

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



Fire This Time!

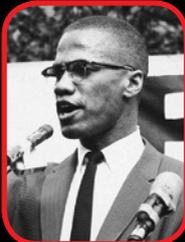
12 Victories for President Maduro in Venezuela

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH



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United Nations Warns Yemen on Brink of Famine

Stop U.S. / Saudi War on Yemen!



By Azza Rojbi

Photos counter-clockwise from top: Yemeni man covered in blood after building destroyed by Saudi airstrikes, Sanaa, Yemen, Aug. 25, 2017. Child recovering from injuries caused by U.S./Saudi War on Yemen. Displaced Yemeni, Razaz Ati, sits with four of his sons outside a tent at the Dharwan settlement, Yemen.

“More than 1,000 days of families driven from their homes by brutal violence. 1,000 days without enough food to eat and safe water to drink. 1,000 days of bombed hospitals and damaged schools. 1,000 days of children recruited to fight. 1,000 days of disease and death ... of unimaginable human suffering.”

“The conflict in Yemen has created the worst humanitarian crisis in the world – a crisis which has engulfed the entire country.”

From a joint statement published on December 29, 2017 by the directors of three UN agencies, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Program (WFP).

Humanitarian crisis from bad to worst!

This horrendous war against the people of Yemen started on March 2015, by Saudi Arabia and its allies’ coalition with the full backing of the United States. The Saudi government used the pretext of internal conflicts in the country to intervene militarily and claimed wanting to bring legitimacy and stability back to Yemen by reinstating the deposed unpopular former

president Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi, who is still hiding in his master’s palaces in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

So now more than 1000 days of war and bombing, what did the Saudi-led coalition achieve in Yemen? Where is the peace and stability the Saudi government promised the Yemeni people?

According to the UN report titled “Yemen: 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview”, “an estimated 22.2 million people in Yemen need some kind of humanitarian or protection assistance, including 11.3 million who are in acute need – an increase of more than one million people in acute need since June 2017.”

This UN report highlight the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen that continues worsening. Millions of Yemenis are facing daily war, displacement, disease and famine. On December 22, 2017 the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) reported that “the total number of suspected cholera cases in Yemen has crossed one million”. The lack of access to clean drinking water,

proper sanitation and access to medical clinics has aggravated the spread of this epidemic.

In addition to the Cholera epidemic, Yemen is now facing a rapidly spreading diphtheria outbreak. According to Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) “Diphtheria is a contagious and potentially fatal bacterial infection [...] It can be prevented through vaccination, but it can be challenging to treat—in part because it is often unfamiliar to health workers. Before this year, the last diphtheria case in Yemen was recorded in 1992, and the last outbreak was in 1982.” The brutal Saudi-led bombing campaign coupled with the land, sea and areal blocked imposed on Yemen, are bringing back forgotten diseases that were thought to be eradicated but that are now taking the life of Yemenis specially malnourished children who are already so vulnerable.

In addition to the destruction of human life, the Saudi-led coalition has bombarded and ruined homes, schools, mosques, hospitals, markets, water and

sanitation facilities, roads and other vital infrastructure. The Saudi government has also targeted historical and cultural facilities in Yemen in a failed attempt to erase the Yemeni pride and strong cultural heritage.

U.S./ U.K. and Canada are direct accomplice of Saudi's crimes

The Saudi-led coalition has shown a complete disregard for human life in Yemen and continues to commit daily crimes against the Yemeni people with the full support of the government of the United States. Since day one, the U.S. continued to supply armament and offered logistical, political and intelligence support to the Saudi-led coalition. U.S. force tankers are refueling Saudi fighter jets after they drop their bombs on Yemen.

According to the Al-Monitor "The Pentagon more than doubled US refueling support for the Saudi-led mission in Yemen over the past year [...] Amid a worsening humanitarian crisis in the war-torn country, the US Department of Defense provided about 480,000 gallons of aviation fuel to the mission at a cost of more than \$1 million in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30 [2017], a 140% increase over the previous year."

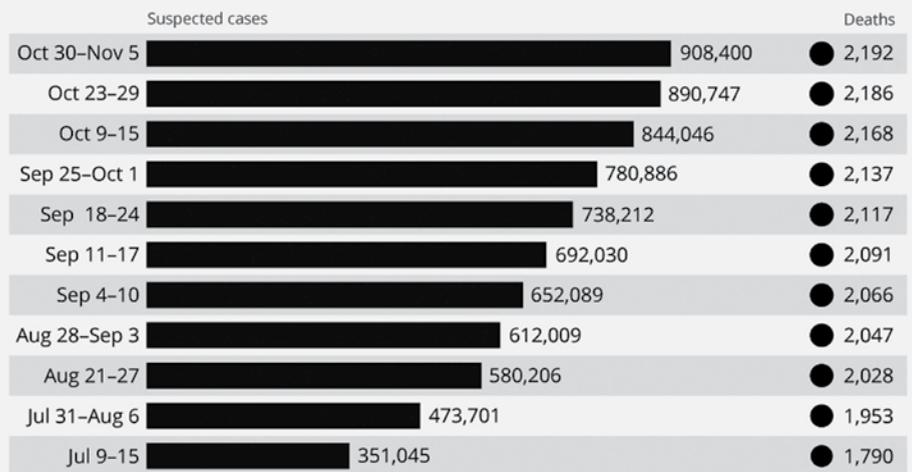
The U.S. is also replenishing the Saudi government weaponry and has increased its sale to Saudi Arabia as Trump announced the \$110 billion arms deal in his trip to Riyadh in May 2017. The British government has also increased its weapons sale to Saudi Arabia since the start of the bloody bombing campaign in Yemen by almost 500 per cent, according to the Independent newspaper. Back here in Canada, the Trudeau government is no innocent! Canada is proceeding with a \$15 billion arms deal to supply the Saudi government with LAV 6.0 advanced combat vehicles.

On December 14, 2017, Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the UN gave a speech in front of fragments from what she claims is a missile launched at Saudi Arabia from the Houthi rebel group in Yemen and provided to them by Iran. Nikki Haley's bizarre presentation in front of this dramatic background reminded some of Colin Powell's speech at the UN before the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

In an interview with Salon.com, William D. Hartung, director of the Arms and Security Project at the Center for

Yemen's Cholera Outbreak Is Out Of Control

Cumulative number of suspected cholera cases and deaths in Yemen (Jul-Nov 2017)



Source: World Health Organization
 @StatistaCharts
 statista

International Policy, commented on Nikki Haley's speech "It's hypocrisy of the highest order [...] And I think obscene, in this context, because the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world is in Yemen, and U.S. allies like Saudi Arabia and the UAE are primarily responsible".

He added that the U.S. has "offered them [Saudi Arabia and allies] tens of billions of dollars in weapons, including some of the very bombs that have been used to kill the civilians, and to pretend that's not happening — and then to put on this dog and pony show about Iranian missile parts — I think is not only outrageous, but it kind of insults people's intelligence."

The Yemeni People Heroically Resisting

Despite all the weaponry and support Saudi Arabia receives from the U.S. and their imperialist allies, they have failed to achieve their so-called goals in Yemen or to break the steadfast resistance of the Yemeni people. We saw images of thousands of Yemenis on the streets of the city of Sa'ada protesting 1,000 days of the Saudi-led war against their beloved country. Yemenis have also been using art, social media and other online platforms to counter the media blackout and share testimonies of their daily life under the Saudi-led bombing and blockade.

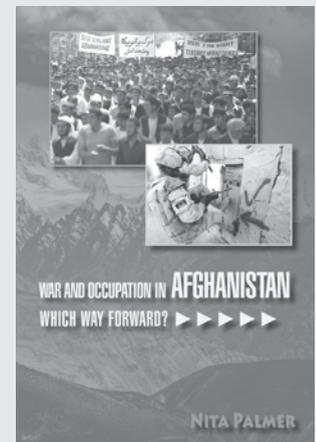
Let us join the people of Yemen in exposing the atrocities committed by the U.S. backed Saudi-led coalition on their country. Let us join them as they fight for their self-determination and sovereignty.

Stop Bombing Yemen! Lift the Naval, Aerial and Land Blockade on Yemen!

Follow Azza on Twitter: @Azza_R14

Battle of Ideas Press

WAR AND OCCUPATION IN AFGHANISTAN WHICH WAY FORWARD?



By Nita Palmer

Author and researcher on the war in Afghanistan. She is a member of the editorial board of Vancouver, Canada-based social justice newspaper Fire This Time.

January 2010, paperback, \$7.00
 226 pages, illustrated,
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What is the Government of Canada Doing in Venezuela?

By Alison Bodine

On January 21, 2018 Chrystia Freeland, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs released a statement repeating the government of Canada's commitment to "democracy" and "human rights" in Venezuela. "Canada is committed to the peaceful return to democracy in Venezuela. The Maduro regime is systematically violating the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its people. As members of the Lima Group, and as Canadians, we must do everything we can to restore constitutional order and relieve the unacceptable suffering of the Venezuelan people."

However, for the government of Canada "democracy" and "human rights" have nothing to do with the will or interests of the mass majority of the people of Venezuela. Instead, this rhetoric has everything to do with overthrowing the democratically elected government of President Nicolas Maduro and reversing the gains made by poor, working and oppressed people by the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

So, Just How Does the Government of Canada Support "Democracy" and "Human Rights" in Venezuela?

Looking at just some of the examples of Canada's so-called support for the people of Venezuela, it is clear that for the government of Canada, regime change is the actual agenda.

1. Canada has sanctions against Venezuela.

The government of Canada has imposed cruel and unjustifiable sanctions that target 52 government officials in Venezuela, including President Nicolas Maduro.

Canada expelled the Venezuelan Ambassador and the Charge d'Affaires at the Venezuelan Embassy.

On December 25, 2017 the government of Canada stripped the diplomatic credentials from the Venezuelan Ambassador to Canada, Wilmer Barrientos Fernandez and chargé d'affaires at the Venezuelan Embassy in Canada, Angel Herrera. Two days earlier, the government of Venezuela expelled the chargé

d'affaires at the Canadian Embassy in Venezuela, Craig Kowalik for "permanent and insistent, rude and vulgar, interference in the internal affairs of Venezuela; as stated by Delcy Rodriguez, the elected President of Venezuela's National Constituent Assembly. She went on to explain that the Canadian Embassy "persistently makes statements and use Twitter to try to



Justin Trudeau meets with the wife & mother of Leopoldo López, leader of the violent right wing opposition.

give orders to Venezuela."

2. The Canadian Embassy in Venezuela gives awards and financial support to Venezuela's counter-revolutionary opposition.

Each year the Canadian Embassy grants a "Human Rights Award" to a counter-revolutionary opposition leader in Venezuela. As well, the Embassy gives funding to organizations in Venezuela through the "Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives." The website of the Canadian Embassy in Venezuela explains that this funding is for initiatives regarding "Promotion of democratic values" and "Promotion of human development and human rights, specifically in the areas of health, nutrition, justice and freedom of expression." As Canada's former Ambassador to Venezuela, Ben Rowswell, who left Venezuela in August 2017, boasted in an interview with the Ottawa Citizen "We established quite a significant internet presence inside Venezuela, so that we could then engage tens of thousands of Venezuelan citizens in a conversation on human rights. We became one of the most vocal embassies in speaking out on human rights issues and encouraging Venezuelans to speak out."



3. Canada is taking a leading role in the right-wing, pro-foreign intervention "Lima Group."

The Lima Group is made up of Canada and 11 other right-wing governments, who have aligned with the objective of promoting foreign intervention in Venezuela. In August, 2017 the "Lima Declaration" was released, which included 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 Constituent Assembly elected by over 8 million people in Venezuela on July 31, 2017. Canada hosted a meeting of the Lima Group in Toronto in October, 2017 which concluded that "If necessary we must put added pressure on the Maduro regime by taking concrete steps to further isolate it from the international community."

4. The Government of Canada welcomes members of Venezuela's violent opposition with open arms.

Members of Venezuela's violent, counter-revolutionary opposition have visited Canada, and been given meetings with Ministers and Parliament. This includes Maria Corina Machado, who publicly supported the 2002 attempted coup d'état against President Chavez. Her decidedly anti-democratic organization, Súmate, which by the way received at least \$22,000 from the government of Canada, was 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.”

5. The Prime Minister of Canada welcomes leaders of the violent opposition too.

On May 16, 2017, Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada met with Lilian Tintori, the wife Leopoldo Lopez, who currently in prison in Venezuela for his criminal and violent actions during violent street riots in Venezuela in 2014 that killed 43 people. As Trudeau met with Mrs. Tintori, the violent opposition was once again rioting on the streets of Venezuela, which resulted in the deaths of at least 125 people in the four months from April-July 2017. Mrs. Tintori also published an editorial in the Globe and Main newspaper called “Canada can help save Venezuela’s democracy” – a clear call for international intervention in the internal affairs of Venezuela.

6. Canada helped lead a failed campaign in the Organization of American States (OAS) to declare Venezuela in violation of the “Inter-American Democratic Charter.”

The OAS is a regional body based in and largely funded by Washington, DC, consisting of 34 countries, in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the United States and Canada. The current President of the OAS, Luis Almagro has dedicated himself to attempting to implement the “Inter-American Democratic Charter” against Venezuela. The government of Canada has stood by every attempt he has made to convince the OAS to interfere in the internal affairs of Venezuela by implementing the charter. This, however, has failed as a majority of member-states in the OAS have stood with Venezuela during numerous illegitimate meetings and forced debates within the organization.

Why is the government of Canada So Concerned About Venezuela?

Caracas, the capital of Venezuela is more than 4,000km away from Ottawa. Driving, you would have to pass through eight different countries before arriving at the Colombian/Venezuelan border. So, why is it that the government of Canada has taken it upon itself to take leading role in the imperialist campaign against the sovereign country of Venezuela?

With the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998, the people of Venezuela decided to take their country out of U.S. and imperialist control and back into their own hands. In the nearly 20 years of the Bolivarian revolutionary process, the majority of the people of Venezuela have seen great gains against poverty, and in increasing access to housing, healthcare, education and nutrition. These gains have been possible due to a revolutionary government that puts the interests of people before those of profits

and has harnessing the power of Venezuela’s natural resources towards improving the lives of poor and oppressed people in Venezuela.

Taking some of these natural resources back meant taking them out of the hands of imperialist corporations through nationalization, a process that has directly affected Canadian mining and resource extraction companies.

The biggest attack on the interests of Canadian mining corporations came in 2011, when the government of Venezuela moved to nationalize gold mines. At the time, both Crystallex International Corporation and Gold Reserve Inc had large gold mining projects underway in Venezuela, which were expropriated. Hundreds of millions of dollars in profit for these corporations were lost.

Throughout the Bolivarian revolutionary process, Venezuela has also joined with Cuba in the struggle to build a stronger and more united Latin America. Through organizations like ALBA and PetroCARIBE, alliances are being built, and goods and services are being exchanged, on the basis of mutual cooperation and solidarity, and, most importantly, without reliance on the US government or imperialist financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF. An independent and united Latin America and the Caribbean is a threat to the government of Canada’s many interests in the region.

People in Canada Must Organize to Defend the Sovereignty and Self-Determination of Venezuela.

This month, the government of Venezuela announced Presidential elections will take place by April 30, 2018. Already, the government of Canada is on the offensive, with Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland sending out tweets stating “We

reject this decision by the Gov of #Venezuela to call these elections...” and claiming them to be “illegitimate” before campaigning has even begun. With all of this talk about “democracy” the government of Canada sure is quick to condemn elections in Venezuela!

The government of Canada, the United States, and the European Union, have all been increasing their attacks and rhetoric against Venezuela. This is because Venezuela’s counter-revolutionary opposition is shattered. Despite US and imperialist support, they have been unable to overthrow the revolutionary government. Despite carrying out a vicious campaign of sabotage against the economy, they have been unable to reverse the achievements made by the mass majority of people in Venezuela.

Now imperialists are on the hunt for new allies and different methods to carry out their intervention.

This means that organizing against intervention in Venezuela is at a critical moment, and poor, working and oppressed people in Canada and around the world must unite to counter this imperialist offensive in defense of the sovereignty and self-determination of Venezuela.

In the last year, there have been three elections in Venezuela - for the National Constituent Assembly, governors, and mayors. The United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), the party of President Maduro, has won in each of these elections. The revolutionary government of Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolutionary process are in a position to continue deepening the gains made for the poor, working and oppressed people of Venezuela. It is our responsibility as people living in Canada to get the boot of the government of Canada off of their neck.

Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette

Exemple of inflammatory tweets by Global Affairs Canada

Foreign Policy CAN @CanadaFP · 3d
The international community will not tolerate further abuses by #Venezuela’s Maduro regime. **Canada** welcomes the European Union’s decision to impose sanctions. We stand with partners in defending #democracy & #humanrights in #Venezuela & around the world. @EUCouncilPress

EU Council Press @EUCouncilPress
The European Union sanctions 7 individuals holding official positions in #Venezuela, as the situation in Venezuela continues to deteriorate, and as negotiations between the government an...

76 1,443 1,097

Foreign Policy CAN @CanadaFP · 2d
Canada opposes today’s decision to hold presidential #elections in #Venezuela before April 30/18, which prohibits the opposition from participating in free/fair/credible elections. #Maduro’s regime is sliding further into dictatorship & escalating #humanrights abuses. #LimaGroup



18 627 353

The rain cleared up in front of the British Columbia (BC) Legislature just in time for the public ceremony. A crowd gathered on the steps out front, and three yellow stakes were hammered into the soft lawn. Each had a name written: John Horgan, George Heyman, Lana Popham. All BC NDP MLAs who had previously donated \$100 to buy a "Stake in the Peace" and support fundraising efforts to stop the giant Site C Dam megaproject BC Hydro is trying to ram through the Peace River Valley. Now that the NDP (New Democratic Party) had formed government and betrayed past commitments to cancel the project – their names, their stakes and their money were no longer welcome.

Moving Forward

The ceremony was led by Chiefs Roland Willson of the West Moberly First Nation and Chief Tsakoza of the Prophet River First Nation. They were joined by Ken Boon, a third generation farmer and President the Peace Valley Landowners Association. They had all come down from the Peace River Valley, where BC Hydro is trying to flood 112 km of the land their families and community live and rely on. This was also the opening of the Site C Accountability Summit – which brought together more than 300 people from across the province to discuss, strategize and respond to the NDP government's decision to approve the controversial megadam project.

A real sense of betrayal hung thick over the two day event. Many in the room had volunteered, donated and voted for the BC NDP



Indigenous Elder and activist Eagle Eyes and Thomas Davies at the Site C Accountability Summit

THIS DAM WILL NOT BE BUILT!

Site C Summit Organizes for Ongoing Resistance

based on its supposed opposition to the Site C Dam. NDP MLAs were regular speakers at the events organized against the project. Now these same friends had gotten up and said they had no choice to approve the project, despite the billion dollar cost overruns and the obvious betrayal of their commitment to respect the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. They had been invited to the Summit to explain themselves, but had decided not to come.

Fiscal Falsification

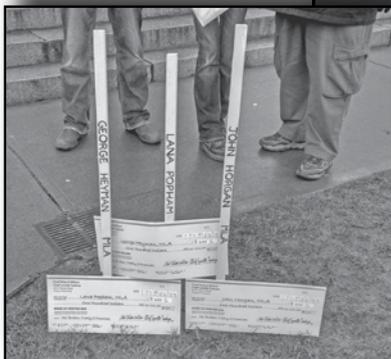
The NDP justification was that cancelling the project would mean billions of dollars wasted and an insurmountable accounting deficit. This would mean immediate increases to BC Hydro rates and make it impossible for the British Columbia government to follow through with their spending commitments to poor and working families. Sounds mostly reasonable – but it's not true.

This economic justification was disproved over and over again. Robert

McCullough, an International Energy Expert, proved that cancellation of Site C could not possibly trigger the threatened immediate 12% rate increase, and instead would save 3.5 billion for other infrastructure. Seth Klein, BC Director



In front of BC Legislature, Indigenous leaders including Chief Bob Chamberlin (Kwkwwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation) returning NDP MLAs John Horgan, George Heyman and Lana Popham's previous \$100 donations and "Stakes for the Peace" against Site C Dam. At Site C Accountability Summit in Victoria, January 26, 2018.



Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, explained how the interest costs on the costs of termination are easily affordable within the BC Budget and a much fiscally wiser longterm approach.

Journalist Andrew Nikiforuk referenced the current scandal of the Muskrat Falls mega hydro dam. To pay for the dam, which is over budget and behind schedule, citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador will see their electricity rates rise to twice the average price in Canada. A damning engineering report early on in the project was hidden until 2017, when costs had already doubled to 12.7 billion.

It was also pointed out that this year Alberta contracted new wind energy at 3.7 cents/kwh. In BC, with

more mountainous conditions, the equivalent might be 5.7 cents. The power from Site C is likely to cost 10 cents/kwh or more, depending on the eventual budget overrun. In Colorado, utility-scale solar power was recently contracted for US 2.9 cents/kwh. The equivalent for BC, with 50% less solar would be CAN 5.4 cents/kwh.

The environmental advantages of wind and solar power are clear, and don't involve flooding an unique and fertile water basin that can provide food for over a million people. Also – these are not megaprojects which literally 9 times out of 10 go much beyond budget. They can be built and scaled up over time without immense investments and commitments. The Summit also heard from Judith Sayers, President of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. She detailed how the provincial government has turned its back on many indigenous nations who are willing to build these projects on their territories. This would mean clean energy, lower costs, no government debt and job opportunities in communities that really need them.

Indigenous Rights - Fundamental

While emphasis was placed on debunking the economic and “clean power” justifications for the Site C, the summit returned repeatedly to the fundamental issue of indigenous rights. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples requires “free, prior and informed consent” before any projects are built on indigenous territories. Obviously the West Moberly and Prophet River Nations have never granted this consent. Also, as Chief Roland Wilson pointed out, many

indigenous nations who enter into agreements with governments or corporations due so under significant duress and pressure. The threat of “sign the agreement and get some jobs and some compensation, or don't sign the agreement and get nothing” is particularly hard for impoverished and remote indigenous communities who have already seen their traditional resources and lands taken away by previous projects. This is not real consent.

The West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations have also already launched a lawsuit in BC Supreme Court to stop construction at the Site C dam because it breaches Treaty 8, which guaranteed that they would be free to hunt, fish and trap on those lands. How do you do any of these things on flooded land?

Action Oriented

The two days Summit dedicated an entire day to working groups and organizing a plan to continue the resistance to the Site C Dam. Across the province groups continue to plan events and actions. Continuing to publicly “re-invest” donations to the New Democratic Party into the indigenous legal challenge gained a lot of support from delegates, as well as protests outside of the courtrooms showing support for the West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations.

While it was in intense two days of actions, education and strategizing the mood throughout the Summit was upbeat and defiant. The Site C Dam project has been cancelled before, and across the province people are determined that it will be cancelled again. Fire This Time was happy to participate and contribute to the conference discussions.



Top: Member of Saulneau First Nation at anti-Site C rally in Fort St John, December 2013

Middle: Protest on Quadra Island against government's decision to continue with Site C Dam project, December 3, 2018

Bottom: Paddle for the Peace protest in the Peace Valley, 2016

We will continue to take part, report on, and support actions to Stop the Site C Dam and Save the Peace River Valley. As was emphasized continually during the Summit: this fight is not over and we will win!

New Democratic Party (NDP) – Stop Site C! Save the Peace!

Stop Site C Dam Now!

*Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter:
@thomasdavies59*

By Alison Bodine

In organizing the “Vancouver Group” summit on North Korea, the United States and Canada tried to dig up old Cold War nuclear fears and alliances to justify their aggression on the Korean Peninsula. Leading peace organizers from around the world also met in Vancouver at the same time – to forge their own alliances and demonstrate that there is a clear alternative that does not involve sanctions, threats or military aggression. Vancouver’s anti-war coalition, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) was heavily involved in these political activities – organizing its own “Hands Off North Korea!” public forum with retired U.S. Army Colonel Ann Wright and Professor Michel Chossudovsky, and participating in all the “Vancouver Women’s Forum on Peace and Security on the Korean Peninsula” actions, which brought 16 leading women peace organizers from around the world to Vancouver.

While the U.S. and Canada gave some small amount of lip service to “diplomatic solutions”, the fact that North Korea, China and Russia were all excluded from the meeting – which was made up principally of countries who waged a bloody war against Korea over 60 years ago – showed that the meeting agenda had nothing to do with peaceful dialogue. Their stated objective was even to, “advance the pressure campaign against North Korea.”

MAWO chairperson Alison Bodine told press, “This meeting been called in an attempt to isolate and demonize North Korea through a publicity campaign which is heavy on threats and rhetoric but thin on facts.”

The Women’s Forum, which was organized by Women Cross DMZ, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and the Nobel Women’s Initiative, included a march and vigil outside the Vancouver Convention Centre on the night before the “Vancouver Group” meetings, as well as an early morning action outside the entrance so all the entering diplomats could see the unified demand for peace. MAWO was present with a delegation and large banner which said, “U.S./Canada: Hands Off North Korea!” at both actions.

MAWO also joined a noontime picket outside the Vancouver Public Library calling for “US Hands Off Korea!”, and later the Women’s

Forum conference which had three dynamic panels giving an in-depth look at the history of imperialist intervention against Korea and possibilities for peace and reunification.

The audience at MAWO’s public forum at the Central Branch of the Vancouver Public Library was over 100 people, which filled the room beyond capacity. Many still stood outside to listen to the speakers, and the lively and informative discussion that followed.

Ann Wright, who is a founder of Code Pink Women for Peace and a member of the international women’s peace delegation, emphasized the need to continue taking principled and organized stands against war. She herself resigned from the U.S. Army in protest of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, and since then has continued to be a leading

expansion of independent anti-war organizing and journalism, and for an end to imperialist aggression in Korea and around the world.

The imperialist “Vancouver Group” came to a very different conclusion during their closed-door meetings. Canada’s Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland announced the Canadian government will contribute \$3.25 million to a U.S. sanctions enforcement program which targets the most vulnerable sectors of North Korean society, and U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson vowed that, “the pressure campaign will continue.”

This outcome had clearly been decided upon before the meeting even began. While the “Vancouver Group” meeting was a step away from peace, it also provided peace activists and opportunity



Top: MAWO Public forum “U.S. Hands Off North Korea” January 16, 2018
Middle: Prof. Michel Chossudovsky speaking at Jan. 16 MAWO forum with Alison Bodine
Bottom: Candlelight Vigil For Peace in Korea, January 15, 2018

U.S. HANDS OFF NORTH KOREA!

Report on United Actions Against Imperialist “Vancouver Group” Meeting January 15-16, 2018



to add the anti-war narrative to the media agenda. MAWO chairperson Alison Bodine, and members of the Women’s Forum, were interviewed by many local, national and international media outlets. Links from some of the coverage are found below.

This past week’s meetings in Vancouver showed two very different visions for the world. One, which is pushed by imperialist countries like the U.S. and Canada, is defined by military might, misery and aggression. The other, which was demonstrated by the flurry of peace activities organized by groups and individuals form around the world – points the way to better world based on solidarity, cooperation and an end to imperialist wars and occupation. MAWO is committed to playing an active role in this international movement for peace, and will continue to educate, organize and mobilize to demand, “US Hands Off Korea!” and “No More Sanctions or Threats Against North Korea!”

* For media coverage links from events visit <http://www.mawovancouver.org/reports/2018/180116-US-hands-off-north-korea.html>

*Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter:
@Alisoncolette*

anti-war organizer around the world.

Peter Wilson brought greetings to from the New Zealand DPRK Society. He had travelled all the way from New Zealand specifically to participate in the anti-war actions related to the “Vancouver Group” meeting.

Professor Michel Chossudovsky founder and editor of Global Research, and author of 11 books on global politics and economy, was speaking as part of a cross country tour which saw him present at successful events in Montreal, Hamilton, Toronto and Winnipeg. He analyzed the roots of imperialist intervention in Korea, which divided the country in two. Besides the current threats and sanctions against North Korea, the U.S has a continued presence of almost 30,000 troops in South Korea. He called for the

By Thomas Davies

I worked at the Chevron oil refinery in Burnaby a couple of times as a pipefitter. That's where a lot of the oil from the original Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline goes. My first time was still as an apprentice in that kind of live industrial environment. Loud noises, hisses, banging, and permits required before you did anything. I wasn't used to wearing a gas monitor, shaving every day so I could put on a respirator or knowing where to go, what to do or when.

It must have showed because an older pipefitter took me under his wing and let me work with him and his partner. I can't count the mistakes I made in front of them, and those are just the ones I'm aware of. They were incredibly patient with me, and as I started to get the hang of things the conversation moved from what I could improve to what was going on with our lives.

He was 30 years older than me, and I learned he lived in Campbell River. Which was strange because that's a two hour drive away from the Nanaimo ferry, another hour and half ferry ride and then another 45 minutes drive to the refinery from Horseshoe Bay, depending on traffic and how much you could decide to speed. With ferry waits and bathroom breaks that's a five hour commute each way – which is impossible to do twice every work day.

Turns out he was renting a room somewhere in Burnaby, and would make the long commute back on most weekends to see his wife. He was like a lot of other people I've gotten to know – former pulp mill workers who'd had to take what they could get after the mill they thought they would retire at shut down. I met a lot on that job, all trying to find ways to keep

**Background: Bute Inlet, BC coast
Photos from January 13, 2018 March and Rally organized by Climate Convergence Metro Vancouver**

**Top: Banner drop - photo by Murray Bush
Middle: Indigneous Elder and activist Eagle Eyes speaking alongside Solidarity Notes Choir - photo by Doug Sprenger
Bottom: Protesters in front of Kinder Morgan Westridge Marine Terminal - photo by Murray Bush**



KINDER MORGAN PIPELINE NEVER!

LESSONS FROM WORKING IN AN OIL REFINERY

working under less than ideal circumstances at jobs where it was understood you would never be permanent. Most of us got laid off a couple of days before Christmas, and we haven't kept in touch more than for me to know that he's now divorced and still coming back to Vancouver for work when he can.

The older guys would all tell wistful stories in the break shacks. Either about steady work for years at pulp mills, or how you could actually get ahead if you bounced around to scheduled mill maintenance "shutdowns" where they did long hours in remote places. You'd be away from your family for months at a time, but the overtime money could put kids through university.

Those days are long gone. Over 100 mills have closed in BC in the last 20 years. The best trees are gone too, but the industry continues

to cut what's left at an unsustainable pace. 26 million cubic meters between 2013 and 2016. Now they are shipped "raw" without any processing, and therefore without any need for local pulp mills.

Some of the younger guys have similar stories about working in the Alberta Tar Sands when oil was \$150 a barrel and they couldn't get enough workers. You'd freeze your fingers and eat disgusting food in a camp made of cramped portable trailers, but you could come back with enough for a down payment on a house. Those days are pretty much done now too. Suicide rates spiked 30% when oil price dropped and the mass layoff started happening in 2015. Even though most out of province workers have returned home, Albertans continue to have a tough time finding good work.

I snuck into a new job as a Power Engineer just before the schools realized that by meeting industry demands they were pumping out way too many people for the amount of jobs that were left. Out of my new crew of five, three had all come from the same pulp mill after it had shut down.

The point I'm making is that this is not accidental. It's a pattern. The resource industry is driven by profit for corporations and capitalist elite not human need. They devour the resources and spit out the workers when there's nothing left. It happened with forestry, it happened with fisheries and now it's happening with oil and gas.

Which is why I've never had a problem as someone trained in jobs traditionally associated with unsustainable resource extraction, opposing projects which further perpetrate what I've seen first hand as



destructive and with few real benefits for poor and working people.

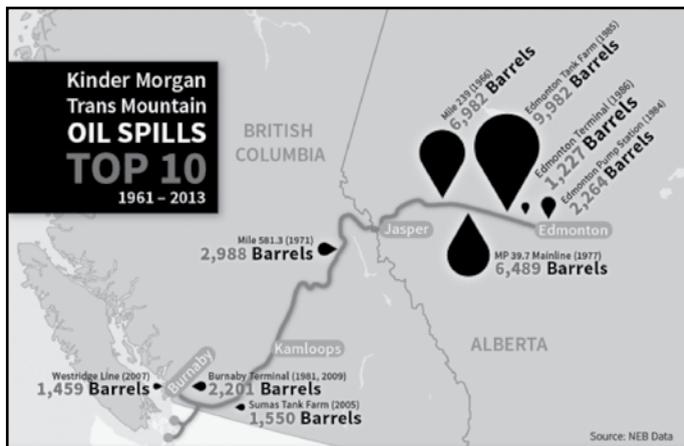
The Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion is another one of these projects, which if built would allow the totally destructive Alberta Tar Sands to continue producing some of the dirtiest oil on the planet when there are already viable clean energy alternatives. We have written extensively about the fact that if the Trudeau-approved Kinder Morgan and Line 3 pipelines are built, it would make it impossible to meet Canada's modest United Nations climate commitments. The commitments are based on the standard which the broad scientific consensus agrees would be the minimum to avoid catastrophic climate change and the likely end of the human race.

All that for 50 full time jobs when the pipeline is done? Ridiculous.

These facts are why so many people are so opposed to the Kinder Morgan pipeline. Indigenous nations are building tiny houses and healing lodges to stop the pipeline as it crosses their traditional territories. Burnaby

residents get up early and stand in the rain to stop construction vehicle traffic working on the Kinder Morgan marine terminal expansion. Large groups of people meet in front of TD Banks every month to protest its financing of the pipeline expansion. The list goes on. We haven't stopped the pipeline yet, but it hasn't been built and Kinder Morgan is reporting huge delays and \$75 million a month losses as long as it remains unbuilt. We haven't stopped the project entirely, but as long as we are fighting we have a fighting chance.

I've also met more and more trades people at different Kinder Morgan demonstrations. We aren't the majority, but we can play an important role in the movement given our



direct experience with just how toxic and dangerous these oil refineries are, and how little the corporations care for our safety or our livelihoods when push comes to shove. I've heard many times, "What if they had a war and everyone refused to fight?" I feel the same way about building dirty oil pipelines.

Follow Thomas on Twitter: @thomasdavies59

TD Bank + KM = Partners in Climate Crime

By Thomas Davies

It's a geographic coincidence that a branch of the TD Bank is located so close to Kinder Morgan's Westridge Marine Terminal in Burnaby. This made a protest connecting the two feasible, but it is also a good indication of how close Kinder Morgan's dangerous oil handling facilities are to major population centres. Climate Convergence, BROKE (Burnaby Residents Opposing Kinder Morgan's Pipeline) and 350 Vancouver came together to highlight the unholy alliance between the big bank and the big oil company with several actions which began outside

Photos from: March and rally from in front of TD bank to Kinder Morgan Westridge Marine Terminal, January 13, 2018

the TD Bank and moved to the Kinder Morgan marine terminal, which is currently undergoing expansion work to accommodate the planned dirty Tar Sands pipeline project.

The action was a huge success. The entire block in front of the TD Bank was filled with protestors and colourful signs and banners. There was lots of honking from passing cars, many belonging to those who live in the surrounding area and are coming to understand the huge risks they live with. They are also coming to understand the massive role TD Bank is playing in trying



to get the pipeline project built. Despite commitments to "building a healthy planet" TD played a central role in securing financing for the pipeline, and has committed \$731 million itself to the project - more than any other bank. People entering the branch that day were giving

"TD - Totally Divest!" information leaflets detailing this information.

The groups then marched down the busy road circling Burnaby Mountain, chanting all of the way. Over 150 people completely filled a long pedestrian bridge with bodies and banners - again to loud honking from people driving past.

From there the action moved to block the main entrance to the Kinder Morgan Marine Terminal. The crowd heard from the Solidarity Notes Choir and held a bright yellow "danger tape" banner blocking the front gates which read, "Climate Crime Scene".

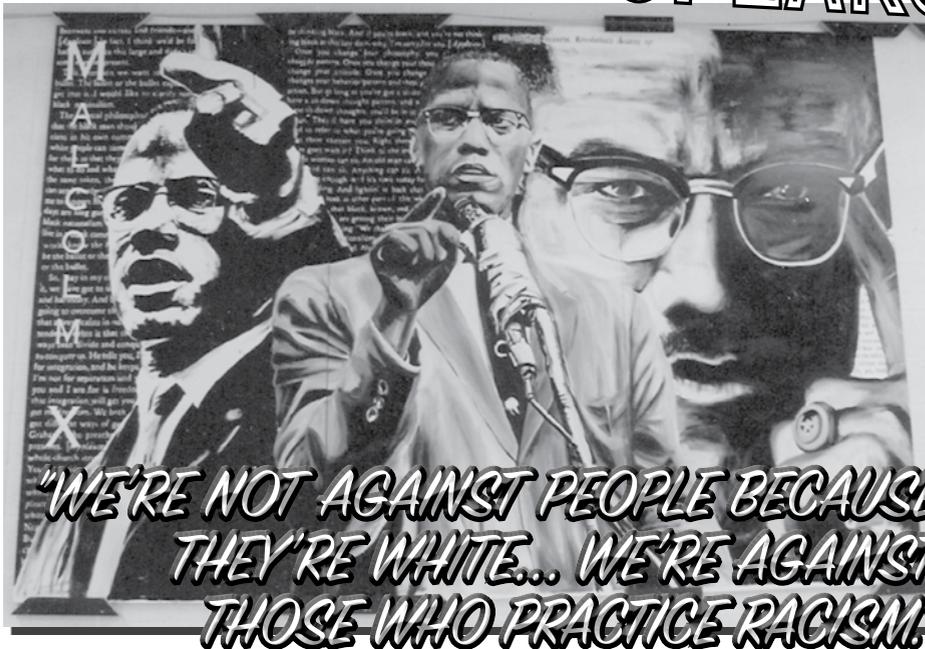
Three hours after the actions had began, the protestors were still chanting and marching back to the TD Bank to wrap up with a circle and closing by Indigenous Elder Eagle Eyes.

These actions have been happening in monthly around Vancouver for the past year, moving to different TD branches and garnering a lot of media attention. They are also a place for groups to work together, and serve as a focal point of emphasizing the fact that the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion is being built by multinational corporation run by billionaires to serve the same corporations and their billionaires. People are learning this in action, as well as their important role in working together to stop the dirty tar stands oil pipeline.

Kinder Morgan, We Still Say NO!
TD Bank, We Say No, the Pipeline Got to Go!

MALCOLM X SPEAKS

**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**



of attacking him. This is what the racists have always done the criminal, the one who has criminal processes developed to a science. Their practice is criminal action. And then use the press to make you victim—look like the victim is the criminal, and the criminal is the victim. This is how they do it. [...]

This is skill. This skill is called—this is a science that's called “image making.” They hold you in check through this science of imagery. They even make you look down upon yourself, by giving you a bad image of yourself. Some of our own Black people who have eaten this image themselves and digested it—until they themselves don't want to live in the Black community. They don't want to be around Black people themselves.

Excerpts from a speech by Malcolm X on February 16, 1965, five days before he was assassinated. In these excerpts Malcolm X addresses racism, both in the U.S. and internationally, as well as U.S. imperialism and its attacks on people around the world. He also references the murder of the first democratically elected president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba, who was assassinated in January 1961. Malcolm also speaks about the lies and manipulations of the mainstream media. Many of these themes are still very relevant today

I'm here to talk about the problem that's in front of all of us. And to do it in a very informal way. I never like to be tied down to a formal method or procedure when talking to an audience, because I find that usually the conversation that I'm involved in revolves around race, or things racial, which is not my fault. I didn't create the race problem. And you know, I didn't come to America on the Mayflower or at my own volition. Our people were brought here involuntarily, against our will. So if we pose the problem now, they shouldn't blame us for being here. They brought us here. [...]

We don't judge a man because of the color of his skin. We don't judge you because you're white; we don't judge you because

you're black; we don't judge you because you're brown. We judge you because of what you do and what you practice. And as long as you practice evil, we're against you. And for us, the most—the worst form of evil is the evil that's based upon judging a man because of the color of his skin. And I don't think anybody here can deny that we're living in a society that just doesn't judge a man according to his talents, according to his know-how, according to his possibility—background, or lack of academic background. This society judges a man solely upon the color of his skin. If you're white, you can go forward, and if you're Black, you have to fight your way every step of the way, and you still don't get forward. [...]

So we're not against people because they're white. But we're against those who practice racism. We're against those who drop bombs on people because their color happens to be of a different shade than yours. And because we're against it, the press says we're violent. We're not for violence. We're for peace. But the people that we're up against are for violence. You can't be peaceful when you're dealing with them. They accuse us of what they themselves are guilty of. This is what the criminal always does. They'll bomb you, then accuse you of bombing yourself. They'll crush your skull, then accuse you

It's a science that they use, very skillfully, to make the criminal look like the victim, and to make the victim look like the criminal. Example: In the United States during the Harlem riots, I was in Africa, fortunately. During these riots, or because of these riots, or after the riots, again the press, very skillfully, depicted the rioters as hoodlums, criminals, thieves, because they were abducting some property.

Now mind you, it is true that property was destroyed. But look at it from another angle. In these Black communities, the economy of the community is not in the hands of the Black man. The Black man is not his own landlord. The buildings that he lives in are owned by someone else. The stores in the community are run by someone else. Everything in the community is out of his hands. He has no say-so in it whatsoever, other than to live there, and pay the highest rent for the lowest type boarding place, pays the highest prices for food, for the lowest grade of food. He is a victim of this, a victim of economic exploitation, political exploitation, and every other kind. Now, he's so frustrated, so pent-up, so much explosive energy within him, that he would like to get at the one who's exploiting him. But the one who's exploiting him doesn't live in his neighborhood. He only owns the house.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

He only owns the store. He only owns the neighborhood. So that when the Black man explodes, the one that he wants to get at isn't there. So he destroys the property. He's not a thief. He's not trying to steal your cheap furniture or your cheap food. He wants to get at you, but you're not there. And instead of the sociologists analyzing it as it actually is, trying to understand it as it actually is, again they cover up the real issue, and they use the press to make it appear that these people are thieves, hoodlums. No! They are the victims of organized thievery, organized landlords who are nothing but thieves, merchants who are nothing but thieves, politicians who sit in the city hall and who are nothing but thieves in cahoots with the landlords and the merchants.

But again, the press is used to make the victim look like the criminal and make the criminal look like the victim.... This is imagery. And just as this imagery is practiced at the local level, you can understand it better by an international example. The best recent example at the international level to bear witness to what I'm saying is what happened in the Congo. Look at what happened. We had

a situation where a plane was dropping bombs on African villages. An African village has no defense against the bombs. And an African village is not sufficient threat that it has to be bombed! But planes were dropping bombs on African villages. When these bombs strike, they don't distinguish between enemy and friend. They don't distinguish between male and female. When these bombs are dropped on African villages in the Congo, they are dropped on Black women, Black children, Black babies. These human beings were blown to bits. I heard no outcry, no voice of compassion for these thousands of Black people who were slaughtered by planes.

Why was there no outcry? Why was there no concern? Because, again, the press very skillfully made the victims look like they were the criminals, and the criminals look like they were the victims.

They refer to the villages as "rebel held," you know. As if to say, because they are rebel-held villages, you can destroy the population, and it's okay. They also refer to the merchants of death as "American-trained, anti-Castro Cuban pilots." This made it okay. [...]

But it's something that you have to look at and answer for. Because they are American planes, American bombs, escorted by American paratroopers, armed with machine guns. But, you know, they say they're not soldiers, they're just there as escorts, like they started out with some advisers in South Vietnam. Twenty thousand of them— just advisers. These

are just "escorts." They're able to do all of this mass murder and get away with it by labeling it "humanitarian," an act of humanitarianism. Or "in the name of freedom," "in the name of liberty." All kinds of high-sounding slogans, but it's cold-blooded murder, mass murder. And it's done so skillfully, so you and I, who call ourselves sophisticated in this twentieth century, are able to watch it, and put the stamp of approval upon it. Simply because it's being done to people with black skin, by people with white skin.

They take a man who is a cold-blooded murderer, named Tshombe. You've heard of him, Uncle Tom Tshombe. He murdered the prime minister, the rightful prime minister, Lumumba. He murdered him. Now here's a man who's an international murderer, selected by the State Department and placed over the Congo and propped into position by your tax dollars. He's a killer. He's hired by our government. He's a hired killer. And to show the type of hired killer he is, as soon as he's in office, he hires more killers in South Africa to shoot down his own people. And you wonder why your American image abroad is so bankrupt. Notice I said, "Your American image abroad is so bankrupt." They make this man acceptable by saying in the press that he's the only one that can unite the Congo. Ha. A murderer. They won't let China in the United Nations because they say she declared war on UN troops in Korea. Tshombe declared war on UN troops in Katanga. You give him money



and prop him up. You don't use the same yardstick. You use the yardstick over here, change it over here.

This is true everybody can see you today. You make yourself look sick in the sight of the world trying to fool people that you were at least once wise with your trickery. But today your bag of tricks have absolutely run out. The whole world can see what you're doing. The press whips

up hysteria in the white public. Then it shifts gears and starts working trying to get the sympathy of the white public. And then it shifts gears and gets the white public to support whatever criminal action they're getting ready to involve the United States in.

Reprinted from: malcolmxfiles.blogspot.ca
(Title: *Not Just an American Problem, But a World Problem*)



Dr. Betty Shabazz and Malcolm X along with their daughters Attilah, Qubilah and Hyasah, sit with boxing legend Muhammad Ali

Cuba condemns the racist, denigrating and gross statements of the President of the U.S. against Haiti, El Salvador, and African states



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba strongly condemns the racist, denigrating and gross statements of the President of the United States of America, on Haiti, El Salvador, African states and other continents, during the course of negotiations on the immigration program known as DACA, which took place in the White House yesterday.

These statements, full of hatred and contempt, produce indignation in the Cuban people, who are proud of the contributions throughout our history made by nationals

and their descendants from diverse latitudes, particularly Africans and Haitians, from the moment that our nationhood was forged.

Cuba joins the strong denunciations from around the world that these statements have attracted, especially in the countries of the global south.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses its most heartfelt solidarity with all the offended countries.

Havana, January 12, 2018
Year 60 of the Revolution

Cuba condena las declaraciones racistas, denigrantes y groseras del Presidente Trump contra Haití, El Salvador y estados africanos



* EN ESPAÑOL *

El Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de la República de Cuba, condena enérgicamente las declaraciones racistas, denigrantes y groseras del Presidente de los Estados Unidos de América, sobre Haití, El Salvador, estados africanos y de otros continentes, en el transcurso de una negociación sobre el programa migratorio conocido como DACA, que tuvo lugar en la Casa Blanca, en el día de ayer.

Estas declaraciones llenas de odio y de desprecio, producen indignación en el pueblo cubano, orgulloso del aporte que a

lo largo de su historia han hecho nacionales y sus descendientes de diversas latitudes, particularmente africanos y haitianos, desde el momento mismo que se forjó nuestra nacionalidad.

Cuba se suma al fuerte rechazo que dichas declaraciones han concitado en todo el mundo, especialmente en los países del Sur.

El Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores expresa su más sentida solidaridad con todos los países ofendidos.

La Habana, 12 de enero de 2018
Año 60 de la Revolución

OUR HERITAGE



NANCY MOREJÓN (1944-)

One of the most preeminent and internationally successful Cuban poets today. Growing up within Cuba's revolutionary process, she became the first widely published black woman poet in Cuba, winning prizes in Cuba and internationally for her work. As a Cuban revolutionary and poet, she is known for celebrating women and blackness in her poems.

BLACK WOMAN

I still smell the foam of the sea they made me cross.
The night, I can not remember it.
The ocean itself could not remember that.
But I can't forget the first gull I made out in the distance.
High, the clouds, like innocent eyewitnesses.
Perhaps I haven't forgotten my lost coast,
nor my ancestral language.
They left me here and here I've lived.
And, because I worked like an animal,
here I came to be born.
How many Mandinga epics did I look to for strength.

I rebelled.

His Worship bought me in a public square.
I embroidered His Worship's coat and bore him a male child.
My son had no name.
And His Worship died at the hands of an impeccable English lord.

I walked.

This is the land where I suffered
mouth-in-the-dust and the lash.
I rode the length of all its rivers.
Under its sun I planted seeds, brought in the crops,
but never ate those harvests.
A slave barracks was my house,
built with stones that I hauled myself.
While I sang to the pure beat of native birds.

I rose up.

In this same land I touched the fresh blood
and decayed bones of many others,
brought to this land or not, the same as I.
I no longer dreamt of the road to Guinea.
Was it to Guinea? Benin?

To Madagascar? Or Cape Verde?

I worked on and on.

I strengthened the foundations of my millenary song and of my hope.
Here I built my world.

I left for the hills.

My real independence was the free slave fort
and I rode with the troops of Maceo.

Only a century later,
together with my descendants,
from a blue mountain

I came down from the Sierra

to put an end to capital and usurer,
to generals and to bourgeois.
Now I exist: only today do we own, do we create.
Nothing is foreign to us.
The land is ours.
Ours the sea and sky,
the magic and vision.
Compañeros, here I see you dance
around the tree we are planting for communism.
Its prodigal wood resounds.

Translated by Kathleen Weaver

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to be here tonight, and how very delighted I am to see you expressing your concern about the issues that will be discussed tonight by turning out in such large numbers. I also want to say that I consider it a great honor to share this program with Dr. Bennett, Dr. Commager, and Rabbi Heschel, some of the most distinguished leaders and personalities of our nation. And of course it's always good to come back to Riverside Church. Over the last eight years, I have had the privilege of preaching here almost every year in that period, and it's always a rich and rewarding experience to come to this great church and this great pulpit.

I come to this great magnificent house of worship tonight because my conscience leaves me no other choice. I join you in this meeting because I am in deepest agreement with the aims and work of the organization that brought us together, Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam. The recent statements of your executive committee are the sentiments of my own heart, and I found myself in full accord when I read its opening lines: "A time comes when silence is betrayal." That time has come for us in relation to Vietnam.

The truth of these words is beyond doubt, but the mission to which they call us is a most difficult one. Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war. Nor does the human spirit move without great difficulty against all the apathy of conformist thought within one's own bosom and in the surrounding world. Moreover, when the issues at hand seem as perplexing as they often do in the case of this dreadful conflict, we are always on the verge of being mesmerized by uncertainty. But we must move on.

Some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. And we must rejoice as well, for surely this is the first time in our nation's history that a significant number of its

religious leaders have chosen to move beyond the prophesying of smooth patriotism to the high grounds of a firm dissent based upon the mandates of conscience and the reading of history. Perhaps a new spirit is rising among us. If it is, let us trace its movement, and pray that our inner being may be sensitive to its guidance. For we are deeply in need of a new way beyond the darkness that seems so close around us.

Over the past two years, as I have moved to break the betrayal of my own silences and to speak from the burnings of my own heart, as I have called for radical departures from the destruction of Vietnam, many persons have questioned me about the wisdom of my path. At the heart of their concerns, this query has often loomed large and loud: "Why are you speaking about the war, Dr. King? Why are

and the need for a collective solution to the tragedy of Vietnam. Neither is it an attempt to make North Vietnam or the National Liberation Front paragons of virtue, nor to overlook the role they must play in the successful resolution of the problem. While they both may have justifiable reasons to be suspicious of the good faith of the United States, life and history give eloquent testimony to the fact that conflicts are never resolved without trustful give and take on both sides. Tonight, however, I wish not to speak with Hanoi and the National Liberation Front, but rather to my fellow Americans.

Since I am a preacher by calling, I suppose it is not surprising that I have seven major reasons for bringing Vietnam into the field of my moral vision. There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection

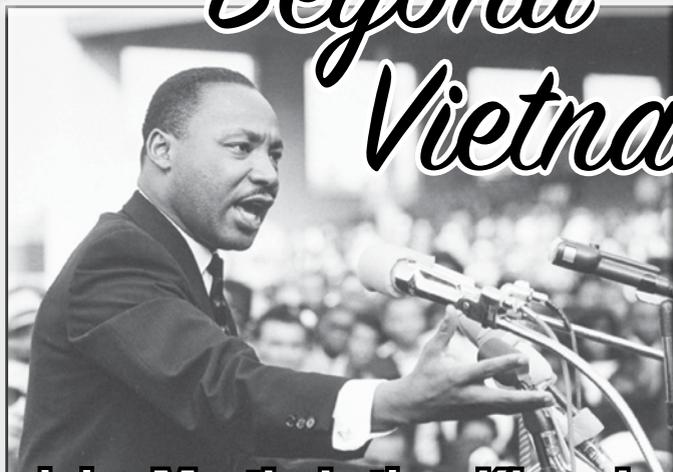
between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I and others have been waging in America. A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It

seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor, both black and white, through the poverty program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then

came the buildup in Vietnam, and I watched this program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything on a society gone mad on war. And I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic, destructive suction tube. So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

Perhaps a more tragic recognition of reality took place when it became clear to me that the war was doing far more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and to die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. So we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would hardly live on the same block in Chicago. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.

"Beyond Vietnam"



**Speech by Martin Luther King, Jr.
April 4, 1967, New York**

you joining the voices of dissent?" "Peace and civil rights don't mix," they say. "Aren't you hurting the cause of your people?" they ask. And when I hear them, though I often understand the source of their concern, I am nevertheless greatly saddened, for such questions mean that the inquirers have not really known me, my commitment, or my calling. Indeed, their questions suggest that they do not know the world in which they live. In the light of such tragic misunderstanding, I deem it of signal importance to state clearly, and I trust concisely, why I believe that the path from Dexter Avenue Baptist Church—the church in Montgomery, Alabama, where I began my pastorate—leads clearly to this sanctuary tonight.

I come to this platform tonight to make a passionate plea to my beloved nation. This speech is not addressed to Hanoi or to the National Liberation Front. It is not addressed to China or to Russia. Nor is it an attempt to overlook the ambiguity of the total situation

My third reason moves to an even deeper level of awareness, for it grows out of my experience in the ghettos of the North over the last three years, especially the last three summers. As I have walked among the desperate, rejected, and angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they asked, and rightly so, "What about Vietnam?" They asked if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government. For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for

*And yet I swear this oath—
America will be!*

Now it should be incandescently clear that no one who has any concern for the integrity and life of America today can ignore the present war. If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read "Vietnam." It can never be saved so long as it destroys the hopes of men the world over. So it is that those of us who are yet determined that "America will be" are led down the path of protest and dissent, working for the health of our land.

As if the weight of such a commitment to the life and health of America were not enough, another burden of responsibility was placed upon me in 1954.* And I cannot forget that the Nobel Peace Prize was also a commission, a commission to work harder than I had ever worked before for the brotherhood of man. This is a calling that takes me beyond national allegiances.

But even if it were not present, I would yet have to live with the meaning of my commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To me, the relationship of this ministry to the making of peace is so obvious that I sometimes marvel at those who ask me why I am speaking against the war. Could it be that they

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

the calling of race or nation or creed is this vocation of sonship and brotherhood. Because I believe that the Father is deeply concerned, especially for His suffering and helpless and outcast children, I come tonight to speak for them. This I believe to be the privilege and the burden of all of us who deem ourselves bound by allegiances and loyalties which are broader and deeper than nationalism and which go beyond our nation's self-defined goals and positions. We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for the victims of our nation, for those it calls "enemy," for no document from human hands can make these humans any less our brothers.

And as I ponder the madness of Vietnam and search within myself for ways to understand and respond in compassion, my mind goes constantly to the people of that peninsula. I speak now not of the soldiers of each side, not of the ideologies of the Liberation Front, not of the junta in Saigon, but simply of the people who have been living under the curse of war for almost three continuous decades now.

I think of them, too, because it is clear to me that there will be no meaningful solution there until some attempt is made to know them and hear their broken cries.

They must see Americans as strange liberators. The Vietnamese people proclaimed their own independence in 1954—in 1945 rather—after a combined French and Japanese occupation and before the communist revolution in China. They were led by Ho Chi Minh. Even though they quoted the American Declaration of Independence in their own document of freedom, we refused to recognize them. Instead, we decided to support France in its reconquest of her former colony. Our government felt then that the Vietnamese people were not ready for independence, and we again fell victim to the deadly Western arrogance that has poisoned the international atmosphere for so long. With that tragic decision we rejected a revolutionary government seeking self-determination and a government that had been established not by China—for whom the Vietnamese have no great love—but by clearly indigenous forces that included some communists. For the peasants this new government meant real land reform, one of the most important needs in their lives.

For nine years following 1945 we denied the people of Vietnam the right of independence. For nine years we vigorously supported the French in their abortive effort to recolonize



Top: Martin Luther King, Jr. with other antiwar and civil rights leaders lead rally protesting Vietnam War, March 16, 1967 in New York.

Right: March against Vietnam War in Chicago, 1968.



the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent.

For those who ask the question, "Aren't you a civil rights leader?" and thereby mean to exclude me from the movement for peace, I have this further answer. In 1957, when a group of us formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, we chose as our motto: "To save the soul of America." We were convinced that we could not limit our vision to certain rights for black people, but instead affirmed the conviction that America would never be free or saved from itself until the descendants of its slaves were loosed completely from the shackles they still wear. In a way we were agreeing with Langston Hughes, that black bard from Harlem, who had written earlier:

*O, yes, I say it plain,
America never was America to me,*

do not know that the Good News was meant for all men—for communist and capitalist, for their children and ours, for black and for white, for revolutionary and conservative? Have they forgotten that my ministry is in obedience to the one who loved his enemies so fully that he died for them? What then can I say to the Vietcong or to Castro or to Mao as a faithful minister of this one? Can I threaten them with death or must I not share with them my life?

Finally, as I try to explain for you and for myself the road that leads from Montgomery to this place, I would have offered all that was most valid if I simply said that I must be true to my conviction that I share with all men the calling to be a son of the living God. Beyond



Malcolm X

**Great Black Leaders
Who Inspired the World
for Liberation and Gave
their Lives to the Struggle!**



Martin Luther King Jr.



Thomas Sankara



Patrice Lumumba

Maurice Bishop



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Vietnam. Before the end of the war we were meeting eighty percent of the French war costs. Even before the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, they began to despair of their reckless action, but we did not. We encouraged them with our huge financial and military supplies to continue the war even after they had lost the will. Soon we would be paying almost the full costs of this tragic attempt at recolonization.

After the French were defeated, it looked as if independence and land reform would come again through the Geneva Agreement. But instead there came the United States, determined that Ho should not unify the temporarily divided nation, and the peasants watched again as we supported one of the most vicious modern dictators, our chosen man, Premier Diem. The peasants watched and cringed and Diem ruthlessly rooted out all opposition, supported their extortionist landlords, and refused even to discuss reunification with the North. The peasants watched as all of this was presided over by United States influence and then by increasing numbers of United States troops who came to help quell the insurgency that Diem's methods had aroused. When Diem was overthrown they may have been happy, but the long line of military dictators seemed to offer no real change, especially in terms of their need for land and peace.

The only change came from America as we increased our troop commitments in support of governments which were singularly corrupt, inept, and without popular support. All the while the people read our leaflets and received the regular promises of peace and democracy and land reform. Now they languish under our bombs and consider us, not their fellow Vietnamese, the real enemy. They move sadly and apathetically as we herd them off the land of their fathers into concentration camps where minimal social needs are rarely met. They know they must move on or be destroyed by our bombs.

So they go, primarily women and children and the aged. They watch as we poison their water, as we kill a million acres of their crops. They must weep as the bulldozers roar through their areas preparing to destroy the precious trees. They wander into the hospitals with at least twenty casualties from American firepower for one Vietcong-inflicted injury. So far we may have killed a million of them, mostly

children. They wander into the towns and see thousands of the children, homeless, without clothes, running in packs on the streets like animals. They see the children degraded by our soldiers as they beg for food. They see the children selling their sisters to our soldiers, soliciting for their mothers.

What do the peasants think as we ally ourselves with the landlords and as we refuse to put any action into our many words concerning land reform? What do they think as we test out our latest weapons on them, just as the Germans tested out new medicine and new tortures in the concentration camps of Europe? Where are the roots of the independent Vietnam we claim to be building? Is it among these voiceless ones?

We have destroyed their two most cherished institutions: the family and the village. We have destroyed their land and their crops. We have cooperated in the crushing of the nation's only noncommunist revolutionary political force, the unified Buddhist Church. We have supported the enemies of the peasants of Saigon. We have corrupted their women and children and killed their men.



Top: Antiwar march at University of Michigan, September 20, 1969.



Right: Martin Luther King, Jr. speaks to peace marchers near United Nations in New York.

Now there is little left to build on, save bitterness. Soon the only solid physical foundations remaining will be found at our military bases and in the concrete of the concentration camps we call "fortified hamlets." The peasants may well wonder if we plan to build our new Vietnam on such grounds as these. Could we blame them for such thoughts? We must speak for them and raise the questions they cannot raise. These, too, are our brothers.

Perhaps a more difficult but no less necessary task is to speak for those who have been designated as our enemies. What of the National Liberation front, that strangely anonymous group we call "VC" or "communists"? What must they think of the United States of America when they realize that we permitted the repression and cruelty

of Diem, which helped to bring them into being as a resistance group in the South? What do they think of our condoning the violence which led to their own taking up of arms? How can they believe in our integrity when now we speak of "aggression from the North" as if there was nothing more essential to the war? How can they trust us when now we charge them with violence after the murderous reign of Diem and charge them with violence while we pour every new weapon of death into their land? Surely we must understand their feelings, even if we do not condone their actions. Surely we must see that the men we supported pressed them to their violence. Surely we must see that our own computerized plans of destruction simply dwarf their greatest acts.

How do they judge us when our officials know that their membership is less than twenty-five percent communist, and yet insist on giving them the blanket name? What must they be thinking when they know that we are aware of their control of major sections of Vietnam, and yet we appear ready to allow national elections in which this highly organized political parallel government will not have a part? They ask how we can speak of free elections when the Saigon press is censored and controlled by the military junta. And they are surely right to wonder what kind of new government we plan to help form without them, the only real party in real touch with the peasants. They question our political goals and they deny the reality of

a peace settlement from which they will be excluded. Their questions are frighteningly relevant. Is our nation planning to build on political myth again, and then shore it up upon the power of a new violence?

Here is the true meaning and value of compassion

and nonviolence, when it helps us to see the enemy's point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves. For from his view we may indeed see the basic weaknesses of our own condition, and if we are mature, we may learn and grow and profit from the wisdom of the brothers who are called the opposition.

So, too, with Hanoi. In the North, where our bombs now pummel the land, and our mines endanger the waterways, we are met by a deep but understandable mistrust. To speak for them is to explain this lack of confidence in Western worlds, and especially their distrust of American intentions now. In Hanoi are the men who led this nation to independence against the Japanese and the French, the men who sought membership in the French Commonwealth and were betrayed by the

weakness of Paris and the willfulness of the colonial armies. It was they who led a second struggle against French domination at tremendous costs, and then were persuaded to give up the land they controlled between the thirteenth and seventeenth parallel as a temporary measure at Geneva. After 1954 they watched us conspire with Diem to prevent elections which could have surely brought Ho Chi Minh to power over a unified Vietnam, and they realized they had been betrayed again. When we ask why they do not leap to negotiate, these things must be considered.

Also, it must be clear that the leaders of Hanoi considered the presence of American troops in support of the Diem regime to have been the initial military breach of the Geneva Agreement concerning foreign troops. They remind us that they did not begin to send troops in large numbers and even supplies into the South until American forces had moved into the tens of thousands.

Hanoi remembers how our leaders refused to tell us the truth about the earlier North Vietnamese overtures for peace, how the president claimed that none existed when they had clearly been made. Ho Chi Minh has watched as America has spoken of peace and built up its forces, and now he has surely heard the increasing international rumors of American plans for an invasion of the north. He knows the bombing and shelling and mining we are doing are part of traditional pre-invasion strategy. Perhaps only his sense of humor and of irony can save him when he hears the most powerful nation of the world speaking of aggression as it drops thousands of bombs on a poor, weak nation more than eight hundred, or rather, eight thousand miles away from its shores.

At this point I should make it clear that while I have tried to give a voice to the voiceless in Vietnam and to understand the arguments of those who are called "enemy," I am as deeply concerned about our own troops there as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting them to in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where armies face each other and seek to destroy.

We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved. Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy, and the secure, while we create a hell for the poor.

Surely this madness must cease. We must stop now. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam. I speak for

those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroyed, whose culture is being subverted. I speak for the poor in America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home, and death and corruption in Vietnam. I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as one who loves America, to the leaders of our own nation: The great initiative in this war is ours; the initiative to stop it must be ours.

This is the message of the great Buddhist leaders of Vietnam. Recently one of them wrote these words, and I quote:

Each day the war goes on the hatred increased in the hearts of the Vietnamese and in the hearts of those of humanitarian instinct. The



Top: Mobilization to End the Vietnam War, 1967, New York City.
Bottom: Harlem Peace March to End Racial Oppression, 1967.

Americans are forcing even their friends into becoming their enemies. It is curious that the Americans, who calculate so carefully on the possibilities of military victory, do not realize that in the process they are incurring deep psychological and political defeat. The image of America will never again be the image of revolution, freedom, and democracy, but the image of violence and militarism.

Unquote.

If we continue, there will be no doubt in my mind and in the mind of the world that we

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have no honorable intentions in Vietnam. If we do not stop our war against the people of Vietnam immediately, the world will be left with no other alternative than to see this as some horrible, clumsy, and deadly game we have decided to play. The world now demands a maturity of America that we may not be able to achieve. It demands that we admit we have been wrong from the beginning of our adventure in Vietnam, that we have been detrimental to the life of the Vietnamese people. The situation is one in which we must be ready to turn sharply from our present ways. In order to atone for our sins and errors in Vietnam, we should take the initiative in bringing a halt to this tragic war.

I would like to suggest five concrete things that our government should do to begin the long and difficult process of extricating ourselves from this nightmarish conflict:

Number one: End all bombing in North and South Vietnam.

Number two: Declare a unilateral cease-fire in the hope that such action will create the atmosphere for negotiation.

Three: Take immediate steps to prevent other battlegrounds in Southeast Asia by curtailing our military buildup in Thailand and our interference in Laos.

Four: Realistically accept the fact that the National Liberation Front has substantial support in South Vietnam and must thereby play a role in any meaningful negotiations and any future Vietnam government.

Five: Set a date that we will remove all foreign troops from Vietnam in accordance with the 1954 Geneva Agreement. *[sustained applause]*

Part of our ongoing *[applause continues]*, part of our ongoing commitment might well express itself in an offer to grant asylum to

any Vietnamese who fears for his life under a new regime which included the Liberation Front. Then we must make what reparations we can for the damage we have done. We must provide the medical aid that is badly needed, making it available in this country if necessary. Meanwhile *[applause]*, meanwhile, we in the churches and synagogues have a continuing task while we urge our government to disengage itself from a disgraceful commitment. We must continue to raise our voices and our lives if our nation persists in its perverse ways in Vietnam. We must be

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prepared to match actions with words by seeking out every creative method of protest possible.

As we counsel young men concerning military service, we must clarify for them our nation's role in Vietnam and challenge them with the alternative of conscientious objection. [sustained applause] I am pleased to say that this is a path now chosen by more than seventy students at my own alma mater, Morehouse College, and I recommend it to all who find the American course in Vietnam a dishonorable and unjust one. [applause] Moreover, I would encourage all ministers of draft age to give up their ministerial exemptions and seek status as conscientious objectors. [applause] These are the times for real choices and not false ones. We are at the moment when our lives must be placed on the line if our nation is to survive its own folly. Every man of humane convictions must decide on the protest that best suits his convictions, but we must all protest.

Now there is something seductively tempting about stopping there and sending us all off on what in some circles has become a popular crusade against the war in Vietnam. I say we must enter that struggle, but I wish to go on now to say something even more disturbing.

The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit, and if we ignore this sobering reality [applause], and if we ignore this sobering reality, we will find ourselves organizing "clergy and laymen concerned" committees for the next generation. They will be concerned about Guatemala and Peru. They will be concerned about Thailand and Cambodia. They will be concerned about Mozambique and South Africa. We will be marching for these and a dozen other names and attending rallies without end unless there is a significant and profound change in American life and policy. [sustained applause] So such thoughts take us beyond Vietnam, but not beyond our calling as sons of the living God.

In 1957 a sensitive American official overseas said that it seemed to him that our nation was on the wrong side of a world revolution. During the past ten years we have seen emerge a pattern of suppression which has now justified the presence of U.S. military advisors in Venezuela. This need to maintain social stability for our investments accounts for the counterrevolutionary action of American forces in Guatemala. It tells why American helicopters are being used against guerrillas in Cambodia and why American napalm and Green Beret forces have already been active

against rebels in Peru.

It is with such activity that the words of the late John F. Kennedy come back to haunt us. Five years ago he said, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." [applause] Increasingly, by choice or by accident, this is the role our nation has taken, the role of those who make peaceful revolution impossible by refusing to give up the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investments. I am convinced that if we are to get on to the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin [applause], we must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. On the one hand we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see than an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. [applause]

A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa, and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say, "This is not just." It will look at our alliance with the landed gentry of South America and say, "This is not just." The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just.

A true revolution of values will lay hand on the world order and say of war, "This way of settling differences is not just." This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous

drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death. [sustained applause]

America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to prevent us from reordering our priorities so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war. There is nothing to keep us from molding a recalcitrant status quo with bruised hands until we have fashioned it into a brotherhood.

This kind of positive revolution of values is our best defense against communism. [applause] War is not the answer. Communism will never be defeated by the use of atomic bombs or nuclear weapons. Let us not join those who shout war and, through their misguided passions, urge the United States to relinquish its participation in the United Nations. These are days which demand wise restraint and calm reasonableness. We must not engage in a negative anticommunism, but rather in a positive thrust for democracy [applause],



Top: U.S. Army helicopters in Vietnam, 1965.

Middle: Vietnam Veterans Against the War protest, 1972 in New York City.

Bottom: Vietnam Veterans Against the War march, 1971.

realizing that our greatest defense against communism is to take offensive action in behalf of justice. We must with positive action seek to remove those conditions of poverty, insecurity, and injustice, which are the fertile soil in which the seed of communism grows and develops.

These are revolutionary times. All over the globe men are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression, and out of the wounds of a frail world, new systems of justice and equality are being born. The shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up as never before. The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. We in the West must support these revolutions.

It is a sad fact that because of comfort, complacency, a morbid fear of communism, and our proneness to adjust to injustice, the Western nations that initiated so much of the revolutionary spirit of the modern world have now become the arch antirevolutionaries. This has driven many to feel that only Marxism has a revolutionary spirit. Therefore, communism is a judgment against our failure to make democracy real and follow through on the revolutions that we initiated. Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo and unjust mores, and thereby speed the day when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low [*Audience:*] (Yes); the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."

A genuine revolution of values means in the final analysis that our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies.

This call for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation is in reality a call for an all-embracing and unconditional love for all mankind. This oft misunderstood, this oft misinterpreted concept, so readily dismissed by the Nietzsches of the world as a weak and cowardly force, has now become an absolute necessity for the survival of man. When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I'm not speaking of that force which is just emotional bosh. I am speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality. This Hindu-Muslim-Christian-Jewish-Buddhist belief about ultimate reality is beautifully summed up in the first epistle of Saint John: "Let us love one another (*Yes*), for love is God. (*Yes*) And every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God,

for God is love. . . . If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us." Let us hope that this spirit will become the order of the day.

We can no longer afford to worship the god of hate or bow before the altar of retaliation. The oceans of history are made turbulent by the ever-rising tides of hate. History is cluttered with the wreckage of nations and individuals that pursued this self-defeating path of hate. As Arnold Toynbee says: "Love is the ultimate force that makes for the saving choice of life and good against the damning choice of death and evil. Therefore the first hope in our inventory must be the hope that love is going to have the last word." Unquote.

We are now faced with the fact, my friends, that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. Life often leaves us standing bare, naked, and dejected with a lost opportunity. The tide in the affairs of men does not remain at flood—it ebbs. We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is adamant to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words, "Too late." There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. Omar Khayyam is right: "The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on."

We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent coannihilation. We must move past indecision to action. We must find new ways to speak for peace in Vietnam and justice throughout the developing world, a world that borders on our doors. If we do not act, we shall surely be dragged down the long, dark, and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight.

Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter, but beautiful, struggle for a new world. This is the calling of the sons of God, and our brothers wait eagerly for our response. Shall we say the odds are too great? Shall we tell them the struggle is too hard? Will our message be that the forces of

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American life militate against their arrival as full men, and we send our deepest regrets? Or will there be another message—of longing, of hope, of solidarity with their yearnings, of commitment to their cause, whatever the cost? The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise, we must choose in this crucial moment of human history.

As that noble bard of yesterday, James Russell Lowell, eloquently stated:

*Once to every man and nation comes a moment
do decide,
In the strife of truth and falsehood, for the good
or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah offering
each the bloom or blight,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that
darkness and that light.
Though the cause of evil prosper, yet 'tis truth
alone is strong
Though her portions be the scaffold, and upon the
throne be wrong
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the
dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch
above his own.*

And if we will only make the right choice, we will be able to transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of peace. If we will make the right choice, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our world into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. [*sustained applause*]

King says "1954," but most likely means 1964, the year he received the Nobel Peace Prize.



March in Oakland, California on MLK Jr. Day, January 18, 2016.

By Ignacio Ramonet

Maduro has confirmed - with his twelve brilliant victories of 2017- that he continues to be "indestructible."

To begin with, we must remember that President Nicolás Maduro is the most unjustly harassed, slandered and assaulted president in the history of Venezuela. Even more than Hugo Chávez himself, founder of the Bolivarian Revolution ... Ousting Nicolás Maduro from the Miraflores palace by whatever means has been and is the unhealthy goal of the internal reactionary opposition and its powerful international allies, especially the government of the States United of America.

The 12 Victories of Venezuelan President Maduro in 2017



As soon as 2017 began, the attacks against the President started immediately. The first aggression came from the National Assembly, controlled by counterrevolutionary forces, who decided on Jan. 9 to "disavow" the President and accused Nicolás Maduro of having "abandoned his position" - something false and absurd.

Faced with this attempt at a constitutional coup d'état -inspired by the parliamentary coup model that overthrew Dilma Rousseff in Brazil in 2016 - the Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ) intervened to point out that, under the Constitution, the National Assembly cannot dismiss the head of state, directly elected by the people.

For his part, the President responded to that coup attempt by organizing a massive civic-military exercise called "Zamora 200 integral anti-imperialist action" on Jan. 14. Some 600,000 were mobilized including military, militiamen and militants of social movements, and in doing so gave an impressive demonstra-

tion of the unity between the armed forces, the government, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) and the popular masses. That was the first victory of 2017.

Encouraged by the election in the United States of Donald Trump - candidate of the right-wing who took office in Washington on Jan. 20, the Venezuelan opposition tried to intimidate the Maduro government with a large march in Caracas on Jan. 23, the date of the fall of the dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez in 1958. But here they failed pathetically. This was because, among other reasons, President Maduro had responded by organizing on the same day the transfer of the remains of Fabricio Ojeda, revolutionary leader during the overthrow of Pérez Jiménez, to the National Pantheon. At the

call of the president, hundreds of thousands of Caracas residents flocked to fill the avenues of the capital. And it was possible to clearly see how popular Chavismo dominates the streets, while the opposition exhibited its divisions and squalor. That was President Maduro's second victory.

Shortly after the Supreme Court intervened to emphasize that the National Assembly was in a situation of "contempt" since 2016. As should be recalled, in the legislative elections of Dec. 6, 2015, there were allegations of fraud in Amazonas state. The claims were backed up by recordings in which the secretary of the state government offered sums of money to groups of voters to vote for opposition candidates. Consequently, the TSJ suspended the election of those legislators. But the National Assembly persisted in swearing them in, because the addition of these three additional members of the assembly would have given the opposition an absolute majority (two thirds of the lawmakers) and the power to repeal organic laws and to limit the action of

the President himself ...

Tensions between a Parliament and a Supreme Court are relatively frequent in all large democracies. In Europe, for example, when a constitutional conflict arises between branches of government, it is common for the Supreme Court to assume powers of Parliament. And in the United States, even such an esoteric president as Donald Trump has had to abide by recent decisions of the Supreme Court ...

But in Caracas, the counterrevolutionary forces used that debate to relaunch an international campaign on the alleged "absence of democracy in Venezuela." With the complicity of the new U.S. Administration, they mounted a colossal, global media lynching operation against Nicolás Maduro. Mobilizing dominant

media outlets from CNN and Fox News to the BBC in London, along with the major media houses in Latin America and the Caribbean, the most influential global newspapers, pillars of conservative communication hegemony, as well as social media networks.

At the same time, the Venezuelan right wing maneuvered with the intention of international-

izing the internal conflict by transferring it to the Organization of American States (OAS) - "the ministry of the colonies of the United States," according to Che Guevara. Obeying the slogans of the new government of Donald Trump and with the support of several conservative regimes in Latin America, Luis Almagro, secretary general of the OAS, assumed the deplorable role of leading the demand that the application of the Democratic Charter against Venezuela.

But Caracas counterattacked at once and secured the diplomatic solidarity of most of the Latin American and Caribbean States. Despite the dishonest schemes and false arguments of the Secretary General of the OAS, Venezuela was never put in a minority position and won irrefutably. And the enemies of the Bolivarian Revolution, including Washington, were defeated by the solid strategy enacted by President Maduro, based on facts and reality, political honesty and ethics. Finally, in April, Caracas decided to withdraw from the OAS, accusing the organization of "intrusive actions

against the sovereignty of Venezuela.” With imagination and audacity, in this complex international scenario, Nicolas Maduro achieved his third great victory in 2017.

Meanwhile, tensions increased in Caracas when, on March 29, the Constitutional Chamber of the TSJ declared that “as long as the situation of contempt and invalidity of the proceedings of the National Assembly persists, this Constitutional Chamber will ensure that parliamentary powers are exercised directly for this Chamber or for the body that it designates, to ensure the rule of law.” Previously, the TSJ had already pointed out that the parliamentary immunity of the deputies “only covers themselves during the exercise of their functions,” which was not the case when the National Assembly is “in contempt”...

The anti-Chavez opposition cried to the heavens. And with the help, once again, of conservative forces internationally went on to propel a seditious counter-revolutionary plan. The long and tragic “crisis of the guarimbas” began. For four interminable months - from April to July - the counterrevolutionaries launched the most desperate and brutal war offensive against the Bolivarian Government. Funded in dollars by the international right, the anti-Chavez forces - led by Primero Justicia

and Voluntad Popular, two far right-wing organizations - did not hesitate to use paramilitaries, terrorists and mercenaries of organized crime in a deployment of simultaneous irregular tactics, along with elite experts in psychological warfare and “democratic” propaganda. All with the pathological purpose of overthrowing Nicolas Maduro.

Drunk with violence, the rioters rushed to assault Venezuelan democracy. They attacked, burned and destroyed hospitals, health centers, nurseries, schools, high schools, maternity hospitals, food and medicine stores, government offices, hundreds of private businesses, subway stations, buses, public infrastructure, while the barricades multiplied in the bourgeois urbanities they controlled.

The violent groups, throwing Molotov cocktails, were particular in their targeting of security forces. Five officials were shot to death. On the other hand, many ‘guarimberos’ showed terrible savagery by mounting tensed,

fine steel cables on public roads to behead motorcyclists ... Or when, overflowing with hatred and racism, they burned young Chavistas alive - 29 in total, of which nine died. The result: one hundred and twenty-one people killed, thousands injured and millions of dollars lost.

During those four months of counterrevolutionary rapture, the opposition also made calls to attack military bases, and tried to push the armed forces to turn against the legitimate government and to assault the presidential palace. The extreme right, intent on a coup, tried everything to start a civil war, fracture the civic-military union, and destroy Venezuelan democracy.

At the same time, on an international scale, the frantic media campaign continued, presenting those who burned hospitals, murdered innocents, destroyed schools and burned people alive as “heroes of freedom.” It



Supporters of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro outside a polling station during regional elections, Oct 15, 2017.

was the world in reverse - the world of ‘post-truths’ and ‘alternative facts’ ...

It was not easy to resist so much terror, so much aggression, and restore public order with a vision of democratic authority, proportionality and respect for human rights. The constitutional and legitimate President Nicolas Maduro got it, and he achieved what seemed impossible: an exit from the labyrinth of violence. He did so with a great idea that nobody expected but upset and disconcerted the opposition: a return to the original constituent power.

The pretext of ‘guarimbero’ terrorism was, in effect, the disagreement between two legitimate bodies: that of the Supreme Court of Justice and that of the National Assembly. Neither institution wanted to allow its arm to be twisted. How to get out of the impasse? Based on articles 347, 348 and 349 of the Chavez Constitution of 1999, and using his position as Head of State and maximum

arbitrator, President Maduro decided to reactivate a popular constituent process. It was the only way to find, through political dialogue and words, an agreement with the opposition, to moderate the historical conflict and to devise solutions to the country’s problems. He thought it out well and waited for the right moment. Until, on May 1, all the conditions were met. That day, the President announced that the election of the delegates to the Constituent Assembly would take place on July 30. It was the only option for peace.

But, again, confirming their desperate political blunder, the opposition rejected the outstretched hand. Amid cheers from the world press, as part of the brutal and inclement campaign against the Bolivarian Revolution, opposition parties agreed not to participate, and instead devoted themselves to sabotaging the elections, to prevent the exercise of suffrage, to barricade, to burn polls and threaten those who wished to exercise their right to choose.

They failed. They were unable to prevent the massive showing from people who wanted to bet on democracy and against violence and terror. More than eight and a half million citizens went to vote, overcoming all kinds of obstacles, facing paramilitaries and ‘guarimberos,’ crossing blocked streets, crossing streams and rivers. Doing the impossible to fulfill your civic, political, ethical, moral duty ... overcoming threats inside

and outside.

Few expected such a high degree of popular mobilization, the turnout of voters and the resounding electoral success. The next day, as the President had predicted, the ‘guarimbas’ dispersed. The violence was fading. Peace reigned again. With subtlety, patience, courage and determination, and a fine strategic intelligence, President Maduro managed in this way to defeat the ‘guarimbas’ and abort the evident coup attempt. He stood firmly against the threats, and he did so without altering the basis of his policies. This was his most spectacular victory of 2017.

“The arrival of the Constituent Assembly,” said Nicolas Maduro, “meant, without a doubt, the arrival of a climate of peace that allowed the political offensive of the Bolivarian Revolution.” And that offensive led to what many believed impossible: two other sensational and resounding electoral victories. That of the

continued on page 26

12 Victorias del Presidente Maduro en 2017

Por: IGNACIO RAMONET



1

Frente al intento de golpe parlamentario:
Ejercicios de acción Integral Antiimperialista Zamora 200. Unidad FANB, Gobierno, PSUV y Pueblo



2

Frente a la "Gran Marcha" convocada por la oposición:
Se trasladaron los restos de Fabricio Ojeda al Panteón Nacional acompañado de miles de caraqueños



3

Frente al intento de aplicar la Carta Democrática en el país:
Se consiguió la solidaridad diplomática de la mayoría de los Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños.



4

Frente a las guarimbas:
Convocatoria, elección masiva e instalación de la ANC



5

La victoria del 15 de octubre con la conquista de 18 gobernaciones y posteriormente la del Zulia



6

La victoria de las elecciones municipales del 10 de diciembre con la obtención de 308 alcaldías de 335. (93% de los municipios del país)



7

Frente a la intención de que Venezuela quedara en Default y aislada financieramente:
Se creó la comisión para consolidar el refinanciamiento y la reestructuración de deuda externa



8

Frente al bloqueo para adquirir medicamentos:
Se anunció la llegada urgente al país de importantes cargamentos de insulina procedente de la India



9

Frente al bloqueo financiero:
Se anunció la creación del Petro



10

Todos los avances sociales logrados gracias al Carnet de la Patria, Somos Venezuela, Plan Chamba Juvenil y los CLAP



11

Gran Ofensiva contra la Corrupción



12

Sentar a la oposición en la mesa de diálogo



Nicolás Maduro
PRESIDENTE



/NicolasMaduro



Nicolas Maduro Moros



@NicolasMaduro



@NicolasMaduro

2018 MARKS THE BEGINNING OF THE 60TH YEAR OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

VCSC HOSTS SUCCESSFUL 13TH ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

By Tamara Hansen

On December 31, 2017 the doors to the Heritage Hall in New Westminster, BC, Canada opened at 8pm for the 13th annual New Year's Eve Party celebrating 59 years of the Cuban revolution! Over 200 people of all ages and backgrounds came through the doors to enjoy an evening of delicious food and drinks, inspiring live music, dynamic speakers, great decorations, a photobooth, Cuban raffle prizes, 2 DJs, a free salsa dance lesson, and lots and lots of dancing!

The evening began with host, Tamara Hansen, the coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC), welcoming everyone and inviting shisháhl elder Eagle Eyes up to speak and acknowledge the unceded territory of the Qay'qayt nation and Coast Salish peoples. Eagle Eyes also spoke about the special significance of January 2018 as a month with two super moons, which are a good omen in his culture. Tamara then explained to the audience why VCSC was organizing its 13th annual New Year's Eve Party in celebration of the Cuban revolution by explaining how 2018 marks the beginning of the 60th year of the Cuban revolution, which has made incredible achievements for the Cuban people and

inspired millions of people around the world to struggle for a better world. 2018 will also mark the final year that Raul Castro is president of Cuba, as he will be stepping down in April 2018, after the Cuban people complete this current round of elections. It is a time of big changes in Cuba, but also a time of continued commitment to fight to guard the socialist gains of the Cuban revolution: from healthcare, to education, to culture, to internationalism and beyond.

Tamara then invited up the first musical guests, Beto and Terrel, who performed beautiful guitar and flute music, which set a warm mood for the event. Tamara then introduced Janine Solanki, an organizer with VCSC, who spoke and shared photos from her trip to Cuba with the 2017 Ernesto Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade, inviting everyone to participate in the excellent 2018 program. She was followed by Maria Melendez and Pablo Mairena who got the audience singing along with some of their Latin-American social justice guitar classics. Then Alison Bodine, coordinator of the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, was invited up to give a special announcement about the ongoing threats by the governments of the U.S. and Canada against the sovereign people and government of Venezuela, led by President Nicolas Maduro. She invited everyone to sign the parliamentary petition demanding "Canada Hands off Venezuela" (for more information, please see page XXX). Tamara then introduced Honduran singer and songwriter, MX Katracho. He sang soulful celebrational songs, to get everyone in the mood for a party! Soon it was time for the salsa lesson with Janine and Nick, who brought dozens of people to the dance floor to refresh their salsa moves. As the lesson finished, everyone was called to the dance floor by the jams of DJ Carlitos Tunes Tunes and DJ 100Fuegos.

As the saying goes, 'time flies when you are having fun' and suddenly it was nearly midnight, and 2018 was upon us! VCSC organizers distributed noisemakers and glow sticks, with everyone joining together on the dance floor. The countdown began: 10... 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1... HAPPY NEW YEAR! As people hugged, kissed, and welcomed the New Year, they also shouted "VIVA CUBA!"

DJs Carlitos Tunes Tunes and 100Fuegos kept the evening going well after midnight, as people danced, chatted, drank, ate, and enjoyed themselves. Before long it was time for the raffle draw, when four lucky winners took home some awesome prizes, including: Cuban t-shirts, books, and Havana Club rum. As the final songs wrapped up the evening, friends and families left with smiles on their faces, looking forward to a great new year of solidarity and friendship!



DJ Carlitos Tunes Tunes & DJ 100fuegos keep the crowd dancing all night!



Balloon drop at midnight, Happy New Year!

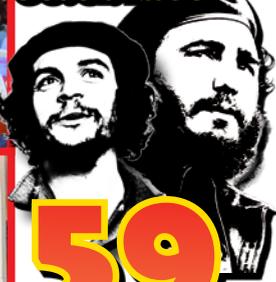


Andrew, Mike & RJ enjoying the party!



Which delicious food & drink to choose?

Celebrate



59
years of
**THE CUBAN
REVOLUTION**

Follow Tamara on Twitter: @THans01

continued from page 23

regional elections on Oct. 15, where 19 of 23 governors were won by Chavismo including Miranda and Lara, two states whose social policy was almost made extinct in the hands of the opposition. And later a triumph in Zulia, a strategic state with great demographic importance and where important deposits of oil and gas are located.

Likewise, the Bolivarian Revolution won the municipal elections of Dec. 10, obtaining of 308 of 335 mayoral offices, that is, 93 percent of the municipalities. Chavismo won 22 (out of 24) capital cities, including Caracas. Meanwhile the counterrevolution confirmed their unpopularity with a sharp decline of their voters, losing more than 2,100,000 votes.

Showing the vitality of its democratic system to the world, Venezuela was the only country that organized three major national elections in 2017 - all three won by Chavismo. While the right, demoralized by so many successive disasters, was atomized, disunited, groggy. Their leaders challenged, followers stunned. They nonetheless retained the support of their international protectors, in particular the most aggressive of them: the new president of the United States, Donald Trump.

Throughout 2017 - building from the executive order signed by Barack Obama on March 8, 2015, in which Venezuela was declared an "unusual and extraordinary threat to U.S. security" - Donald Trump issued a list of sanctions against the Bolivarian Revolution.

In particular, on August 11, he threatened military action. Speaking to reporters at his New Jersey golf course, Trump said: "We have many options for Venezuela, including a possible military option, if necessary." Then, on August 25, Trump prohibited that "any person, entity, company or association, legally domiciled or engaged in activities in the United States, may conduct business with new debt bonds that are issued by any instance of the Venezuelan Government, namely, bonds of the Republic issued by the Venezuelan Central Bank or the state company PDVSA."

These sanctions look to push Venezuela into default (default on its external debt) because they close the state and PDVSA from accessing financial markets associated with the United States by preventing them from offering bonds there, and subsequently from being able to obtain foreign currency.

Already Lawrence Eagleburger, former Secretary of State under President George W. Bush, had openly acknowledged in an interview with Fox News, that the economic war against Venezuela had been effectively designed in Washington. "We must use economic tools," said the former -Secretary of State, "to worsen the Venezuelan economy, in such a way that the influence of Chavismo in the country and in the region gets buried (...) All we can do to

sink the Venezuelan economy into a difficult situation, is well done." The current Secretary of the Treasury, Steven Mnuchin, officially confirmed that the new sanctions aimed to "strangle Venezuela."

Faced with such insolent aggressions, Nicolas Maduro declared that default "will never come." First, because Venezuela is the South American country that has paid more of its debt than any other nation. In the last four years, Caracas paid off nearly US\$74 billion ... because the Bolivarian government "will always have a clear strategy" aimed at the renegotiation and restructuring of the external debt. The president denounced that what Chavismo's enemies desire is the financial isolation of the Bolivarian Revolution until it has no possibilities to obtain credit. To drown it little by little. They want to generate fear in private investors, so they do not buy bonds, do not participate in the renegotiation of the debt and therefore, investment is no more.

Nicolas Maduro explained that beyond a blockade, what Venezuela faces is an authentic "persecution" in which countries like Canada and those of the European Union also participate. Active persecution of trade, bank accounts and financial movements.

But the president knew how to avoid those attacks, and he surprised, once again, his adversaries when he announced on Nov. 3 the creation of a Commission to consolidate the refinancing and the restructuring of the external debt, with the purpose of overcoming financial aggressions. "We are going to make a complete reformatting of external payments to achieve balance," he said. "We are going to break international schemes." " So it was. A few days later, in defiance of the financial blockade, and as part of the first approach to

the renegotiation and restructuring proposed by the President, a group of Venezuelan debt holders from the United States, Panama, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Japan and Germany arrived in Caracas to meet with the Bolivarian Government, which was an undeniable victory for President Maduro.

Here it is worth pointing out that the fourth-generation warfare declared upon the Bolivarian Revolution has several fronts and includes, simultaneously and continuously, four fronts: 1) an insurrectional war designed by experts in subversion, sabotage and mass psychology, with the use of mercenaries, cyclical explosion of criminal 'guarimbas' and terrorist attacks against barracks, military targets and infrastructures (electricity network, refineries, water distribution, etc.); 2) a media war, with the press, radio, television and social networks converted into new armies of conquest through the planned use of propaganda aimed at taming minds and seducing hearts; 3) a diplomatic war with harassment in some international forums, particularly in the OAS, and attacks by the countries of the so-called "Lima group" to which the United States, Canada and the European Union are regularly added; and 4) an economic and financial war with hoarding and shortages of food and medicines, manipulation of the exchange rate of the currency, induced inflation, banking blockade and distortion of the country's debt risk.

With regard to country risk, it should not be forgotten that, in the last four years, as already stated, Caracas honored all its debt payment commitments, without exception, for more than US\$74 billion, which should have drastically reduced the country risk. Well, there is

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro with newly elected governors at Miraflores Palace in Caracas, Venezuela, October 17, 2017. The placard reads "Popular victory, 54%, We are joy, We are majority"



no risk in lending to Venezuela as it religiously pays all its debts. However, the country risk has continued to increase. Currently, according to the JP Morgan bank, its country risk is 4,820 points, that is, thirty-eight times higher than that of Chile, which has the same debt/GDP ratio as Venezuela. So, Caracas is being made to pay high cost for having democratically chosen a socialist political system.

As for the banking blockade, throughout 2017, and particularly after the sanctions of Donald Trump, the unilateral cancellations of contracts multiplied. In July, for example, the payment agent Delaware reported that its correspondent bank, the PNC Bank of the United States, refused to receive funds from PDVSA. In August, Novo Banco de Portugal notified Caracas of the impossibility of carrying out operations in dollars due to the blockade of the U.S. intermediary banks. Later, the Bank of China Frankfurt, a Caracas ally, could not pay US\$15 million owed by Venezuela to the Canadian mining company Gold Reserve. In November, more than US\$39 million - a payment of 23 purchase operations of food destined to the Christmas holidays - were returned to Caracas because the intermediary banks of the suppliers did not accept money from Venezuela.

On the other hand, in early September, it was learned that the financial company Euroclear, a subsidiary of the U.S. bank JP Morgan, blocked a payment of US\$1.2 billion made by the Bolivarian government to buy medicines and food. This prevented the acquisition of 300,000 doses of insulin. At the same time, a Colombian laboratory, belonging to the Swedish group BSN Medical, refused to accept the payment by Venezuela of a shipment of primaquine, medicine for the treatment of malaria.

The objective of all these blockades is to prevent the Bolivarian Government from using its resources to acquire the food and medicines that the population needs. All with the intention of pushing the people to protest and to generate chaos in the health system, endangering the lives of thousands of patients.

In this case, thanks to his international relations, in November the President ensured the urgent arrival of important shipments of insulin from India. Hundreds of patients, at risk of death, were saved. Which, without a doubt, constituted a new victory for Nicolas Maduro.

To break the financial blockade, the President announced another initiative in November: the creation of a digital currency, the Petro. That announcement aroused a lot of enthusiasm in the cryptocurrency investor community, placed Venezuela at the forefront of technology and global finance, and gener-

ated enormous expectations. Even more so as the price of the Petro would not be subject to the whims and speculation of the markets, but would be associated with the international value of real assets such as gold, gas, diamond and oil. Venezuela thus took an enormous step to possess a revolutionary financing mechanism that no foreign power can impose sanctions on, or boycott the arrival of capital. In that sense, the Petro is a clear victory for President Maduro.

It should be added that in the midst of all these battles, despite the overall breakdown of model oil dependence, the President was particularly concerned that Bolivarian socialism would not be detained and that no one was missing school, work, shelter, care doctors, income, food. The revolutionary government did not stop financing fundamental public works, nor did they stop building housing. In 2017, more than 570,000 homes were delivered. The Barrio Adentro Mission and all the Social Missions were maintained. The Plan

Maduro launched new social initiatives. The most spectacular was the Carnet de la Patria, a new identification document that uses QR codes to identify the socioeconomic status of citizens and through this provide favorable access to the socialist missions for families in need. At the end of December 2017, a total of 16.5 million citizens had registered for the Carnet de la Patria.

The President also promoted the creation of the 'Somos Venezuela' movement in order to speed up the process of allocating social aid. The 200,000 volunteers of 'Somos Venezuela' have as their task the identification, house by house, of the needs of the registered families. They then allocate aid to families according to the real needs. Another of the important objectives of the 'Somos Venezuela' movement is to guarantee 100 percent of pensioners throughout the country, as Nicolas Maduro promised.

The President also proposed the 'Youth Gig' plan aimed at young people aged between 15 and 35 years old, with a view to incorporating them into employment fields aimed at satisfying human needs identified through the Carnet de la Patria areas, and framed in the 'Somos Venezuela' movement. The plan is aimed, in particular, at unemployed university students, out-of-school youth, single mothers with family responsibilities, and young people living on the street. It is estimated that this new plan will generate some 800,000 jobs.

All these social advances constituted, without any doubt, some of the most prized victories of President Maduro in 2017. We could also mention the successes obtained in the field of foreign policy, in particular the extraordinary international tour of the President in October, through Belarus, Algeria, Russia and Turkey, which led to the successful signing of important bilateral agreements aimed at

winning the battle against economic warfare. Or the incessant negotiations maintained by the President with the oil producing countries (OPEC and non-OPEC) that permitted a spectacular increase in barrel prices by more than 23 percent in 2017!

We could also mention the great offensive against corruption that finally began in November with the announcement of several dozens of spectacular arrests among the top management and executives of PdVSA and Citgo, including front-line leaders. Nothing similar had happened in a hundred years of Venezuelan oil industry. This was undoubtedly the most commented on victory of President Maduro at the end of 2017.



**A popular logo shared on social media
Venezuelans do not want sanctions! Yes to elections!**

Siembra planting program was consolidated. The Sovereign Supply Mission extended. The Sovereign Field fairs multiplied. In the middle of so many storms, President Maduro achieved the social miracle of saving the country. The counterrevolution could not stop the advance of socialism.

In that regard, the Local Committees of Supply and Production (CLAP), centralized direct distribution model continued to evolve throughout the country and reach four million Venezuelans from popular sectors who are being protected from the shortages caused by the economic war.

In addition, throughout 2017 President

To conclude, it is necessary to point out again that the destruction of the image of Nicolas Maduro is the main purpose of the world propaganda campaign directed by large media corporations. Without forgetting the permanent digital war in the internet through multiple platforms on the web, and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, etc. All these weapons of mass manipulation try to degrade the figure of the President and manipulate the Venezuelan reality, invisibilize the level of real support of broad sectors of the population towards the president, and hide the violence of the opposition. The objective is political: to defeat Bolivarian Venezuela, a key player in the global system, not only because of its considerable wealth but, above all, because of its revolutionary social model. And obviously because of its geopolitical importance as an anti-imperialist power of regional influence.

So far, all those plans to ruin Nicolas Maduro have failed. As he himself said: "Imperialism has not been able to suffocate us, nor can it be against the Bolivarian Revolution in any of the fields that seek us." On the contrary, the President has been strengthened in 2017.

This has allowed him to resume the strategic initiative for the pacification of the country. Concerned about defending the great national interests, and adhering to the principles of honesty and humility, Nicolas Maduro has proposed sitting down with the opposition at the negotiating table and resuming dialogue on the basis of respect and mutual recognition. This time in the neutral scenario of Santo Domingo, with the idea of restoring a permanent national negotiation as a democratic method to defend the best interests of the nation and to regulate the conflict that naturally arises from political differences in the midst of a revolution. Such progress towards peace has been perhaps the President's most appreciated victory.

In this heroic year of brutal attacks and infinite aggressions, Chavismo has demonstrated its strength and ability to excel. And it has managed to expand its base of support, increasing the political and social forces in favor of the revolution. There it stands, more solid than ever. Which means a relief and a hope for all of Latin America. Despite his enemies, President Nicolas Maduro has confirmed - with his twelve brilliant victories of 2017 - that he continues to be, as his followers say, "indestructible."

Ignacio Ramonet is a Spanish journalist, author, and intellectual. He was editor-in-chief of renowned newspaper, Le Monde Diplomatique from 1991 until 2008. He is the author of the acclaimed books "Cien horas con Fidel" (100 hundred hours with Fidel) and "Hugo Chavez, Mi Primera Vida" (Hugo Chavez My First Life).

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Vancouver Activists Picket at U.S. Consulate & Petitioning Government of Canada: "HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!"

By Janine Solanki

Over the last 19 years, the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela has been building a society where the needs of the Venezuelan people are the number one priority. This has transformed a country where in 1998, 50% of Venezuelans lived in poverty, to one that by 2012 the United Nations Agency for Human Settlements reported as having the highest wealth equality in Latin America. This and many other improvements for the lives of Venezuelans came after social programs were introduced under the Chavez government and continued with President Nicolas Maduro, and with the efforts of the Venezuelan people who are organized and engaged in moving the Bolivarian Revolution forward.

However the U.S. and their allies, including Canada, are trying to turn back the great progress Venezuela has made with sanctions, military threats and support for Venezuela's violent and counter-revolutionary opposition which attempts to overthrow Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

The government of Canada has been ramping up its aggressive rhetoric and actions against Venezuela. In 2017, Canada imposed two sets of sanctions against Venezuela. Then on December 25, 2017, Chrystia Freeland, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Canada expelled the Venezuelan Ambassador to Canada, Wilmer Barrientos Fernandez and the chargé d'affaires at the Venezuelan Embassy in Canada, Angel Herrera. This unjustified, unjust and provocative move escalates Canada's actions against the democratically elected government of Venezuela. With extreme hypocrisy, the government of Canada admits to using its own embassy in Venezuela to fund and promote anti-government organizing, despite repeated official warnings. This led to the earlier expulsion of Canada's chargé d'affaires.

Here in Vancouver, the Fire This Time Venezuela (FTT) Solidarity Campaign brings together peace and justice loving people to demand that Canada and the U.S. end their sanctions and threats against Venezuela, and respect Venezuela's self-determination and sovereignty.



On Friday January 12 the FTT Venezuela Solidarity Campaign held its monthly action starting out with a picket action outside of the U.S. consulate. Despite a heavy downpour, protesters gathered to hear from speakers on the situation in Venezuela and held up picket signs reading "U.S. Hands Off Venezuela!" and "No Regime Change in Venezuela!". In between speakers, the protesters raised their voices in energetic chanting and marched in front of the U.S. consulate. Protesters then moved to the busy downtown Vancouver plaza at the Vancouver Art Gallery, for an info display and petition drive. Activists gave out information on the situation in Venezuela, and collected petition signatures on an important new parliamentary petition against Canada's sanctions on Venezuela. The petition is being circulated across Canada and after it collects over 500 signatures will be discussed in Canada's House of Commons. You can sign the petition at <https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Sign/e-1353>

The action wrapped up with a traditional closing song and drumming by Eagle Eyes, an Indigenous elder and activist from the Sechelt nation, recognizing that action was taking place on the traditional and unceded territories of the Tsleil-Waututh (səlilwətaʔɬ), the Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm), and the Squamish (Skwx-wú7mesh) Coast Salish Nations.

The FTT Venezuela Solidarity Campaign will continue these protests every month, demanding that the government of Canada and the U.S. respect the sovereignty and self-determination of Venezuela, and stop its sanctions and threats. To join these actions and to get more information visit www.firethistime.net and follow on Facebook or Twitter @FTT_np.

U.S./Canada Hands off Venezuela!

Follow Janine on Twitter: @janinesolanki

Blockade of Cuba: Criminal, Immoral & Illegal HEY TRUMP! END THE BLOCKADE ON CUBA!

By Janine Solanki

On January 17th 2018, Cuba solidarity activists and supporters came together for the first picket action of the year demanding that the US end its cruel blockade on Cuba, and return Guantanamo back to Cuba. Looking forward to 2018, will this be the year to end the blockade on Cuba?

Back on December 17th 2014, many believed the end of the US blockade was near, after the historic announcements by former US President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro that the US and Cuba would be normalizing diplomatic relations. Shortly after this announcement, Cuba solidarity activists in Vancouver realized that this called for a time of heightened protest and public pressure on the US to end the blockade. Three years later, Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade – Vancouver (FCAB-Van) is out in front of the US Consulate every month, raising voices and pickets signs to demand that the blockade on Cuba be lifted! With US President Trump now trying to reverse the progress that had been made towards lifting the blockade, it is more important than ever to make demands for an end to the blockade heard.

Over 60 years of the blockade on Cuba has caused

tremendous strain on the Cuban economy, and on the Cuban people. Damages from the blockade total over \$1.3 trillion, and the far-reaching measures of the blockade not only bar Cuba from trading with the US, but also limit Cuba's ability to trade with other countries. This makes everything from medicine to school supplies, computers to construction equipment, and everything in between difficult and expensive to import to Cuba. Despite 60 years of this inhumane policy imposed by the US government, Cuba has not only survived but thrived, with a universal health care system that has a better child mortality rate than the "first world" United States, a renowned education system that sees education up to a PhD free to its citizens, and great advancements in many fields including technology, art, sport, medical research and agriculture. Imagine how much more Cuba could do without the blockade?

The January 17th monthly picket organized by Friends of Cuba Against the Blockade – Vancouver started out, and later closed, with a traditional song and drumming led by Eagle Eyes, an Indigenous elder and activist from the Sechelt nation, which acknowledged that the action was being held on unceded and traditional Indigenous territories. Activists and Cuba supporters picketed in front of the US Consulate, energetically chanting "Trump Hands Off Cuba!" "End the Blockade on Cuba Now!" and "Return Guantanamo to Cuba Now!" Between



rounds of picketing, protesters gathered to hear from speakers including FCAB-Van organizer Alison Bodine, who also was the emcee of the action, Tamara Hansen, who is the coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba. Protesters were reminded that beyond the action here in Vancouver, coordinated actions in Ottawa, Montreal and Kiev, Ukraine also happened on this day at US consulates and embassies, united in the demand to end to the US blockade on Cuba.

The action closed with the resolve to continue the monthly protests until the illegal US blockade on Cuba is lifted, and Guantanamo is returned to Cuba!

MAWO KICKS OFF 2018 DEMANDING AN END TO THE NEW ERA OF WAR & OCCUPATION!

By Janine Solanki

In only the first few weeks, 2018 has already proven to be one of increasing war and occupation. The US government and its allies are leading an aggressive campaign of threats and genocidal sanctions against North Korea. Yemen continues to face the world's worst humanitarian crisis with daily bombing from US-backed Saudi Arabia. Iran is also once again a primary target of US government war-mongering. Yemen today is in the grip of a devastating humanitarian crisis. The World Health Organization (WHO) has labeled the cholera epidemic in Yemen as the worst in the world, which is now at over one million cases. On top of this, Yemen is facing famine, which UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock warns will be "the largest famine the world has seen for many decades, with millions of victims."

On January 27, 2018 Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) gathered activists and peace-loving people together for an antiwar rally and petition drive. MAWO has been organizing these demonstrations every month for over 14 years, campaigning for an end to the new era of war and occupation, which features the United States and its imperialist allies organizing for war, occupation, sanctions, and threats against oppressed nations. Since the beginning of the so-called "war on terror" in September 2001, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Palestine, Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea, Iran and many others have all been targets of American led imperialist campaigns for more war and destruction.

During the January 27 action in downtown Vancouver, activists approached passers-by, inviting them to add their signatures to a petition demanding that Canada end its \$15 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia. The deal is for so-called "light" armored vehicles which in reality are heavily armed military vehicles, similar to ones which Saudi Arabia has used to crush protests in Bahrain and against its own people. MAWO's information table was busy with people stopping to find out more and to open discussions with organizers, attracted by banners setup demanding "US/Saudi Arabia Hands off Yemen!" and "US and Canada Hands off North Korea!" To wrap up the rally MAWO chair Alison Bodine spoke, bringing in more people at the busy



downtown plaza, against the increasing wars and occupations and encouraging people to get involved to organize against these wars and for the self-determination of all oppressed nations!



MAWO was also out on the streets bringing antiwar demands to the January 20 "March On Vancouver" rally and march. The event started last year in protest of US President Trump's actions against women's rights, and on the day after his 2017 inauguration demonstrations were held in cities and towns big and small around the world, bringing out over 4 million people in coordinated protest. This year's action was in the same vein, with huge numbers mobilizing especially in US cities, and thousands in Vancouver. The Vancouver event started out with a rally and speakers at the Jack Poole Plaza, where MAWO had an information table, and then marched through downtown Vancouver, including to pass by the infamous Trump Tower. MAWO activists marched with a banner reading "Women of the World Unite Against War and Occupation!" and called attention to the fact that women are both victims of war, and vital in the struggle against war. The demand was one that resonated with those on the march, and many people stopped to get their photo in front of the banner.

MAWO encourages all peace-loving people join events and actions against this new era of war and occupation. To find out more visit www.mawovancouver.org or follow MAWO on Facebook and Twitter @MAWOVan.

By Max Tennant and
Thomas Davies

With the beginning of the New Year and the start of a new parliamentary session on the immediate horizon, the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 continued its weekly campaign and activities at various transit hubs throughout the Lower Mainland – focusing especially on dispelling some of the myths the Liberal Party will be trying to use to justify the human and democratic rights they plan to violate with their re-worked “Anti-Terrorism Law” Bill C-59.

January saw actions in four major cities in five weeks, three of which were at entirely new locations where many high school & college students, along with workers, learned about Bill C-51 & C-59 for the first time.

The Liberals have tried to sell the human rights infringements in Bill C-59 as reasonable because the Bill includes some increased oversight mechanisms. However, the shadowy Communications Security Establishment (CSE), which is being given broad new powers for surveillance and cyber attack has little public accountability. The CSE has its own “panel of experts” from across the agency that meets “regularly” to discuss



149th Weekly Picket Action to Repeal Bill C-51! & Scrap Bill C-59!
King George Station, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada.

the agencies policies, but refuses to make any of them public. Under Bill C-59 Canada will continue to be worse than even the U.S. in public accountability in this regard.

As Chris Parsons, an academic involved in a 90 page report released by the University of Toronto’s CitizenLab and the Canadian Internet Policy & Public Interest Clinic said, “Unfortunately, there is a vast difference between how the CSE publicly describes its intended use of these powers and [the] ways they could be used (and abused) in the future”.

The Globe and Mail also reported this month that researchers estimate almost 100,000 Canadians have been false-flagged under the government’s error plagued “No Fly List” program. Children as young as three and four years old have been put on this no-fly list because their name resembles someone else’s. The Liberal Government has been unwilling or unable to fix this in its two years of governance. If they are comfortable keeping 100,000 innocent people on a No-Fly list, how are we to trust them to protect our rights with the other powers which Bill C-59 does not change from the Conservatives Bill C-51, and the new ones it also adds.

The answer is straightforward. We cannot. Bill C-51 and now Bill C-59 are answers looking for a problem. Through a mix of fear and Islamophobia, both Harper and now Trudeau have worked towards minimizing our rights and ability to organize in opposition to their austerity policies. The only immediate solution is to Repeal Bill C-51 and Scrap Bill C-59. This month will be the three year anniversary of the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51, and the group is still as committed as ever to defending democratic and human rights through a consistent and dynamic campaign.

Repeal Bill C-51! Scrap Bill C-59!
Trudeau, Respect Our Human Rights!



148th Weekly Picket Action to Repeal Bill C-51! & Scrap Bill C-59!
Metrotown Station, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada.

Follow Max and Thomas on Twitter:
@MaxTennant @thomasd Davies59

NEW PARLIAMENTARY PETITION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SIGN TODAY!

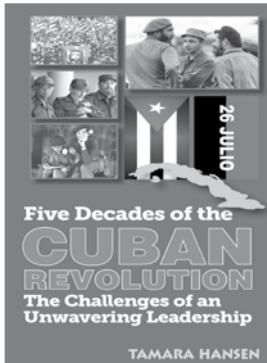
NO TO CANADA'S THREATS & SANCTIONS ON VENEZUELA!

Scan the QR code to sign or visit:
<https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-1353>



Battle of Ideas Press

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



By Tamara Hansen

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 over a dozen times and has written extensively on Cuban politics since 2003.

April 2010, paperback, \$14.00
 314 pages, illustrated,
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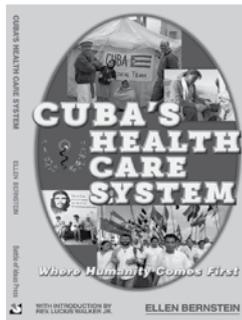
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Ellen Bernstein has served as Associate Director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) since 2003.

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.



September 2010, paperback, 149 pages, illustrated, \$6.00
 ISBN 978-0-9864716-2-9 | Copyright © 2010 by Battle of Ideas Press
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The Newspaper of
FIRE THIS TIME
 MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
www.firethistime.net
 Volume 12 Issue 2
 February 2018
 Published Monthly

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Subscriptions

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

Distribution

For Fire This Time in your area across BC, Canada, and Internationally contact Publicity and Distribution Coordinator *Thomas Davies*
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-ISSN-1712-1817-

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**2. INFO TABLING & PETITION 5:30PM
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