

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



Fire This Time!

YEMEN



Page 2

SPECIAL SECTION FOR CUBA



Meet Cuba's
New President
Page 24

Cuba & Democracy Page 19



VENEZUELA



Page 8

Cuba & World Health
Organization Page 27



CANADA INVOLVES ITSELF IN LIES AGAINST CUBA

Page 29
& 30

KOREA



Page 12

STOP BILL C-51 & 59!

Page 13



NICARAGUA



Page 10

STOP KINDER MORGAN PIPELINE



Page 5

HANDS OFF



SYRIA

Page 11



People of Yemen Resisting U.S./Saudi War & Occupation

By *Azza Rojbi*

On the night of April 22, Yahya Jaafar was surrounded by family, friends, and neighbours as they were celebrating his wedding when a Saudi-led airstrike hit the wedding party. What was supposed to be a memorable night of love and celebration for Yahya and his bride, turned into a disaster. As Yahya described in an interview with RT Ruptly, “The whole world turned red... This bombing caused the complete destruction of buildings and people. Many people died, many were wounded, some lost their hands, some lost their legs.”

Local health sources put the death toll from this horrendous crime by the Saudi-led coalition to between 20-50 people, as some bodies are still believed to be buried under the rubble. The majority of the victims were children and women including the bride.

The international medical humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) received some of the wounded after the airstrike in a hospital it supports in Hajjah, Yemen. In a press release following the attack João Martins, MSF head of mission in Yemen said, “What happened in Bani Qays is appalling. Among the 63 wounded our teams have treated, 13 are children. These people arrived at the hospital in garlands traditionally worn to celebrate marriage. None were armed or arrived in military uniform.”

Footage that emerged online showed chaos and scattered remains of the people that were brutally killed by the Saudi-led bombing. One striking image was that of a young boy clinging to his dead father's body and refusing to let go while rescuers are trying to pull him away. This is a war crime! Where is U.S. Ambassador to UN, Nikki Haley's indignation and fiery speeches at the U.N. in defence of the children of Yemen? Where are the U.S., U.K. and France's condemnation of the senseless killing of civilians in Yemen? Where are their tears for the people of Yemen?

This atrocious crime by the U.S. backed Saudi-led coalition against the people of Yemen is not an isolated incident. For over three years, the Saudi-led military coalition has been pounding Yemen with daily airstrikes under the pretext of reinstating legitimacy and stability to the country.

Bringing stability to the people of Yemen? Really?! Let's look at some of the Saudi-led coalition's criminal track record against the people of Yemen:

- April 23, 2018: 18 killed and 13 wounded in the early morning when US-Saudi aggression warplanes bombed a petrol



**U.S. and Saudi Arabia, Hands off Yemen!
Canada Stop Selling Arms to Saudi Arabia!
Saudi Arabia Stop Bombing Yemen!**

- station in Abis district in Hajja province.
- April 22, 2018: 20-50 killed and 63 wounded when an air strike hit the wedding party.
- April 20, 2018: 20 people were killed in an air strike by a Saudi-led military coalition in southwestern Yemen. The attack hit a bus transporting passengers south of Taiz province.
- April 9, 2018: 15 people, including children, were killed by a Saudi-led coalition airstrike in the southwestern city of Taiz. The airstrike hit a civilian house in the Dimnat Khadir district.
- April 2, 2018: At least 14 were killed and 9 wounded when a Saudi-led coalition airstrike destroyed a house in a camp of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Yemen's Red Sea port city of Hodeidah. 7 children were killed.
- September 28, 2018: 135 people, majority women and children, were killed when Saudi-led airstrikes hit a wedding party in Yemen's central Taiz province.
- August 23, 2017: At least 51 people were killed in an airstrike that hit a hotel on the outskirts of Sana'a.
- January 10, 2017: At least 8 children lost their lives, and 15 others were critically injured in an airstrike from Saudi-led forces that hit an elementary school to the northeast of the Yemeni capital Sana'a.
- October 8, 2016: 155 people were killed and at least 525 more wounded when two airstrikes, about three to eight minutes apart, hit the packed Al Kubra hall in Sana'a, Yemen during a funeral.
- August 8, 2016: 15 food factory workers including six women were killed and eight others wounded after the Saudi-led coalition bombed a potato chip factory in the Yemeni capital of Sana'a
- January 21, 2016: 26 people were killed, including an ambulance driver and civilian rescuers and as many as 48 more were injured after a Saudi led coalition airstrike hit the village of Dhahian.
- January 10, 2016: 6 people were killed and 7 were injured after the Saudi led coalition airstrike struck an MSF supported hospital in Razez in Saada province, in the North of Yemen.
- March 15, 2016: 106 people were killed, including 24 children after the market in Khamees, a town in northern Yemen, was destroyed in two airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition.
- June 3, 2015: 55 people including 35 children and 11 women were killed when a Saudi led coalition airstrike hit a cluster of houses in al-Eram, a village in the North West of Sa'da basically decimating an entire community.
- July 24, 2015: 65 people killed and 42 injured when airstrikes targeted two residential compounds of the Mokha Steam Power Plant, which housed plant workers and their families.
- May 6, 2015: 28 people were killed, including 7 women and 17 children, after the Saudi led coalition airstrikes hit a cultural center and a home in Sa'da City.

These horrific killings and destruction are examples of Saudi Arabia's style of bringing 'democracy' and 'stability' to Yemen and the region.

In addition to the daily bombing, Saudi Arabia and its coalition is also imposing an air, sea and land blockade on Yemen, creating huge shortages of many essential items and



The title of an article published by CBC in 2016 summed up this situation well, “Let’s not kid ourselves, Canada is in the war business.”

Why the war on Yemen?

The United States is a direct accomplice of all the war crimes committed against the people of Yemen. The U.S. military has been providing aerial refuelling for planes flying with the Saudi led coalition, it is also providing targeting intelligence to the military coalition and continues selling weapons and

armament to the Saudi government and some of their allied countries. Saudi Arabia’s government and its imperialist allies continue to claim that their real intentions in Yemen are to bring back legitimacy by reinstating Yemen’s former president Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi. Over three years of bombing and killing and they still want us to believe that their goal is peace and stability in the region!

Further clear proof that the U.S. backed Saudi coalition has no real interest in peace or stability in Yemen, was the Saudi announcement about the assassination of Saleh al-Samad, the president of the Houthis’ Supreme Political Council. Samad was killed days before he was scheduled to meet with Martin Griffiths, the U.N. special envoy for Yemen, on April 28 to discuss the possibilities of reaching a negotiated settlement to Yemen’s war.

In an interview with the New Yorker: Shireen al-Adeimi, a Yemeni analyst and doctoral student at Harvard said, “It’s an assassination...Any group that assassinates political leaders gives a strong message that they don’t want peace talks. Imagine if the Houthis had sent missiles to Saudi that killed Mohammed bin Salman.”

The U.S. and Saudi Arabia have no interest in peace or the well-being of the Yemeni people. Their goal is to expand their hegemony in Yemen and the region in a desperate move to quash the formation of an independent government; to protect its shaky and unstable monarchy; as well as to impose on Yemen a corrupt pro-imperialist government to serve their interests.

Yemenis deserve Peace

“I want nothing for myself. I want these children to be happy and to live in peace,” those are the words of Alhaga Misk, a 55-year-old grandmother. She shared them with UNICEF workers on the ground in

Yemen. What Misk wants for her children is what all Yemenis families dream of, peace and prosperity.

As peace loving people living in Canada, the United States, and around the world, we must support the struggle of the Yemeni people for peace and self-determination. We must demand an end to the U.S. backed Saudi-led bombing campaign on the country and the lift of the blockade to allow commercial goods and humanitarian aid to reach people in need.

In Canada, it is our human responsibility to point out the hypocrisy of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government and hold them accountable for their complicity in the atrocious crimes against the people of Yemen. We must demand the cancellation of Canada’s \$15 billion arms deal and other weapons and military goods to the Saudi government.

Together let’s join the brave people of Yemen in their struggle for peace and dignity!

All Foreign Troops Out of Yemen!

Lift the Naval, Aerial and Land Blockade on Yemen!

Follow Azza Rojbi on Twitter:
@Azza_R14

medical supplies – pushing the humanitarian crisis in the country to the edge. According to the United Nations, the war in Yemen is now the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, with more than 22 million people — 80 percent of the population -- in desperate need of aid and protection and more than half of the country left without basic medical services.

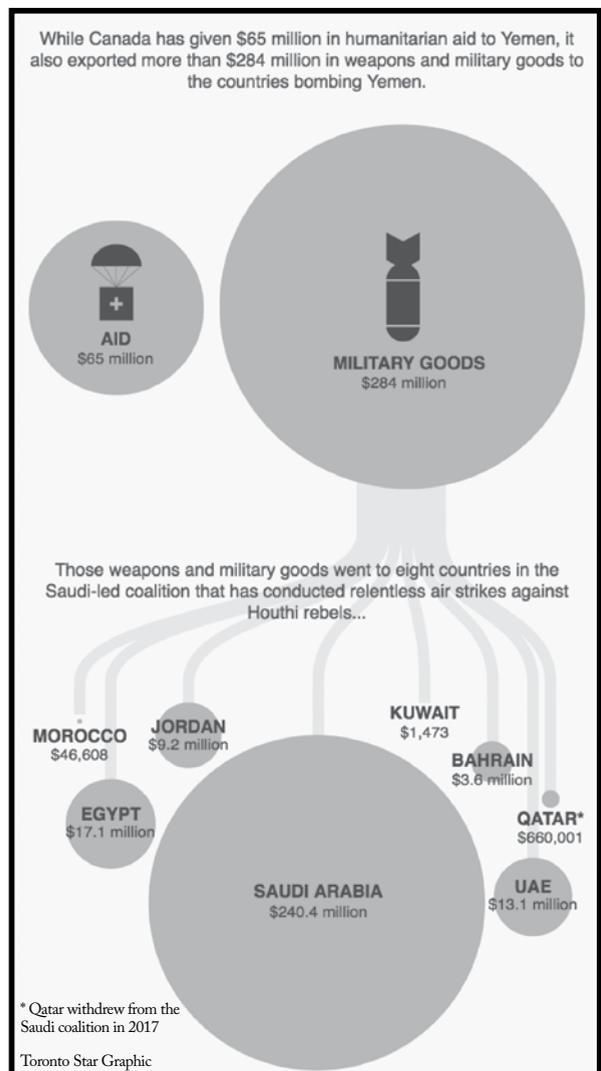
What a farce! As the humanitarian crisis in Yemen worsens, it is becoming harder for the Saudi-led coalition to justify the war. As they continue to bomb the children of Yemen daily, the Saudi government and its allied UAE government announced a joint \$930 million donation to the United Nations’ Yemen Humanitarian Fund. Indeed this is a farce and clear attempt by the Saudi-led coalition to wash their bloody hands of the war crimes they’re committing in Yemen.

In an article by NPR, Yahya Nasser, a Yemeni who works at a relief organization in Yemen, said in response to the news about the donation, “We don’t need money from Saudi Arabia...What we need is for them to stop the war.”

This hypocrisy is not exclusive to the governments of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. According to an investigation published recently by the Toronto Star, “Canada has sent \$65 million in humanitarian aid to help Yemenis suffering amid a brutal war. It has also exported \$284 million worth of weapons and military goods to the countries bombing Yemen.”

This number doesn’t include the \$15 billion sale of Canadian-made armoured combat vehicles to Saudi Arabia approved by the Trudeau government. How can the government of Canada claim to care about helping the Yemeni people in this humanitarian crisis, while providing weapons to the countries responsible for creating this crisis in the first place?

In the same article, the Toronto Star quotes Anthony Fenton, an academic who follows Canada’s arms exports to the Middle East. He uses local reports and photos posted to social media to track the use of Canadian weapons in Yemen. “There is not a shred of doubt Canadian equipment is being used in Yemen...We track this on a daily basis, and there hasn’t been a week since this war began that there hasn’t been some sighting of Canadian goods being used.”





Fire This Time Interview with Yemeni Human Rights Activist Kim Sharif

"There is some racism and colonial mentality being applied in relation to international law"

*Interview by Azza Rojbi
Transcription by Alison Bodine*

Fire This Time interview with Kim Sharif, a Yemeni lawyer, Human Rights Campaigner, and Director of Human Rights for Yemen, based in London, England.

FTT: We saw last week that the Saudis, with their partner coalition, bombed Yemen and killed dozens of people while they were celebrating a wedding. Why do you think Saudi Arabia is continuing this killing of innocents in Yemen, knowing they haven't gotten results or achieved their goal they declared three years ago?

Kim Sharif: The Saudis continue to commit horrific war crimes, specifically against civilians in Yemen because there has not been any accountability from the international community, which is fully aware of the number of serious war crimes being committed in Yemen against civilians that been going on for three years. They also know that there is no useful outcome from the continuation of this military campaign, yet they appear to be totally inactive in this regard. Instead of doing what is necessary legally to bring an end to the suffering of the people of Yemen, they are continuing to just "express concerns" without doing anything about it.

The reason for the continuation of this illegality by the Saudi-led coalition is that they have the support of the international community, as represented by the UN security council, which is dominated by three main countries and others who stand to benefit from the continuation of the suffering of the people of Yemen because they get to sell a lot of weapons and make a lot of money. At the same time, they get to have some kind of regional sort-of hand twisting and negotiating with each other about other issues.

The problem with what is going on is that this impunity sets a very negative precedent and makes it very clear that the UN is incapable of consistently, fairly and equally applying its rules as enshrined by the charter, as well by the various Geneva conventions that regulate this kind of situation that is happening in Yemen. The UN has failed

Yemen miserably, although Yemen was one of the first members of the UN, which become a member in 1948, and it is sad and tragic to see that international law is being applied in this inconsistent, irregular way, which has the effect of indicating that there is some racism and colonial mentality being applied in relation to international law, specifically concerning third-world countries, and Yemen is one of them.

It is sad, it is tragic, and the situation is untenable. If anything, yes there is a lot of suffering Yemen, if anything, it does undermine the reputation and standing of the international community and specifically of the UN, as being honest and independent and an institution of integrity, that apply its rules of law consistently and properly and without any discrimination. So, the UN, and specifically its members in the UN Security Council and as well as the Human Rights Council, are in breach of international law themselves, and it can well be said that they might well be guilty of aiding and abetting various crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. That is our experience about the UN's handling of the situation in Yemen.

Of course, the Saudi-led coalition, who are ruthless, brutal dictators, who have no mercy on their own people, aren't going to have any mercy about other people in their neighbourhood or elsewhere in the world. They are likely to continue as there is no one to stop them. There is no one to stop them. The international community has failed miserably and has shown itself to be willing partners to brutal dictators who supply terrorism to the world and are party to more serious war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Yemen. So, if anything, the greater loss is going to impact more seriously on the international community than actually the situation in Yemen. The humanitarian catastrophe is heart-breaking, it is very dire, it is man-made, and man that's making it is the Saudi-led coalition as aided and abetted by members of the Security Council, and thus, in turn, the UN itself stands accused of aiding and abetting these crimes for failing to uphold the charter rights of the State of Yemen.

FTT: What do you think we can do as people around the world to help the people of Yemen and stop the war and bombing in Yemen?

Kim Sharif: To help the people of Yemen we must not stop our campaign in raising awareness about the suffering of civilians in Yemen. We must not stop in reaching out to lobby our politicians to demand that they restore some balance and integrity in the international community. Because this kind of development or movement is very dangerous for any country around the world because what is happening to Yemen today can happen to any country and impunity is something that the international community cannot afford to allow because it can affect everybody eventually.

We must organize demonstrations, we must write to our MP's, we must support campaigners who work in the field of helping the people of Yemen. Moreover, we have advanced legal proceedings to hold accountable the Saudi-led coalition, and we would be grateful for any support by way of funding that we may receive from our brothers and sisters in Canada. Anyone who would like to assist our organization to continue its case against the Saudi-led coalition, please get in touch with us and we would be happy to give you our bank account details where you can make any donation to support our case.

If anybody and organizations in Canada themselves can advance cases like this, we would be grateful. However, under UK law we can prosecute war criminals who commit such crimes anywhere in the world. We are in need of funding for our case, we are progressing our case, we will not stop this case but we will grateful for any support that you may be able to give in relation to our case in court, or any of our other activities which include going to the Human Rights Council to lobby on behalf of the people of Yemen and hold conferences and events in London as well as hold photographic exhibition, issue publications, and do a lot of other work to help our brother and sisters in Yemen. Please let us know of anybody interested in helping us; we will be happy to provide you with our bank details, many thanks.

*To contribute to the funding campaign contact:
www.humanrights4Yemen.com
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KINDER MORGAN: BILLIONAIRES, BLACKMAIL & BAILOUTS

VERSUS THE "NINJAS OF ECO-TERRORISM"

By Thomas Davies

It's when things get tough that you see who is who and what is what – and it was all laid wide open in April. Kinder Morgan showed yet again that it is a greedy oil corporation which will use every trick in the book to force through dangerous projects, the Trudeau government showed that it prioritizes the profits of these corporations over the interests of people and the planet. Most importantly though, the opposition to the pipeline showed going toe to toe with this team of supposed giants doesn't phase them one bit. Kinder Morgan and the Canadian government have the beginnings of a crisis. We have the beginnings of a powerful climate justice movement.

You couldn't blame someone for checking, but it was a week late for April Fools Day when Kinder Morgan released an incredible press release announcing it was suspending all "non-essential spending" on its 7.4 billion dollar Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project. Blaming big delays due to the opposition, they said they would be meeting with investors and stakeholders to decide by May 31 regarding the future of the project.

There could be a lot of factors involved in this announcement, but the bottom line is that Kinder Morgan is not happy with the project's progress and is pressuring governments to do more of the dirty work and heavy lifting.

True Colours Coming Through

This is where Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Liberals showed their true colours. Like a bunch of

circus animals gathering at the crack of the ringmaster's whip, the Liberals immediately held an emergency cabinet meeting. They emerged promising to meet behind closed doors with Kinder Morgan to try and figure out the government's next moves to push the project through.

Very much on the table is at least a \$2 billion government bailout of the project. Incredibly, the \$1.6 billion Kinder Morgan Canada raised by selling stocks already went to paying off debts of its parent company. Kinder Morgan Canada has arranged \$5.5 billion in construction facility loans from Canadian banks — but only if they can raise another \$2 billion in equity for the project. With investors understandably standoffish, this two billion could very likely be on the table as a government bailout.

Always in the Pocket

None of this should be that surprising. PM Trudeau's first scandal was just before he was elected in 2015. His national campaign co-chair Dan Gagner was forced to resign when it was discovered that during the campaign he was also being paid to advise people behind the Energy East pipeline on how to lobby a new Liberal government.

As Andrew Nikifork wrote in a recent article in the Tyee, "Canada has already granted Kinder Morgan several subsidies. In 2011 the National Energy Board (NEB) granted Kinder Morgan a special fee of approximately \$1.45 a barrel to help fund the company's participation in the regulatory review of the Trans Mountain pipeline. By 2014 Kinder Morgan confirmed that it had collected \$132 million in fees."

So, the government gives the oil corporation our tax dollars as subsidies, so it doesn't have to spend any of its own money going through the necessary review process? Economist Robin Allan has also pointed out that Trudeau's promise to fund a \$1.5 billion ocean protection plan to cope with increased oil tanker traffic if the pipeline is built is another clear taxpayer subsidy for Kinder Morgan. They create the risk, we pay for it.

Who's Driving This Thing?

Recent revelations have even further shown how far on board with Kinder Morgan the Trudeau government was before the approval. Reporting by the National Observer has revealed that on October 17, 2016, weeks before the Trudeau government approved the pipeline, assistant deputy minister Erin O'Gorman of the Department of Natural Resources instructed her staff to, "give cabinet the legally-sound basis for saying yes to Kinder Morgan's pipeline." This was literally as the government was meeting with representatives of impacted indigenous nations and promising that no decision had yet been made on the pipeline.

The National Observer also recently released documents showing that despite warnings from colleagues, federal officials sped up their timeline for the review of the Trans Mountain project following a phone call from Kinder Morgan Canada President Ian Anderson. According to the federal lobbying registry, Kinder Morgan Canada also reported lobbying federal officials more than three dozen times in 2016 before the approval.

Meet the Kinder

"We wanted to drive home one culture here: Cheap. Cheap. Cheap," - Richard Kinder, CEO of Kinder Morgan

Kinder Morgan is the biggest pipeline company in the US. Richard Kinder and Bill Morgan are ex-Enron Executives. Enron is the infamous energy trader whose collapse after being found guilty of account fraud and corruption cost shareholders \$74 billion and killed 20,000 jobs. Kinder himself has a net worth of \$8.2 billion.

That's who PM Trudeau is going to bat for, with possibly billions of our tax dollars.

Meet the Opposition

"There is the real threat. Regardless of any future court resolutions or accommodations worked out between the BC and Alberta governments, there remain the ninjas of extreme environmentalism". - Rex Murphy's National Post Column, April 21, 2018

There's a dual game of dismissal of the opposition to the Kinder Morgan pipeline going on. Kinder Morgan, for its part, refuses to acknowledge the mass opposition movement which is currently focused on the company's tank farm and marine terminal at the foot of Burnaby Mountain. Mass rallies of thousands, over 200 arrests for defying a court-imposed 5-meter "buffer zone" around Kinder Morgan's property, and ongoing actions by an Indigenous-led movement that shows no sign of backing down.

On the other hand, right-wing

commentators like Rex Murphy try to dismiss everyone as "the ninjas of extreme environmentalism" or as sheep organized by shadowy foreign billionaires for "less than salubrious" agendas he fails to define.

Anyone who has been to any action regarding Kinder Morgan can tell you the opposition is much broader than that.

>> The Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish nations, whose territories the pipeline would terminate on, are leading organizing on Burnaby Mountain

>> The 200 people arrested are from a diverse cross-section of people. There have even been specific actions organized by youth, elders, religious leaders and artists.

>> Two Members of Parliament, Elizabeth May and Kennedy Stewart, were both arrested for defying the injunction

>> The Burnaby Deputy Fire Chief has released a damning report on the safety concerns of the Kinder Morgan tank farm expansion, "We don't believe they have any firefighting capabilities. When I asked specifically for the details on the storage tanks and written protocols for how they plan the fire protection for the storage tanks, I was told by Kinder



Morgan that they have none."

>> The BC Teachers Federation passed a resolution to, "encourage all locals to stand in solidarity with Indigenous water and land protectors in opposition to the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion by lobbying their local politicians and by participating in any protests or actions."

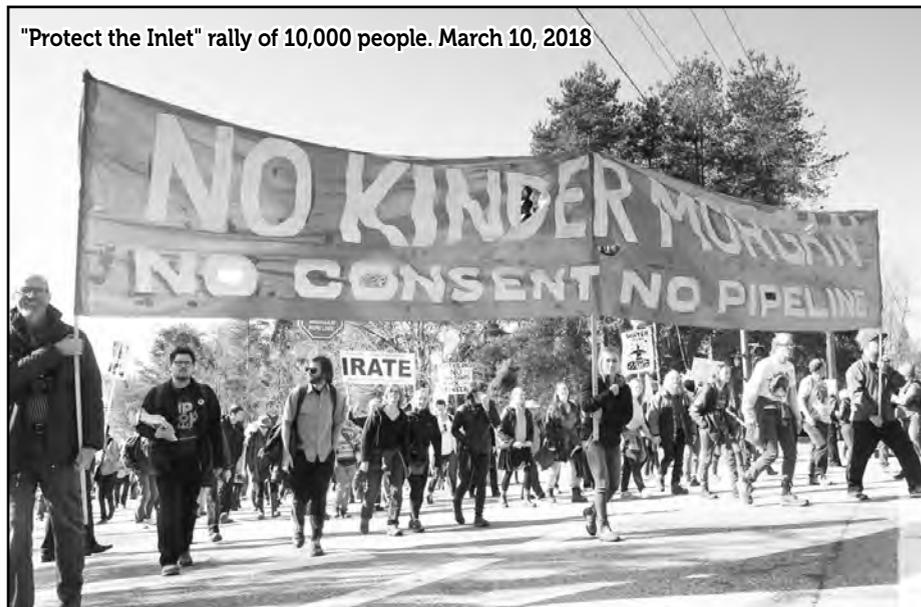
This is just a small cross-section of who has been involved. It is impossible to ignore and has shown itself time and time again to be large and committed.

Who Are the Extremists?

Is it so extreme to demand that a government follow through on its promises to prioritize the environment and respect the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People? To demand that government represents the interests of people above billion dollar oil corporations? To point out the failures of the "market" - where the corporations we are told, are providing us with all the jobs and prosperity need billions of our tax dollars to stay afloat? How extreme is it to point out that human beings have developed technologically and socially to a point where we don't need to destroy the environment, don't need to accept poverty and don't need to bow down to capitalism as the pinnacle of human development?

The real extremists are Kinder Morgan, Prime Minister Trudeau, and whoever else in positions of power who are trying to force us down the proven road of environmental, social and political degradation. The opposition to the Kinder Morgan pipeline is, however, extremely committed. The battle is far from over but the pipeline has not been built, and no one is giving up on stopping it any time soon.

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KINDER MORGAN PIPELINE? DON'T BANK ON IT!

By Thomas Davies

The Climate Convergence Coalition in Vancouver has had a busy month participating in the many ongoing actions against the Kinder Morgan pipeline, and building its own May 12 “Kinder Morgan Pipeline? Don’t Bank on It!” mass rally and march. As Kinder Morgan’s self-imposed May 31 deadline to decide on whether to move forward with the pipeline nears, these actions become all the more important.

On April 7, Climate Convergence organizers brought their “Climate Crime Scene” banner to the gates of the Kinder Morgan tank farm facility with hundreds of others. Under thunder and heavy rain, they blocked both entrances to a facility with Indigenous leaders including Grand Chief Stewart Phillip leading the mass civil disobedience. This was the first time that Kinder Morgan did not ask the police to arrest people, who stayed for several hours blocking any possibility of continuing work. The next day Kinder Morgan released its now infamous press release announcing a halt to “all non-essential spending” on the pipeline expansion project.

April 14 saw another demonstration organized by the Pipe Up Network in Surrey. Climate Convergence joined

Surrey residents in calling out TD Bank for sponsoring Surrey’s Earth Day Festival, yet being the largest investor in the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

Given the amount of heavy rain at so many actions, Climate Convergence organized its first ever “Umbrella Edition Art Build.” It was a great success with many people turning their umbrellas into beautiful reusable protest signs, while others worked on 16 umbrellas which spelled, “STOP KINDER MORGAN” in huge letters.

Sunday, April 22 saw Climate Convergence organizers travel to Kamloops to participate and speak as part of the “Picnics Not Pipelines” action, which was organized local indigenous Secwepemc organizers right on the path of the Kinder Morgan pipeline to emphasize their nations opposition to the project.

As May 12 approaches, the coalition is busy building the action and deciding on a march route which will target many of Kinder Morgan’s largest investors, as well as huge construction contractors trying to profit from the dangerous and unnecessary project. Big action on May 12 will be another important message to Kinder Morgan as it decides on the future of the pipeline project. It will all begin at 1 pm, in front of the TD Bank Tower at 700 West Georgia Street in downtown



Stop KM Art Build - Umbrella Edition. April 12, 2018



Rally at Kinder Morgan Tank Farm April 7, 2018



Custom "Stop KM" umbrella!



Climate Convergence organizers in Kamloops for "Picnics Not Pipelines" action. April 22, 2018

Vancouver. See you all there!
Kinder Morgan, We Still Say No!
No Consent – No Pipeline!
All Out May 12!

ALL OUT FOR MAY 12!

SANCTIONS AND THREATS AGAINST VENEZUELA INCREASE IN LEAD-UP TO MAY 20 ELECTION

By Alison Bodine

“The United States believes now is the time to do more, much more. Every free nation gathered here must take stronger action to isolate the Maduro regime. We must all stand with our brothers and sisters suffering in Venezuela. And I can promise you; the United States will not rest.” – Mike Pence, U.S. Vice President, April 15, 2018

Vice President Pence said these threatening words during a speech at the 8th Summit of the Americas, a gathering of member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Lima, Peru in April 2018. However, they are not new threats. For more than 20 years, the United States has not rested in its attempts to destroy the Bolivarian revolutionary process in Venezuela, which began with the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998. There has been no pause in its meddling in the internal affairs of Venezuela, no breaks in its funding and support for a violent, counter-revolutionary opposition, and no end to its threats of military intervention.

When Pence made his remarks, the audience was smaller than usual, with less than half of the 35 countries that are members of the OAS represented by heads of state. Pence was also largely preaching to the choir, as those heads of state in attendance at the Summit were largely from pro-US governments, including Honduras, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Colombia, and Peru, as well as Canada. There is no surprise given that the Summit of the Americas and the OAS are both initiatives promoted and funded by the United States. Nicolas Maduro, the President of Venezuela, was excluded from the event by the now, ex-President of Peru (who was recently forced out of office for corruption).

Overthrowing the democratically elected



PM Trudeau and VP Pence meet at the 2018 Summit of the Americas. Both agree on threats and sanctions on Venezuela.



“Peaceful” Venezuelan opposition call for military intervention. August 24, 2017.

government of Venezuela and reversing the gains made by poor, working and oppressed people in Venezuela within the Bolivarian revolutionary process is central to the agenda of the United States and their allies, not only at the Summit of the Americas. This is especially true in the final weeks leading up to the May 20 elections in Venezuela, which are seen by imperialist governments as an opportunity to foment further foreign intervention, sanctions, and threats.

Lima Group Lies About Venezuelan Elections

One of the vehicles used by the United States and their allies to promote intervention in Venezuela and attempt to isolate Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolutionary process is the Lima Group. Lima Group was formed when it became clear that the U.S. and Canada were failing to convince the 35 members of the Organization of American States to intervene in the internal affairs of Venezuela. Since August 2017, the Lima Group has served as a mouthpiece for imperialist intervention in Venezuela, though often under the guise of standing for “democracy” and “human rights.”

Coinciding with the Summit of the Americas, on April 14, 2018, the so-called Lima Group, made up of right-wing governments in Latin America, as well as Canada, issued a statement making demands on the government of Venezuela regarding the May 20 Presidential, and local and Provincial assembly elections. In the end, the statement was signed by 16 nations, fewer than half of the 35 countries that are members of the Organization of American States (OAS).

It read, “the Lima Group Urgently call on the Venezuelan government to hold presidential elections with the necessary guarantees for a free, fair, transparent and democratic process, without political prisoners, including the participation of all Venezuelan political actors; and ratify that elections that do not meet these conditions will lack legitimacy and credibility.”

Already, before the elections have occurred,

the Lima Group countries are declaring them to be illegitimate and not credible. This is right in line with the fact that the governments of the United States and Canada have also declared that they will not recognize the results of the upcoming Presidential elections in Venezuela. Unbelievably hypocritical, given the fact that elections are exactly what the U.S. government and their imperialist allies were demanding of Venezuela just a few months ago.

Regarding the demand for “free, fair, transparent and democratic process” it is important to note that the May 20 elections are the 25th time that a national election or referendum has been held in Venezuela since the election of Hugo Chavez as President in 1998. These elections, organized by a branch of Venezuelan government known as the National Electoral Council, have been under international scrutiny and observation, including that of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter who declared the election process in Venezuela to be the “best in the world.”

There are no grounds on which to believe that the May 20th election will be anything but free, fair and transparent. As the Foreign Minister of Venezuela, Jorge Arreaza, said at a Press conference in Belgium, “The only ones who have to recognize the results in Venezuela are the Venezuelan people and the National Electoral Council (CNE). We are not worried about if (U.S. President) Trump recognizes it; if (Spanish Prime Minister Mariano) Rajoy recognizes it or if the European Union does not recognize it.”

Sanctions Against Venezuela are a Crime Against Humanity

The U.S. and the European Union have also used the May 20th elections as another opportunity to threaten further sanctions against Venezuela. Currently, the United States, Canada, the European Union and Switzerland have brutal financial and economic sanctions against Venezuela. These sanctions, which are illegal under international law, impact Venezuela's ability to purchase goods abroad, including foods and medicines. United Nations Special Envoy, Alfred de Zayas, who toured Venezuela in November and December 2017 has declared "The sanctions against Venezuela entail a crime against humanity" (Real News Interview, March 2018)

De Zayas also confirmed reports by the Venezuelan website *Mision Verdad* that detail the impacts of the criminal sanctions. For example, the sanctions have prevented the government of Venezuela from making purchases of medicines, including a shipment of more than 300,000 doses of insulin, which Venezuela was not able to pay for due to funds being held by U.S.-based Citibank. There is also the case of a shipment of the malaria treatment Primaquine. This medicine, from a pharmaceutical company in Colombia, was prevented from being shipped by the government of Colombia, and instead, the government of Venezuela had to buy it from India at an increased price.

In fact, before the sanctions, Venezuela imported 34% of its medicines, 33% of its food and 32% of machinery and spare parts used in domestic production from the United States, as reported by Pascualina Curcio, a Professor at Simón Bolívar University in Venezuela. In this way, the sanctions, which also leave much of Venezuela's money tied up in international banks, have had a devastating impact on the Venezuelan economy.

As if the hardships caused for people in Venezuela was not enough, now the U.S. government is working to assist other Latin American and Caribbean countries in developing laws that enable them to sanction against Venezuela. As a senior official in the U.S. government stated to the McClatchy news agency, "They don't have the authority... So what we have to do is help these countries write laws that give them jurisdiction to carry out these kinds of sanctions if they choose to."

Is There a "Humanitarian Crisis" in Venezuela?

One of the primary justifications for intervention in Venezuela coming from

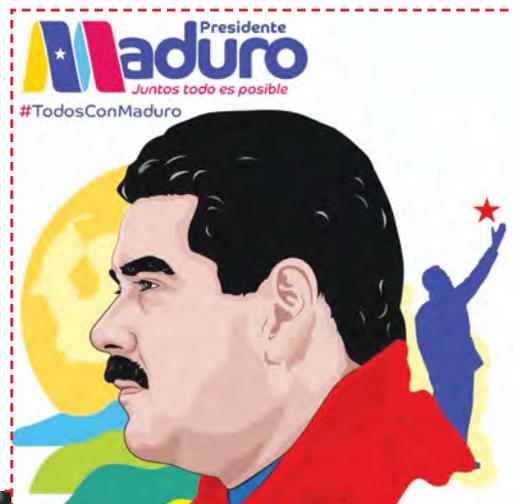
the mouths of imperialist politicians and major capitalist media is that of "humanitarian crisis." The Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, has been a prime promotor of this rhetoric. During a news briefing on April 19, 2018, the PM Trudeau started his comments on Venezuela with, "I think that we know that what is happening in Venezuela is not just a political crisis, it is a humanitarian crisis," and proceeded to repeat them three more times in the 1.5-minute-long interview.

Saying "humanitarian crisis" so many times doesn't make it true. Beyond dramatic claims and anecdotal accounts of "malnutrition," "starvation" and the lack of medicines, very little has been reported regarding the actual reality of this so-called humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

In December 2017, the United Nations (UN) Special Envoy, Alfred de Zayas, also spent eight days in Venezuela to see for himself what was happening on the ground. He determined that there is, in fact, not a humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. As he reported at a UN press conference, "I agree with the FAO [UN Food and Agriculture Organization] and CEPAL [Economic Commission for Latin America & the Caribbean] that the so-called humanitarian crisis does not exist in Venezuela, although there are shortages, scarcity, and distribution delays, etc."

De Zayas goes on to explain his findings and the reason that peace-loving people around the world should be alarmed at the use of this term, in a March 2018 interview on Real News: "Humanitarian crisis is a technical term. The problem with hyperboles, the problem with the loose use of language is that you can say the government has failed to protect the human rights of the population, there is a humanitarian crisis. Therefore we should have a humanitarian intervention and a military intervention." In other words, using the term "humanitarian crisis" is nothing but an attempt to justify military intervention.

When the government of the United States or Canada use this term, it is no accident. In February 2018, former U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson visited five right-wing governments in Latin America, including Colombia and Brazil, which border Venezuela. Tillerson's only objective



Workers at nationalized steel plant SIDOR rally in support of President Maduro. February 4, 2018.

was to promote the imperialist campaign of "regime change" in Venezuela. In fact, the tour began with Tillerson proclaiming, "President Maduro could choose just to leave... If the kitchen gets a little too hot for him, I'm sure that he's got some friends over in Cuba that can give him a nice hacienda on the beach, and he can have a nice life over there."

Furthermore, while at the Summit of the Americas, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence also held meetings with members of Venezuela's violent right-wing opposition, including Antonio Ledezma, David Smolansky, Julio Borges and Carlos Vecchio. As reported by *Mision Verdad*, Ledezma even went so far as to ask for U.S. military intervention against Venezuela, a clear act of treason and a murderous request.

If the United States, Canada and the European Union wanted to alleviate the hardship that people in Venezuela are facing due to shortages of some foods and medicines, they would immediately end the sanctions.

However, this is not their intention. Imperialist governments do not care about the people of Venezuela. As U.S. Republican Senator Marco Rubio said

continued on page 15



U.S. HANDS OFF NICARAGUA!

The Empire Turns Its Sights on Nicaragua = Again!

By Dan Kovalik

It was only a matter of time before the US government and its compliant media would once again put Nicaragua in their sights. And, that time has indeed come.

Last year, the US House of Representatives voted unanimously in favor of the Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act of 2017 (NICA Act) which would cut that already-poor country off from loans offered by international financial institutions.

Citing the Alliance for Global Justice, Telesur reported at the time that “[t]he Nicaraguan government uses foreign assistance from the international financial institutions to support social spending on health and education which have become an ever-larger proportion of the national budget.” Telesur explained that the NICA Act therefore “poses a serious danger to the Central American nation’s economy

and could result in a humanitarian crisis and waves of economic refugees that would flee toward the U.S. border, joining waves of migrants from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.”

Currently, Nicaragua is the only country victimized by the US-backed Central American Wars which is not also a source of immigrants to the US. This is in no small part due to the Sandinistas’ effective social programs. As for the Sandinistas’ social programs, even the *New York Times* acknowledged that “[m]any poor people who receive housing and other government benefits support” Sandinista President, Daniel Ortega.

Incredibly, as the US is preparing to build a wall ostensibly to keep out Central American and Mexican migrants, it is poised to exacerbate the very migration problem it claims to want to stop. This simply defies all logic and notions of morality and decency.

As Noam Chomsky has opined numerous times, the US shall never forgive the Nicaraguan people for overthrowing the US-backed Somoza dictatorship in 1979, for militarily defeating the Contras and for then voting back in the Sandinistas in 2007. The NICA Act is pay-back for such crimes.

But meanwhile, the NICA Act was getting no apparent movement in the US Senate and appeared to be a dead letter. And so, right on cue, we witness violent protests in Nicaragua which closely resemble the violent guarimbas which have plagued Venezuela on and off since Nicolas Maduro was elected in 2013. These demonstrations will surely be used as a pretext to revive the NICA Act in the US Senate.

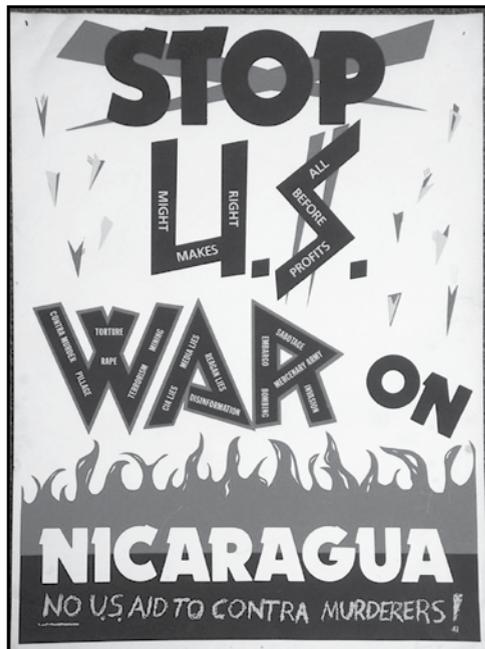
There are a number of curious things about the protests in Nicaragua. First, while the mainstream press has explained these protests as a response

Photos Left to Right: US President Ronald Reagan’s administration gave heavy military and financial support to the right-wing “Contra” army which fought against the Nicaraguan government in the 1980s; Hundreds of thousands rally in support of Nicaraguan government in the capital of Managua, April 30, 2018; Burning tires at anti-government riot in Managua. April 20, 2018.

to a “social security overhaul” announced by the government, it was largely students and other youth who have been demonstrating, and not those directly affected by the announced cuts. And, though the government reversed itself on the previously-announced social security cuts in response to the protests, the *New York Times* stated with glee that this probably would not stop the protests from continuing.

Moreover, it must be pointed out that the proposed social security cuts which provided the impetus for the protests were themselves necessitated in no small part by the House passage of the NICA Act which, as Telesur noted, “has already put a chill on foreign direct investment into the Nicaraguan economy, having a knock-on effect on local lending activity and private investments.” Of course, this is all according to plan.

Several alternative Spanish-speaking news outlets, including the on-line publication Mision Verdad, have detailed a number of ways in which the violent demonstrations in Nicaragua look like those organized by the right-wing in Venezuela. These include (1) the demonstrators’ use of “artisanal weapons,” such as mortars and rockets, designed to obscure “the line between peaceful protest and the tactics of subversion and urban warfare,” and thus to provoke a government response which could be labeled “a violation of human rights”; (2) attempts to falsely blame the government for chemical weapons use (a tried and true way to provoke foreign intervention); (3) the inflation of the number of those killed in clashes, combined with the



Poster from 1980s campaign against US attacks on Nicaragua

downplaying of the deaths of state security forces; (4) looting of private and public property, including memorials to left-wing revolutionary leaders such as Hugo Chavez; (5) the use of snipers; and (6) the support of the Catholic Church and various NGOs for the anti-government activities.

Not surprisingly, the Cold War-era National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has recently been giving substantial funding to groups in Nicaragua seemingly to stoke the very types of anti-government actions taking place right now. For example, the NED, in 2017, gave \$72,440 to the Comision Permanente de Derechos Humanos de Nicaragua (CPDHN) for “human rights” monitoring. Curiously, the CPDHN is a key source the Western press has been relying upon for the lop-sided information about the current protests and the government’s response to them.

The NED has also been giving substantial monies to youth and student groups in Nicaragua – such groups now serving as the main source of the current unrest. In addition, the NED has given support to “independent” (i.e., anti-government) media outlets and to other civil society groups for the purpose of “raising awareness” about how the Nicaraguan government is allegedly repressing them. All told, the NED last year alone gave well over a \$1 million in aid to civil society groups for the purpose of ginning up social strife in Nicaragua.

During the 1980s, Nicaragua – a tiny country which remains the second poorest in the Hemisphere — inspired many of us, myself included, with its heroic resistance to violent US aggression. Nicaragua has remained a symbol of opposition to US imperialism, and that has galled the powers-that-be in this country – particularly Neo-Cons such as current National Security Adviser John Bolton.

We must stand with Nicaragua now, as many of us did before, in opposing continued US hostilities in the form of the NICA Act and interference in Nicaragua’s internal affairs. Nicaragua deserves such solidarity.

From: www.counterpunch.org

Daniel Kovalik lives in Pittsburgh and teaches International Human Rights Law at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law.

HANDS OFF SYRIA!

Statement from Mobilization Against War & Occupation - MAWO

April 14, 2018
Vancouver, Canada

Once again, the bloody and criminal hands of the axis of devils, the US, UK and France, has attacked a sovereign country, Syria, with a phony and fabricated allegation, only to advance their colonial interests. The US, UK and France pounded Syria, especially Damascus, with more than 130 missiles and air strikes inflicting more pain on this torn apart country, already suffering for more than seven years from war, destruction, and the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, imposed by mercenary terrorists and foreign military intervention.

In fact, this attack occurred just hours away from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) starting their investigation of allegations of chemical weapons used by the Syrian government. The bombing of civilians and destruction of the infrastructure of a sovereign country are not only against all human values and human rights, but also against

international law. As the statement by the Revolutionary Government of Cuba states this “...is a flagrant violation of the principles of International Law and the UN Charter and an outrage against a sovereign State, which exacerbates the conflict in that country and region.”

The conscious of the world must ask ourselves why we are letting this axis of devils, these war mongers, the US, UK and France, easily and arrogantly ignore all laws and rules. We strongly believe this is the time, more than ever, to build an international antiwar movement which requires unity in action of all antiwar organizations and human loving people. A mass antiwar movement around the world can stop these atrocities. However, we need to start from our own communities. Our unity in action, as well as the continuity of protesting wars and occupations, will effectively stop future military aggression against Syria and other sovereign nations.

MAWO activists and supporters protested in the streets of Vancouver, Canada while the bombing of the Syrian people was underway by the US, UK and France. Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), strongly and actively condemns the bombing of Syria, a sovereign nation, by the US, UK and France.

IMPERIALISTS HANDS OFF SYRIA!

US, UK AND FRANCE OUT OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA!

Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)

www.mawovancouver.org



By Manuel Yepe

Calls for talks made by China and Russia, as well as the worldwide outcry for them, outweighed U.S. threats of war and got the two Koreas to sit down and speak and dialogue to prevailed over the cannons, at least for the moment.

Trump's aggressiveness had to give in to reason, and what seemed less likely to be achieved on the Korean peninsula was dialogue for the sake of concord, peace and national reunification.

Objectively, because of what has happened so far, the only absolute loser for this universal achievement has been the US imperialist foreign policy. It sees its role as a guarantor of South Korea's security threatened by a hypothetical danger of absorption by Democratic and Popular Korea, the US pretext for its control strategy in that region of Asia.

What is happening on the Korean peninsula today is the result of Washington's policy of intimidation and threats of violence against Pyongyang, which has intensified considerably since Trump came to power. However, because of the wonders of imperialist propaganda, the media in the U.S. and the many media outlets around the world that are governed by the enormous financial resources that the world's top power devotes to this, US pressure is presented as the source of the moves toward dialogue on the peninsula.

It is true that this policy was not invented by the current president, just as it was not he who invented U.S. imperialism, but it is demonstrable that every time a government has responded with concessions to U.S. intimidation, the threats have materialized with the exercise of greater violence. In the Middle East, the centre of Europe and Latin America provides ample evidence. If the hopes for peace on the Korean peninsula were to be attributed to a positive foreign influence, this could only be credited to the insistence with which Beijing and

Moscow have called for a respectful inter-Korean dialogue for a satisfactory solution.

But it is clear Pyongyang enjoys the national independence that is essential for the achievement of such dialogue, and Seoul, on the other hand, lacks such freedom because of its enormous political and military dependence on the



Peace With North Korea: Not an Impossible Dream

United States. The extensive and intense US military presence in the south of the Korean peninsula has always been the main obstacle to the efforts for the reunification of the Korean homeland. The North has never given in to Washington's demands, and the South has always lacked the necessary autonomy to assert its interests as a formally independent nation, due to the United States' control over its defenses and war resources.

It was this circumstantial reality that led Pyongyang to propose a development totally independent of its national defence. These include nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, productions monopolized by the highly developed nations, in which North Korea made autonomous in roads through enormous sacrifices for its objectives of expanding the material well-being of its people. Credit goes to South Korean President Moon Jae-in who, since coming to power last May, has sought to bring the North and South Korean governments closer through dialogue and his insistence that Pyongyang participate in the Winter

Games was part of that effort. It is recalled that in September 2017 President Donald Trump offended Moon, in his usual derogatory remarks, by calling him a beggar, for his insistence on dialogue with North Korea.

Many endeavors will have contributed to the achievement of the admirable events announced today in Korea. At the same time it must be recognized that the wisdom with which the Korean communists have defended the independence of their Homeland has been decisive for the triumph of the Asian nation. It shows that the only way to curb the imperialists' appetites in the contemporary world is confronting all risks and not by making concessions. It is hoped that, in the agreed-upon talks, the US President will seek to advance arguments to safeguard its

atomic monopoly by calling for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as a principle for any agreement. For his part, North Korean Kim will advocate general and total denuclearization as the only form of truly democratic disarmament. If it succeeds in achieving this goal, the much-vaunted Democratic People's Republic of Korea will have laid the foundations for an education that the heroic Argentine and Cuban guerrilla fighter Ernesto Che Guevara always advocated: "Imperialism cannot be granted concessions, not even a little bit like this, nothing".

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

*A CubaNews translation. Edited by
Walter Lippmann.
www.walterlippmann.com*

www.englishmanuelyepe.wordpress.com

PM TRUDEAU PUSHES MASSIVE CYBER SURVEILLANCE SCRAP BILL C-51! REPEAL BILL C-59!

By Thomas Davies

As the Canadian government gets closer and closer to passing Bill C-59, it's becoming clearer and clearer that there is no political will within Canada's major political parties to fix the damage done by the Conservatives much despised, "Bill C-51 - Anti-Terrorism" law. The massive human rights and privacy concerns remain, and while the Liberal's Bill C-59 softens some of the most blatant attacks, it tries to legalize and legitimize a whole new level of cyber surveillance that even the Conservatives didn't dare try. The most alarming of these is the further enabling of the secretive Communications Security Establishment (CSE) to collect massive amounts of cyber data with little oversight or restrictions.

Secret Surveillance

The CSE is a secret spy agency created during the Second World War. The CSE remained a complete secret until a 1974 CBC documentary uncovered its existence. Despite being outed, its surveillance activities are still mostly unknown, but we are promised it focuses on foreign threats. However, as some revealed internal documents show, there is little to no discretion when it comes to data collection.

This government surveillance push is part of an overall trend regardless of which political party has been in power. The CSE now has a new \$1.2 billion facility adjacent to the CSIS building in Ottawa, which covers a massive 84 acres. According to another CBC investigation, "CSE spends over \$400 million a year, and employs about 2,000

people, almost half of whom are involved in intercepting phone conversations, and hacking into computer systems supposedly in other countries."

While the CSE constantly says it does not target the data of people in Canada, CIA whistleblower Edward Snowden released secret documents which show:

- The CSE used information from the free Wi-Fi internet at Toronto's Pearson International Airport to track the wireless devices of thousands of normal airline passengers for days after they travelled.

- The CSE program named "Levitation," sifted through millions of videos and documents downloaded on file-sharing websites. Every single upload and download to was archived, collected and analyzed - regardless of whether the user was suspicious or not.

- The CSE has also been collecting millions of emails from Canadians and storing them for days, weeks or even years before deleting the records. According to a 2010 report, more than 400,000 emails were being obtained every day.

Not a Fix

So, if you use the internet, it's more than likely the CSE has collected your data without justification. Prime Minister Trudeau is now trying to push this even further. As Micheal Vonn, Policy Director of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association and Tim McSorley, National Coordinator of the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group summarized "Bill C-59 also expressly

empowers mass surveillance through the collection of bulk data and suspiciously non-defined 'publicly available' data. The terrible irony is that this means instead of reining in mass surveillance, the new oversight bodies will be giving an official seal of approval to mass surveillance."

The Liberals promise C-59 creates more oversight with a new National Security and Intelligence Review Agency and an intelligence commissioner. However, the commissioner doesn't have to be consulted or approve any use of the new cyber operations. They need only the approval of the Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs.

The Fight Continues

So, it's no wonder that many civil liberties and human rights organizations have continued to voice concerns that Bill C-59 is far from the "fix" of Bill C-51 that PM Trudeau promised before he was elected. In Vancouver, the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 has expanded its focus to include an emphasis on public education and protest of Bill C-59.

The group has continued its campaign of weekly actions, reaching 165 consecutive weeks by the end of April. Spring has been slow to come to BC, but through downpours as well as beautiful sunny days the group has still never missed a week. Banner drops have continued draw almost continuous honks from supportive drivers, and there is an ongoing and important level of scepticism regarding Justin Trudeau's promises, especially regarding issues of privacy and national security.

Bill C-59 is not a done deal. It is still being reviewed in a parliamentary committee, and must be debated in both the House and Senate before becoming law. This creates time and opportunities to make the human rights and privacy case the Canadian government refuses to. The Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 will continue to mobilize to demand and immediate repeal of Bill C-51, and the complete scrapping of Bill C-59.

Repeal Bill C-51!

Prime Minister Trudeau - Respect our Human Rights! Scrap Bill C-59!

*Follow Thomas on Twitter:
@thomasdavies59*



Under some watchful eyes at 164th weekly action. on April 23, 2018

MAWO PROTEST RALLIES IN VANCOUVER, CANADA AS THE US/UK/France BOMB SYRIA! Successful International Day of Action Against War at Home & Abroad!

by Alison Bodine

Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) was in the middle of their monthly antiwar rally and petition campaign on Friday, April 13 when news broke that the US, UK and France had begun to pound Syria with bombs and missiles. As this criminal military attack unfolded in real time, a television news crew showed up and the picket signs, petition and new "Don't Attack Syria!" banner took on added urgency.



VANCOUVER, CANADA

The US, UK and France had fired more than 130 missiles into Syria, an escalation of the seven-years of imperialist intervention that has killed hundreds of thousands of people, and displaced half of the country through attacks by mercenary terrorists and foreign military intervention.

This criminal and

inhuman attack against the sovereign country of Syria was carried out under the justification that the Syrian government allegedly had used chemical weapons the week before. However, the very next day U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis stated that "the US is looking for evidence," when asked if there was any proof of the alleged attack.

At the MAWO protest, it was especially important to give voice to antiwar sentiments from within Canada as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was immediately and emphatically in support of the bombing. He told reporters, "We were apprised in advance of the operation. We were very supportive."

Despite strong winds and rain, MAWO held its presence and distributed every new antiwar newsletter printed, which focused especially on imperialist attacks against Syria. Many people passing by disagreed completely with the Trudeau government's pro-war posturing.

MAWO's action in Vancouver, Canada was part of an internationally coordinated period of actions based in the U.S. known as the "Spring Mobilizations to End the Wars at Home and Abroad", a timely and important antiwar effort as President Trump continues to expand the imperialist legacy of the U.S. Organized by a broad coalition of peace and social justice groups including the Coalition Against U.S. Foreign Military Bases, the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), the Black Alliance for Peace, Veterans for Peace, and the ANSWER Coalition, successful and united protests were held in New York City; Oakland; Minneapolis; Atlanta; Dallas, Detroit, Chicago and Washington, DC; and dozens of other cities across the United States. For a report on this day of action visit: www.springaction2018.org

Every month MAWO is out on the streets, rallying and petitioning to demand an end to imperialist wars and occupations. The next rally, on Friday, May 11 will continue to demand "Imperialists Hands Off Syria!" "Stop Bombing Yemen!" and "US/UK and France Out of the Middle East and North Africa!" as well as condemn the government of Canada's support and involvement in these bloody wars of aggression. On Monday, May 21 at 7 pm, MAWO will also be organizing an open community forum about Syria in the Learning Resources Room at the Britannia Community Centre (1661 Napier Street) in East Vancouver.

The U.S./U.K./France bombing of Syria is part of the new era of war and occupation, a period of continuous imperialist attacks that began with the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. In order to defeat the imperialist assault on oppressed people at home and abroad, we must work to build a stronger and more united antiwar movement. To get involved, find out about MAWO's next actions visit www.mawovancouver.org or follow on Facebook or Twitter @MAWOvan

MAWO also released a statement immediately following the U.S./U.K./France bombing of Syria, read the statement on page 11.



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA



PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



NEW YORK CITY



DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA



WASHINGTON, DC

“We need a multilateral equivalent of the Marshall Plan, the American initiative to rebuild Europe after the end of World War II, for post-Maduro Venezuela. This plan should include investment from the Inter-American Development Bank, which the United States contributes to, and from other international economic organizations aligned with our interests.”

Defend the Sovereignty and Self-Determination of Venezuela!

As poor, working and oppressed people in Canada and around the world we have

the responsibility to stand with the people of Venezuela in defence of Venezuela’s sovereignty and self-determination.

As the final statement of the People’s Summit, a parallel summit that also took place in Lima, Peru and brought together hundreds of grassroots organizations and social movements from Latin America and the Caribbean reads, “We reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela. We strongly condemn imperialist aggression, economic war, and political harassment against Bolivarian Venezuela. We demand respect for the sovereignty of the homeland of the Venezuelan people who, since 1999,

initiated a popular constituent process that has marked the path of a reference for the anti-imperialist struggle for Latin American unity and our American socialism. We express our support for President Nicolás Maduro, the successor of the historical project promoted by Commander Chávez. We demand the cessation of illegitimate and unilateral sanctions against the Bolivarian people, we reject the intent of military intervention in Venezuela under the pretext of humanitarian aid. We demand non-interference in the upcoming elections of May 20 and respect for the sovereignty and self-determination of our peoples.”

Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette

VANCOUVER CONTINUES ACTIONS IN SOLIDARITY WITH VENEZUELA

By Alison Bodine

With each passing month, the United States, Canada or countries of the European Union announce another increase to brutal sanctions against Venezuela. As part of this, on March 19, 2018, U.S. President Trump issued an executive order increasing sanctions yet again “in light of recent actions taken by the Maduro regime to attempt to circumvent U.S. sanctions by issuing a digital currency.”

The United States government has also threatened Venezuela with military intervention, all while ramping up their efforts to drum up support for increasing intervention in Venezuela, especially from other Latin American and Caribbean countries. These actions have the objective of forcing the overthrow of the democratically elected President of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, and reversing the gains that the Bolivarian revolutionary process has made for millions of poor, working and oppressed people in Venezuela.

As the sanctions, threats and intervention by imperialist countries in Venezuela have continued, so has the organizing of peace-loving people against it. Since December 2015, the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice – Venezuela Solidarity Campaign has been organizing a monthly protest action to demand of “U.S. Hands Off Venezuela!” On Friday, April 6, supporters of Venezuela once again took their voices right up to the doorstep of the U.S. Consulate in downtown

Vancouver. Through speakers, chanting, and marching, the energetic picket made sure that everyone passing by on the busy street knew about the criminal actions that the government of the U.S., Canada and their allies are taking against the people of Venezuela and their democratically elected government.

At the protest action, a recent victory for Venezuela solidarity in Canada was also announced. After receiving 582 (out of 500 required) signatures from across Canada, a Parliamentary petition demanding that the government of Canada end its threats and sanctions against Venezuela has been certified for presentation to the House of Commons. As per the rules of the House of Commons, it will be presented to Parliament sometime before the end of May 2018. (Read the text of the petition and get updates here: <https://nosanctions.org>). This petition demonstrates that there is support in Canada for an end to the government’s attacks on Venezuela, and many more people that can be appealed to join in actions to defend Venezuela’s right to sovereignty and self-determination.

On April 19 there

was another action in Vancouver for Venezuela. This action was organized by the Hugo Chávez People’s Defense Front Southwest Canada Chapter to mark the 208 years since Venezuela’s struggle for independence began, as well as to show support in Vancouver for Venezuela’s upcoming Presidential elections, which will take place on May 20, 2018. The Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign supported and participated and also spoke at this action, held in downtown Vancouver.

Every day, people in Venezuela are mobilizing in their schools, workplaces, communities and in the streets to defend the Bolivarian revolutionary process against Venezuela’s violent counter-revolutionary opposition and meddling by the U.S., Canada and their allies. As people living in Canada, which is supporting and participating in the imperialist campaign of sanction, threats and intervention, we have the responsibility to join them!

The Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign will continue being out on the streets every month, protesting in front of the U.S. consulate demanding U.S./Canada hands off Venezuela! To join in the next event visit www.firethistime.net or follow on Facebook and Twitter @FTT_np

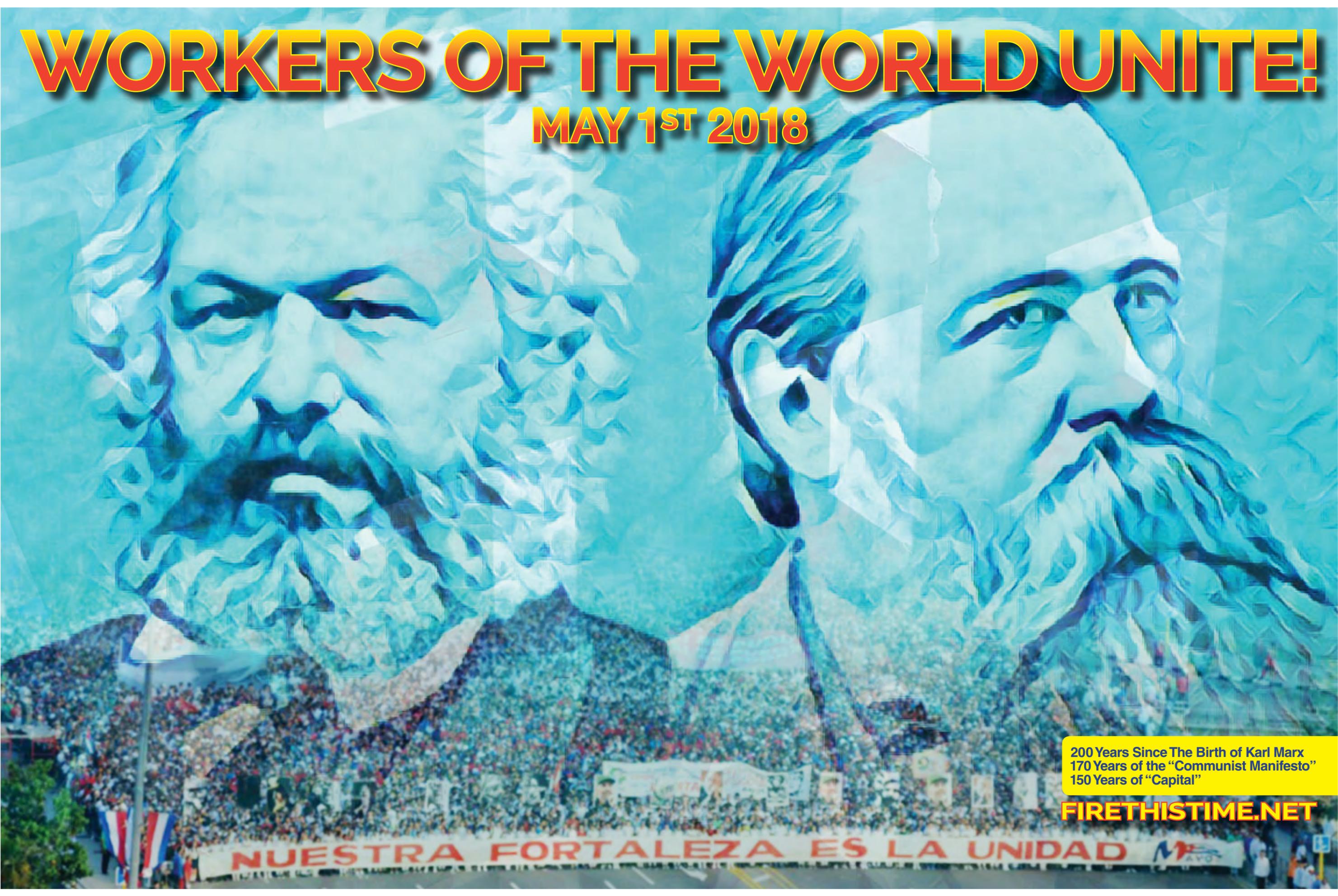


Fire This Time picket in front of US Consulate in Vancouver. April 6, 2018



WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

MAY 1ST 2018



200 Years Since The Birth of Karl Marx
170 Years of the "Communist Manifesto"
150 Years of "Capital"

FIRETHISTIME.NET

NUESTRA FORTALEZA ES LA UNIDAD

Bolivian President Evo Morales tweeted, "Stay strong, brother Lula. Your struggle and the struggle for the poor, workers...is also ours."

Political leaders throughout Latin America have expressed their solidarity with former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio 'Lula' da Silva after he adhered to an arrest warrant issued by judge Sergio Moro earlier this week and surrendered to federal police Saturday night.

The Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued an official statement saying Lula is the victim of an "evident judicial inquisition, (which has been) instrumentalized since the coup d'etat and dismissal of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016."

Bolivian President Evo Morales tweeted, "Stay strong, brother Lula. Your struggle and the struggle of the poor, workers, intellectuals and professionals committed to the dignity and sovereignty of our people is also our (struggle). No decision, no judicial coup can ever impede it or separate it from (our) people."

Ecuador's former President Rafael Correa denounced maneuvers undertaken by Brazil's corporate media to destroy Lula's political and historical reputation and supported the demonstrations and protests to defend his innocence.

Former Colombian president and Secretary General of the Union of South American Nations (Unasur), Ernesto Samper, affirmed that Lula is a political prisoner and his detainment harms Brazil's democracy.

Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs released an official statement saying that it "rejects the political aims engulfed in the imprisonment of comrade Luiz Inacio

'Lula' da Silva, which constitutes a grave event seeking to impede the most popular leader in Brazil from being a presidential candidate this year."

Former presidents Cristina Fernandez Kirchner (Argentina), Fernando Lugo (Paraguay) and Nicaragua's current president, Daniel Ortega, also expressed support for Lula.

Even Jean-Luc Melenchon, leader of the French political party, Francia Insumisa, tweeted, "Lula has never become corrupt. That's a lie. It's a judicial coup. He was 15 points ahead in the (presidential) polls."

Lula's two terms in office were marked by a slew of social programs, lifting millions of Brazilians out of poverty and removing the country from the United Nations World Hunger Map. One of his most ambitious and successful plans was Family Allowance (Bolsa Familia). Launched in 2003, it provided stipends to families living below the poverty line. In turn, those families must prove that their children are attending school and have been vaccinated.

He has told his judicial and media critics that "If they don't want me to be a (presidential) candidate (this year), go to the polls and vote against me. Don't create artifices and tricks to prevent my candidacy."

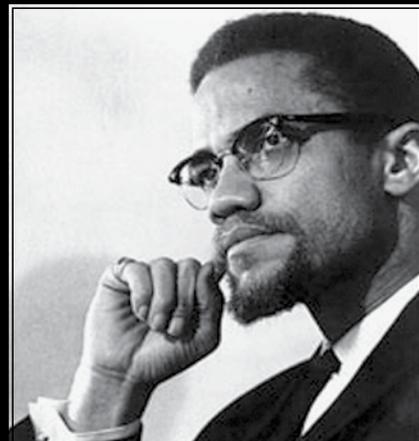
After delivering a rousing, motivational speech on the grounds of the ABC Steelworkers Union headquarters in Sao Bernardo do Campo, Sao Paulo Saturday, Lula was hoisted in the air by hoardes of supporters, seemingly floating from the stage, amid the crowd and back into the building. Shortly after, he would surrender to federal police, adhering to an arrest warrant issued by Moro.

He was flown from Sao Paulo and taken to prison in the city of Curitiba where members of several social movements and other supporters of the former president have set up camp in front of the federal police headquarters where he is detained.

Having left office with a record approval rating of 83 percent in 2011, according to Datafolha, Lula, despite his legal woes and imprisonment, has topped every electoral poll conducted this year by Vox Populi, Datafolha, Data Poder 360, Instituto Parana, the National Confederation of Transportation/MDA and Ipsos.

From: telesurtv.net/english

"By Any Means Necessary..."



MALCOLM X SPEAKS

*Organization of Afro-American Unity Homecoming Rally.
November 29, 1964*

"I must say this once before we close. I don't want you to think that I'm coming back here to rabble-rouse, or to get somebody excited. I don't think you have to excite our people; the man already has excited us. And I don't want you to think that I'm ready for some unintelligent action, or some irresponsible action, or for just any old thing just to be doing something. No. I hope that all of us can sit down with a cool head and a clear mind and analyze the situation, in the back room, anywhere, analyze the situation; and after we give the proper analysis of what we're confronted by, then let us be bold enough to take whatever steps that analysis says must be taken. Once we get it, then let's do it, and we'll be able to get some kind of result in this freedom struggle.

But don't let anybody who is oppressing us ever lay the ground rules. Don't go by their game, don't play the game by their rules."

**HANDS
OFF
LULA!**

**BRAZIL
Leftist Leaders,
Governments
Condemn
Lula's
Imprisonment**

SPEECH BY JUAN CARLOS RODRIGUEZ DIAZ MEMBER OF CUBA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLE'S POWER

Speech delivered at the public forum "Elections and Democracy in Revolutionary Cuba" in Vancouver, Canada on April 3rd, 2018. For a report from the event see page 23.

Good evening everybody. First of all, we would like to thank all of the solidarity groups that have made this cross-Canada tour possible from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I also thank all of you who are present here tonight. Events such as this in solidarity with Cuba are very important for us. In this room, we have felt a lot of warmth and love for Cuba and the essence of our homeland. Flags for us are the essential symbols of our nationhood and above all, a symbol of your solidarity work.

There is the struggle to lift the genocidal blockade that has been imposed on our country; the struggle for the return of the illegally occupied territory in Guantanamo. The struggle for the return of Elian Gonzalez; the struggle for the return of the Cuban 5 that, thanks to your solidarity, are already in Cuba. The solidarity that the Che Guevara Brigade has shown for many years towards our country, where you work directly with our people and when we see the Canadian flag marching along with our people in the May Day parade. Our country is very proud of all this solidarity. On behalf of the Cuban people and our Parliament, we thank you.

Since the Cuban war for Independence began in the 19th century, solidarity has been one of the principles of the Cuban revolution. With our hands, Cuba helped to defend people around the world and in turn, people from around the world have joined in the fight for Cuba's independence. Several combatants from Canada went to Cuba in the 19th century to fight in our independence war.



Tamara Hansen, Juan Carlos Rodriguez Diaz, and Yamil Martinez Marrero at the Vancouver stop of the Canada-wide tour of the Canadian Network on Cuba

CUBA'S REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

José Martí, our national hero, organized our project of liberation in the late 19th century, of course, also under the basis of solidarity.

To understand our social process, to understand our electoral system, and to understand the unity of the Cuban people, we need to understand the revolutionary process in all its continuity.

Martí made great strides towards the unity of the Cuban nation and the Cuban revolution. He left with us the

legacy of a single political party model. As he used to say: with all and for the well being of all, without any discrimination based on class, or race. He also warned us about the threat of imperialism which would later become a reality when the United States invaded Cuba. Our Independence War finished with an occupation by the U.S. army.

A two-party system was imposed in Cuba. An amendment to the 1901 Cuban Constitution, known as the Platte Amendment, was also imposed on us. The Platte amendment granted the United States the right to create military bases in Cuba and to invade our country any time they wanted.

From 1902 to 1958 the United States constantly intervened in Cuba. In the first election, they imposed their candidate.

The 1906 elections were a fraud, and they had to intervene in Cuba. That is the model that they imposed on our people. In 1917 and 1933, once again they intervened. They interrupted the revolutionary process that was taking place.

They created alliances with the bourgeoisie and with a military group led by Batista.

So, those elections were characterized by misinformation, fraud and the imposition of political parties. This is how the years of the Republic passed, until 1953 when Comrade Fidel began the revolutionary process for our society that resulted in the attack on the Moncada military garrison. Fidel explained how the Cuban revolution was based on popular democracy and, as he explained in "History will absolve me," how international solidarity is also



Above: Guests fill the Vancouver Public Library to hear the Cuban guests; Right: Indigenous & Latin American supporters blanket Cuban guests, Juan Carlos Rodriguez & Yamil Martinez



struggle against imperialism. In that context our revolutionary mass organizations were formed. The Central Trade Union was founded to bring together all Cuban workers, and the Committees for the Defense of the

Revolution and mass organizations for peasants and women were formed.

The Cuban revolution matured for 15 years until 1976, the year that our system of people's power was planned and tested, with an initial experiment conducted in the Province of Matanzas. Then, in the year 1976, there was a process of consultation with the people and a vote for a new constitution. 98% of our population voted for the Constitution, and 97.7% of those people voted in favour of socialism.

Within this new Constitution, a project based on two fundamental elements was approved. These elements are the unity of the Cuban people in support of the revolution and the right of the Cuban people to nominate and elect those that are going to represent them.

The structure of popular power in Cuba contains three interrelated elements: the Municipal Assembly of People's Power, the Provincial Assembly of People's Power and the National Assembly of People's Power. This is the process that we have been developing.

The electoral laws in the Cuban Constitution allow for the convocation

of two types of elections. Every five years there are general elections, and every two-and-a-half years there are partial elections. The process that we are in right now is the general election, which was convoked in September. The elections for the Municipal Assembly took place on November 26, and the representatives were officiated on December 17. This is a very important process because it directly represents the will of the Cuban people.

In all the country, there are over 12,515 delegates to the Municipal Assemblies. How were these delegates chosen? There are five fundamental steps: first, an electoral commission and a nomination commission is set up at each level. Our Constitution has established that people over 16 years old can vote. At nomination meetings, everyone has the right to nominate or to be nominated as candidates. People are put forward freely, and democratically.

There are no forms of political campaigning; rather there is a picture and short biography posted in a public place. There is no money spent in elections. As is outlined in our Constitution, each person has a single vote, and people don't have to vote if they do not want to. This means that when the day comes, people present themselves voluntarily at the voting stations. Today our voting stations are guarded by children who are members of the Pioneers organization; they are no longer guarded by soldiers as was done before the revolution.

The right to vote is a civil right that is also established in our Constitution. We also believe that it is a patriotic duty. The Cuban people are the ones that control who they elect as their delegates, and

fundamental to the Cuban revolution. Following this, we witnessed the landing of the Granma and the struggle in the Sierra Maestra mountains.

It was an epic struggle. Planes would take off from the naval base in Guantanamo and drop bombs that were labelled "Made in the USA" on the rural population which was struggling for freedom. Under these circumstances, the Cuban revolution triumphed on January 1, 1959, and became a lighthouse for the people of Latin America.

For the first time, we were free. Were we going to return to the multi-party system? Of course not. Instead, we carried out a program of power for the people. The Cuban revolution was the first fountain of people's power in Cuba. Fidel consulted the Cuban people about all major decisions. People were consulted in public squares, in neighbourhoods, and everywhere.

Under the pressure of imperialism, remember the Bay of Pigs; with the creation of counter-revolutionary gangs all around Cuba, financed and armed by the CIA; under threat of nuclear war with the Cuban missile crisis of 1962; the will of our people was forged in the

after they are elected, it is their very own neighbours that make sure they fulfil their duties. The Cuba people can also recall their elected delegate if they believe that they are not doing a proper job, or if they violate any laws.

All elected members must hold a meeting in their constituency at least twice a year and be responsible to the people that they represent. People are elected based on their merit, their capacity and for their work, for their level of sacrifice and their level of commitment to taking care of the community is essential.

The elections to the Municipal assemblies are important because many of the delegates to the Provincial Assemblies and the Cuban Parliament, or National Assembly, will be nominated from the Municipal assemblies. In this way, it is important for delegates in the higher assemblies are accountable to the base.

50% of the delegates to National Assembly were first elected to the Municipal assemblies in community meetings. The other 50% of the delegates to the National Assembly are nominated by the mass organizations through the nomination commission. There are six mass organizations that put forward candidates through the nomination commission: the Central Cuban Workers (CTC); the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP); the University Students' Federation (FEU); the Intermediate Level Students Federation (FEEM); and the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR). The proposals to the nomination commission are made in consultation with the people, who have direct input and create the criteria for those that are nominated.

Now I am talking about the elections that we had on March 11 of this year, where we voted for the 605 members of Cuba's National Assembly. Constitutionally, each candidate must receive over 50% of the votes in order to be elected. On March 11, 85.65% of eligible voters in Cuba came out to vote. More than 7,399,000 Cubans voted. 94.42% of the votes cast were valid. This demonstrates the confidence of the people in the revolution and the strength of the electoral system, as well as the strength of the form of democracy that has produced these elections in Cuba.

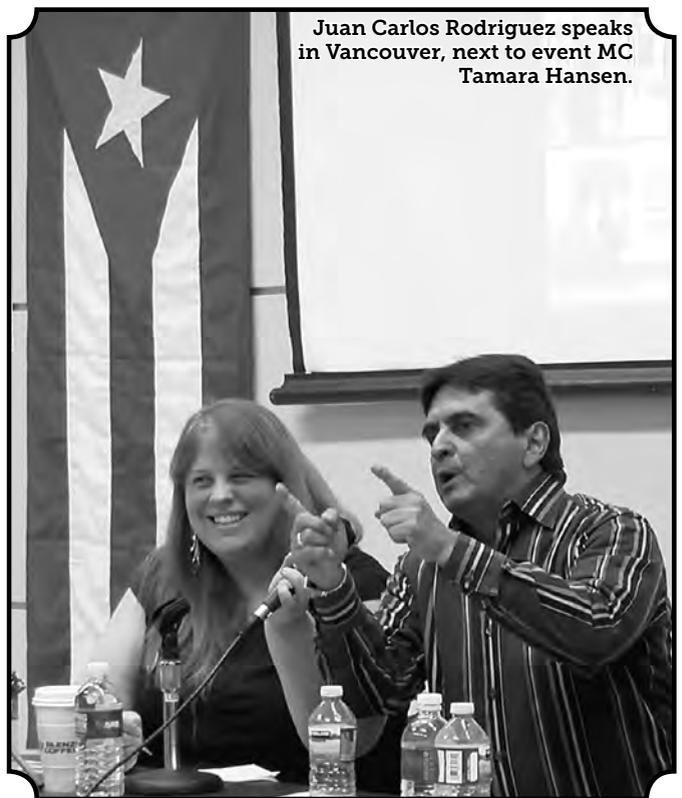
What is the composition of the 605 deputies to the National Assembly? 322

of the 605 deputies or 53.322% of the National Assembly deputies are women. Women from all sectors of society, they are ministers, doctors, intellectuals, nurses, and production workers.

By law, to be elected to Cuba's National Assembly you must be 18 years old. The youngest member is 19-year-old from Matanzas. There are young people of 21, 22, 23 years, a bit more than 13% of the elected deputies are young people. 294 of the seats are workers, farmers or self-employed. All the social sectors are represented in the National Assembly. There are deputies from different religions and cultures. More than 40% of Parliamentarians are Black or of African descent. 338 deputies are people that have been elected for the first time.

During the vote of the March 11 the people of Cuba demonstrated their confidence that they were voting for people that will represent them, people that will carry forward the destiny of our country. There are two ways that we Cubans can fill out the ballot; one is the united vote, which is a single vote for all the candidates, the other is a selective vote, which is a vote for each candidate. 80% of the votes cast were for the united vote for all the candidates. Candidates received between 69% and 98% of the vote. The candidate that received the most votes was Raul Castro Ruz, who received over 98% of the votes.

Now the 605 deputies have the responsibility to conclude the elections process by April 19, where they will vote in the highest election in our organizations for popular power, for the President, Vice-President and the Secretary of the of the National Assembly. They have the duty also to elect the Council of State, made up of 31 members, as well as the President, the First Vice-President, and the five Vice Presidents of Council of State and Ministers.



Juan Carlos Rodriguez speaks in Vancouver, next to event MC Tamara Hansen.

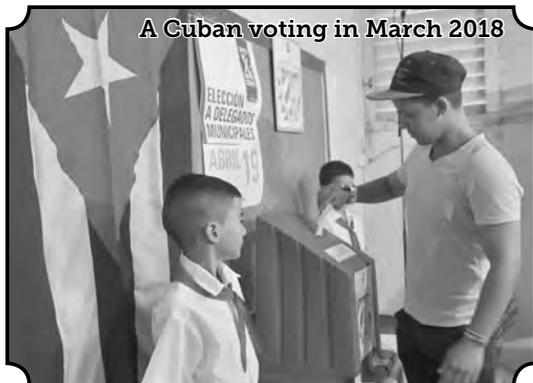
The 605 deputies all have an equal opportunity to be elected to the Council of State, or to any of the other positions. We understand as delegates that we have the historical responsibility to maintain the continuity of the revolution that began with Fidel continued with Raul and now is going to continue with the new generation.

Under what conditions did the elections happen in Cuba? I would like to establish the context.

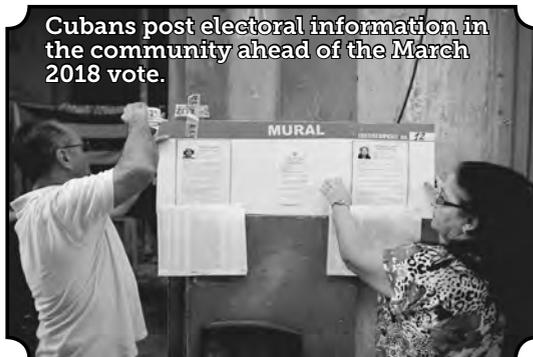
This year, Cuba faced a huge hurricane that affected 12 of our Provinces. This limited our access to fuel and other important resources and ruined 179,000 homes in our country. The cost of these damages was more than \$13 billion.

The people of Cuba demonstrated their capacity for struggle and resistance. In 20 days all electricity and water services were restored. In 62 days all the touristic infrastructure of the country was restored. We repaired 2,900 health, cultural and community centers, all in the middle of our election process.

As compañero Raul said, "No Cuban is going to be left behind." We created a program of subsidies and assistance to help people recuperate all that was damaged. Now we see the faith that Cubans have in their revolution and their electoral process. Cuba has spent



A Cuban voting in March 2018



Cubans post electoral information in the community ahead of the March 2018 vote.

millions of dollars for reconstruction. In this context, the United States administration has brought new attacks against the Cuban revolution. This administration has strengthened the U.S. blockade against Cuba. The Trump administration has already fined different companies for violating the blockade, add up to more than during the entirety of the Obama administration. There are new restrictions in diplomacy and migration.

Today there are more threats against our brothers and sisters in Latin America, especially the people of Venezuela. The U.S. government threatens the condition of peace in Latin America and the Caribbean. On March 5th at the ALBA-TCP meeting in Venezuela, compañero

Raul Castro denounced the non-conventional war and the military threats that have been made against Venezuela.

Again, it is in this context that elections were held in Cuba. This demonstrates the strength of the Cuban people and the legacy of Fidel; remember that this was the first election held in Cuba since the passing of Fidel.

The Cuban people know very well what the strategy of our enemies against the revolution is. The new U.S. administration has augmented their subversive campaign against the Cuban revolution, especially through the internet. This demonstrates their high level of hostility against our socialist project. This is why the unity of the Cuban people and people's power is so important.

The elections have also occurred in the context of a strengthening of the institutionalization of socialism. The past two Congresses of the Communist Party have passed economic and social guidelines for our current and future work. These are the guidelines for the deepening of our socialist model. Our vision for the future is one of always strengthening our socialism.

We have a plan for economic and social development until 2030. The growth of socialist production is fundamental for our economic development. In the middle of all of the hardships we have encountered, the economy grew by 1.6% in 2017. We are planning for a 2% increase this year.

What we have been doing is very important, especially with the most

recent steps we have taken towards the consolidation of our socialism. Because, above all, the victory of the Cuban people is a victory for all of the people of the world.

We have chosen to open our new National Assembly on April 19th because this is the day of our triumph over the United States at the Bay of Pigs. This April 19th will be another victory for our unity and the power of the Cuban people. We will educate the young people of Cuba in the principles of the struggle of Fidel, Raul, and the history of our country. Because of this, we have confidence in the continuity of the democratic electoral process and the Cuban revolution.

Within the 605 members of the National Assembly, there are two of the five heroes of the Republic of Cuba that you fought so hard for, Fernando and Gerardo.

In reality, it is hard to synthesize this complicated process in such a short time. You can find books and writings here in this room that explains very well the fundamentals of this process.

However, it is very important that we continue discussing the fundamentals of the democratic process in Cuba. For example, it might seem strange to you that Cuban Parliamentarians do not receive a salary for their work in Parliament. They continue receiving the same wage that they received from their job either as a professional or as a worker, before being elected. The work of the Cuban Parliamentarian is in the service of the people of Cuba and demonstrates their dedication to this project that we are building together.

Thank you very much.



Yamil Martinez answers questions at the Vancouver Public Library

CNC Canada Tour in Solidarity with Cuba - A Great Success with full house in Vancouver

By Tamara Hansen

On Tuesday, April 3rd four organizations came together to host two special Cuban guests for a well attended and timely event titled, "Elections and Democracy in Revolutionary Cuba". 90 people packed the room at the Vancouver Public Library to hear Cuban parliamentarian Juan Carlos Rodriguez Diaz and Yamil Martinez Marrero, Director of the Canada Desk at Cuban Institute of Friendship with the People (ICAP) speak about the recent elections in Cuba, as well as the upcoming Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba.

The event was part of a nine-city cross-Canada tour organized by the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC), with the Vancouver event endorsed by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC), Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade - Vancouver, the Communist League, Stories from the Salish Sea and the FMLN-Vancouver.

Juan Carlos Rodriguez Diaz is a member of Cuba's National Assembly of People's Power,

as well as a Historian of the City of Pinar del Rio and Professor at the "Hermanos Saiz Montes de Oca" University. Given his unique qualifications and experience - he was able to delve into detail regarding the development of Cuba's revolutionary democracy. He emphasized Cuba's unique achievements since the 1959 Revolution, despite ongoing attacks by the United States. The room burst into applause when he announced that after the most recent March election of Cuba's National Assembly of People's Power, the assembly is now over 53% women. This is the highest percentage of any country in the world which does not use gender quotas.

Yamil Martinez invited everyone to participate in the Che Guevara Brigade this year - emphasizing that it would be in collaboration with the May 1st International Brigade. Not only will 'Brigadistas' get to experience Cuba through tours and volunteer work, they will also be able to share the experience with people from across Canada and around the world. There were many past, present and future Brigade members in the audience who

were able to share their own questions and experiences.

VCSC Coordinator Tamara Hansen chaired the meeting and led the lively discussion period following the speakers. Participants took full advantage of having two Cuban experts with a vast combined knowledge and expertise, and the discussion ended only because the library was closing its doors!

Coast Salish Elder Kelly White led both the opening and closing of the event. She welcomed the Cuban guests to unceded Coast Salish territory and also presented them with ceremonial blankets as part of the closing ceremony. The room also made a circle where everyone was able to greet not only the special guests, but all those participating in the event.

This special event confirmed again that not only is Cuba continuing to make important gains on an ambitious revolutionary path, but also that their lessons and experience present important and unique lessons for those interested in building a better world. VCSC would like to thank our two special Cuban guests and the many event participants who made for such an incredible evening!

For photos of the event please see Juan Carlos Rodriguez Diaz's speech p. 19-22

VANCOUVER & THE WORLD CONTINUE DEMANDING: *Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!* *Return Guantanamo to Cuba!*

By Azza Rojbi

For over 56 years the U.S. has maintained an illegal and unjust blockade against Cuba. According to Cuba's Mission to the UN, this cruel policy cost Cuba at least \$4.3 billion in the period between April 2016 to June 2017 alone. The continuation of this criminal and inhuman blockade affects the daily life of the Cuban people, for example, doctors in Cuba are denied access to more than 50 percent of the drugs on the world market.

In addition to the blockade being in full force, the United States government continues its illegal occupation of the territory of Guantánamo Bay, Cuba and its hostile and aggressive policies against Cuba. Most recently in March 2018, President Trump signed the Congress budget deal, where the U.S. government allocated USD 20 million for subversion against Cuba camouflaged under the so-called "democracy programs."

In Vancouver Canada, Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade (FCAB-

Vancouver) is joining peace-loving people around the world in standing in defense of Cuba against the U.S. blockade and hostile policies against the island. On April 17, 2018, FCAB-Vancouver held its monthly picket action demanding that the U.S. end its criminal blockade against Cuba, stop its regime change programs, and return the territory of Guantanamo to Cuba! Alongside Vancouver's action, coordinated actions are held in Montreal, Ottawa and Kiev, Ukraine also on the 17th of every month.

Participants in Vancouver raised picket signs and energetically chanted "Hey Trump Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!" and "Return Guantanamo to Cuba Now!". In between picketing, Cuba supporters heard from local speakers as well as from Cuba solidarity activists with Ottawa Cuba Connections, via phone, who earlier in the day had protested against the U.S. blockade on Cuba in front of the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa.

Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade - Vancouver will continue monthly picketing at the U.S. consulate until the blockade is lifted,



and until the US returns Guantanamo Bay to Cuba. Join FCAB-Vancouver at our next action, May 17, 5 pm at the US Consulate in Downtown Vancouver, 1075 West Pender Street. For more information visit www.vancubavblockade.org, follow us on Facebook and Twitter @NoBloqueoVan.

Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!

Return Guantanamo to Cuba Now!

Follow Azza on Twitter: @Azza_R14



Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez,
President of Cuba

The Continuity of the Cuba's Socialist Revolution & Independence



MEET CUBA'S NEW PRESIDENT MIGUEL DIAZ-CANEL BERMÚDEZ

By Tamara Hansen

Since winning its independence from Great Britain at the end of the American Revolution in 1783, the United States government has set its sights, not on liberating the Americas, but instead on playing a reactionary role in attempting to dominate the region and its peoples. As Cuba fought valiantly for its independence from Spanish colonialism, the United States intervened with the Spanish-American War in 1898. When the war was over, Spain withdrew from Cuba, and an American occupying force remained for three years until Cuba's formal "independence" on May 20, 1902. It was a so-called "independence," that did not mean Cuba was independent at all!

In fact, before withdrawing their occupation troops, the U.S. government forced the new Cuban government to agree to the Platt Amendment. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, "the Platt Amendment [...]

specified the conditions for American withdrawal. Among those conditions were (1) the guarantee that Cuba would not transfer any of its lands to any foreign power but the United States, (2) limitations on Cuba's negotiations with other countries, (3) the establishment of a U.S. naval base in Cuba, and (4) the U.S. right to intervene in Cuba to preserve Cuban independence." May 2018 marks 116 years of the Platt Amendment, which is the supposed legal cover the U.S. continues to use for its illegal occupation of Guantanamo Bay with its torture prison and naval base. Cuba has been demanding the U.S. return Guantanamo to Cuba since the triumph of the revolution on January 1, 1959.

Cuba truly won its independence in 1959 with the triumph of the revolution. The revolutionary government led by Comandante Fidel Castro expropriated companies and land owned by wealthy Cubans and American corporations, which were stealing the resources of the Cuban people to line their own pockets. The United States government sought to overthrow the Cuban revolution and regain its profit-making industries and lands with the Bay of Pigs invasion on April 17, 1961.

On that day, over 1400 right-wing Cuban mercenaries, who had fled Cuba after the revolution, invaded the island with the backing of the U.S. government and President John F. Kennedy. However, due to the popularity of the revolution and the exceptional organization of the counter-offensive led by Fidel Castro, the revolutionary Cuban people and government defeated the well-funded invasion in less than 72 hours. The Bay of Pigs invasion was the first major defeat of U.S. imperialism in the Americas and left a mark on the American government, who promised to invade Cuba again. Nevertheless, over the past 57 years since the attack, the U.S. has not dared a direct invasion of Cuba again.

On April 19, 2018, as Cuba celebrated the 57th anniversary of their victory at the Bay of Pigs and the defeat of U.S. imperialism

on its shores, Cuba's newly elected National Assembly met for the first time in Havana. The National Assembly's major task was electing the country's new President, as well as Cuba's First Vice President, and five Vice Presidents, as well as the leadership of the Assembly itself.

Elected by Cuba's 605 member National Assembly were:

- Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President of Cuba
- Salvador Valdés Mesa, First Vice President of Cuba
- Ramiro Valdés Menéndez, Vice President of Cuba
- Beatriz Jhonson, Vice President of Cuba
- Inés María Chapman, Vice President of Cuba
- Gladys María Bejerano Portela, Vice President of Cuba
- Roberto Tomás Morales Ojeda, Vice President of Cuba
- Esteban Lazo Hernández, President of Cuba's National Assembly
- Ana María Machado, Vice President of Cuba's National Assembly
- Miriam Brito Sarroca, Secretary of Cuba's National Assembly

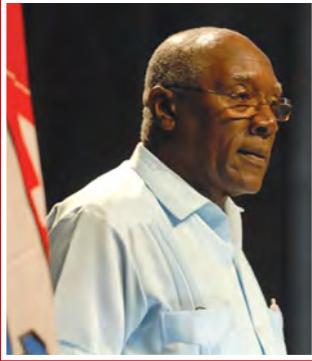
This executive, like the newly elected National Assembly, is a diverse group of Cubans.

Meet Cuba's new President, Miguel Díaz-Canel

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez is 58 years old and was born after the triumph of the Cuban revolution, like 530 out of the 605 members of the new National Assembly. As many news outlets have reported, his presidency marks a generational shift in the leadership of the Cuban revolution.

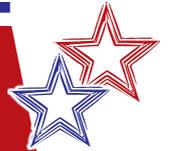
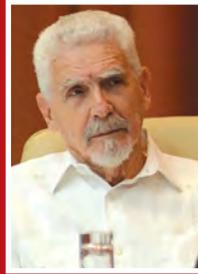
Díaz-Canel is a well-established figure in Cuba for many years. He has been Cuba's First Vice President since 2013, as well as a member of the National Assembly and Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba.





Salvador Valdés Mesa, Cuba's First Vice President

The 5 Vice Presidents of Cuba: Ramiro Valdés Menéndez , Beatriz Jhonson, Gladys María Bejerano Portela, Inés María Chapman, Roberto Tomás Morales Ojeda



He is also known for previous leadership roles in the Union of Young Communists of Cuba, the Cuban Communist Party in the provinces of Villa Clara and Holguin, as well as Minister of Education.

Díaz-Canel attained an electrical engineering degree in 1982 and then fulfilled his military service. He was also part of an internationalist mission in Nicaragua.

In their April 16, 2018 article, "Who is Miguel Díaz-Canel, Cuba's likely new president? A look from those who know him", NBC News interviewed many Cubans, mostly living in the U.S., who knew or grew up with Díaz-Canel. Many of the interviews are positive but tinged with mainstream media's overt bias against Cuba and the Cuban revolution. Interestingly, they interviewed Ramón Silverio, the creator of a famous LGBTQ+ friendly nightclub in Santa Clara, El Mejunje. According to NBC, Silverio says he did establish El Mejunje in 1984 "to provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ people, as well as artists, bohemians and rockers." Silverio recalled to NBC how Díaz-Canel was one of the community leaders who helped keep the space open, even taking his two young children to the kid-themed events held at El Mejunje. Silverio explained, "He was one of those people who went to the theatre because he loved it, not because he had to comply with a political task."

While NBC makes El Mejunje sounds like kind of an underground space, it is one of the most popular nightclubs in Santa Clara, one of Cuba's largest cities. As an activist from Canada on the 2008 Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade, I went there several times. Each night has a different theme, including their weekly LGBTQ+ night, Sunday afternoons for seniors and families, as well as ongoing cultural activities both at night and during the day. It is a staple of the city, for people from all walks of life. Far from being an isolated voice in Cuba, Ramón Silverio received a prize from the President of Cuba's National Centre for Sex Education (Centro Nacional de Educación Sexual - CENESEX) and Raul Castro's daughter, Dr. Mariela Castro Espín. As well, the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba - UNEAC) regularly supports and

praises his cultural work. Either way, Silverio is very positive about his interactions with Díaz-Canel saying, h e i s "advanced in his thinking."

Miguel Díaz-Canel in International Headlines

The mainstream bourgeois media across the U.S. and Canada are mostly spinning the same tales about Cuba and Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez.

First, they explain that Raul Castro is staying as the head of the Communist Party of Cuba, and thus Díaz-Canel will hold little to no power.

Second, they explain that Díaz-Canel will be confronting some immediate challenges, mostly related to Cuba's economy related to what they refer to as "stagnation" and the challenge of unifying Cuba's dual currencies, the CUC and the Peso. They also cite the deterioration of U.S.-Cuba relations under President Trump.

Third, they call Díaz-Canel names, like "right-hand man to outgoing leader Raul Castro," "bureaucrat," "little-known," "an uncharismatic figure," and "a problem-solving party loyalist."

It seems few media outlets paid much attention to the issues Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel presented to the Cuban people and the world in his first formal address at the National Assembly on April 19, 2018.

Miguel Díaz-Canel's first speech as President of Cuba

First, he responds to the discussion about who holds power in Cuba, by speaking about the responsibility of all members of the National Assembly to the Cuban people that elected them. He said, "If someone wanted to see a microcosm of Cuba in a group of citizens, due to its age, racial, gender and occupation composition, it would be enough to look and study the composition of our National Assembly." He continued the "representation of women, blacks and mestizos, young people and senior citizens who occupy decision-



The President, Vice President & Secretary of Cuba's National Assembly of People's Power

making positions in the highest levels of government, almost is in the same proportion as statistically make up the nation. However, the most important thing is not, how much we resemble the country. What we can not forget for a second, as of this moment, the commitment we have made to the people and the future." Then he concluded, "All deputies, the leadership of the Assembly, and the members of the Councils of State and Minister - our main reason for being is the systematic connection with the population, which forces us to deepen our analysis of the problems that concern the whole of society and the daily life of Cubans," and "fostering a broad and sincere debate and encouraging all possible ways to solve or mitigate the impact of the problems with the participation of those involved, either because they are affected or because they have the possibility to solve them."

He also acknowledges the responsibility of the role he is taking on, "I am aware of the concerns and expectations at the moment like this, but I know the strength and wisdom of the people, the leadership of the Party, the ideas of Fidel, the presence of Raúl and Machado."

At the same time, he did not shy away from the important role that Raul Castro will continue to play in the Cuban government. He said, "Raul [Castro] is a political leader who has constantly promoted debate for the improvement of partisan work, connected to the people, with ears listening to the ground, called on us with integrity to prove that "Yes, we can." [...] Knowing the popular feeling, I affirm to this Assembly, the supreme organ of State power, that the comrade General of the



First meeting of the newly elected National Assembly of Peoples' Power, April 19, 2018.

Army Raul Castro Ruz as First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, will continue leading the most important decisions for the present and the future of the nation.”

Second, in response to those talking about Cuba's economic challenges he explained, “In this Legislature there will be no room for those who aspire to capitalist restoration. This Legislature will defend the Revolution and will continue the improvement of socialism. To face the difficulties at the internal level is an opportunity to emphasize that the priorities are defined in the documents approved in the 7th Congress of the [Communist] Party, backed by the Parliament, after being subjected to a broad process of popular consultation. They recognize that political-ideological work, the struggle for peace, unity and ideological firmness, closely linked to the development of the national economy, ensuring the conscious, active and committed participation of the majority of the population in the process of updating the economic and social model, is the fundamental mission. It is up to us to simply enforce it and carry it forward.”

While Díaz-Canel did not expressly call out the United States, the first meeting of the National Assembly was expressly called on the historic date of the victory at the Bay of Pigs. Also, Díaz-Canel stated, “No country has resisted for so many years without surrendering to the type of economic, commercial, military, political and media siege that Cuba has faced. But there is no miracle in this feat. There is, in the first place, an authentic Revolution that emerged from the depths of the people, a consistent leadership that never put itself above the people.”

These words give us an idea of who Díaz-Canel is and what he represents, more than any of the petty comments made to slander him. Díaz-Canel has been elected for a 5-year term, and according to Cuban law, he can be elected for a maximum of a second 5-year term before he will need to pass the torch to a new President. Of course, more important than his words will be his actions.



Many in Cuba and around the world are looking forward to understanding the role his leadership will play in the developments of the Cuban socialist revolution.

Elián González comments to CNN

CNN recently interviewed Elián González, who became famous in 1999 when his mother kidnapped him from his father and fled Cuba by boat to Miami. The boat capsized, killing Elián's mother and the 5-year-old was rescued by a Florida fisherman and delivered to his mother's family in Miami. The family in Miami refused to return Elián to his father in Cuba. After a huge battle for the return of Elián, in which Fidel Castro and the Cuban people mobilized across the island alongside Elián's father, the U.S. government intervened to return him to Cuba. Elián is now 24 years old. He explained to CNN about life in Cuba today, explaining, “Many people say ‘when the Castros' mandate ends’ but I don't believe the ideology will end; not what they have taught us, nor the ideas of the Castros. [...] Cuba is more than its government.” As someone who has been offered money and status to defect from Cuba and become a member of the opposition, Elián González remains a crucial voice for young Cubans who are defending the Cuban socialist revolution and its important gains for poor and working people.

Of course, the leadership of those who fought in and won the Cuban revolution will never be replaced in the minds and hearts of revolutionary Cubans. However, as coming generations take up the responsibility of continuing to build and develop Cuba's socialist project, they will face the same (and possibly deepening) challenges that were faced by the leadership that came before them. However, Cubans continue to take to the streets, to mobilize in their communities and their popular mass institutions, to defend the gigantic gains they have made so far. The future is bright and full of new advances of this revolution of workers and farmers “by the humble, with the humble, and for the humble” as Fidel Castro said once.

Follow Tamara on Twitter: @THans01

NUESTRA HERENCIA



Sara González Gómez

13 de junio de 1951 - 1 de febrero de 2012

Nacida en la Cuba prerrevolucionaria, Sara González fue fundadora del Movimiento de la Nueva Trova en Cuba. En 1973, compuso "Girón, la victoria", un tributo a la victoria de Cuba en Playa Girón en abril de 1961. Más tarde en su vida fue conocida por su peña cultural mensual, "El jardín de la Gorda", una noche amistosa con la comunidad LGBTQ+ en La Habana.

Girón: la victoria

*Quando cambia el rojo color del cielo
por el blanco color de palomas
se oyen las campanas de los hombres
que levantan sus sonrisas de las lomas.*

*Después que entre pecho y pecho
haya tenido el deseo de quemar,
de matar, de vengar y de vencer.*

*Quando no se olvida que no hay
libertad regalada, sino tallada
sobre el mármol y la piedra
de monumentos llenos de flores y de tierra,
y por los héroes muertos en las guerras*

*se tiene que luchar y ganar,
se tiene que vivir y amar,
se tiene que reír y cantar,
se tiene que morir y crear.*

*Canto y llanto de la tierra,
canto y llanto de la gloria,
y entre canto y llanto de la guerra,
nuestra primera victoria.*

*De luces se llenó el cielo
de esta tierra insurrecta,
y entre luces se batió seguro
buscando la victoria nuestra.*

*Hoy se camina confiado
por los surcos de la historia,
donde pelearon los héroes
para alcanzar la victoria.*

*Canto y llanto de la tierra,
canto y llanto de la gloria,
y entre canto y llanto de la guerra,
nuestra primera victoria.*

OUR HERITAGE



Sara González Gómez

June 13, 1951-February 1, 2012

Born in pre-revolutionary Cuba, Sara González was a founder of Cuba's Nueva Trova Movement in music. In 1973, she composed "Girón, la victoria" a tribute to Cuba's victory at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. Later in life she was known for hosting "The Fat Woman's Garden" an LGBTQ+ friendly cultural night in Havana.

Girón: The Victory

*When the red color of the sky changes
to the white color of pigeons
hearing the bells of men
that raise their smiles from the hills.*

*After going chest to chest
had the desire to burn,
to kill, to avenge and to win.*

*When one does not forget that there is no
freedom given, if not carved
of marble and stone
of monuments full of flowers and earth,
and by the heroes killed in the wars*

*we must fight and win,
we must live and love,
we must laugh and sing,
we must die and create.*

*Singing and weeping of the earth,
singing and weeping of glory,
and between the singing and weeping of war,
our first victory*

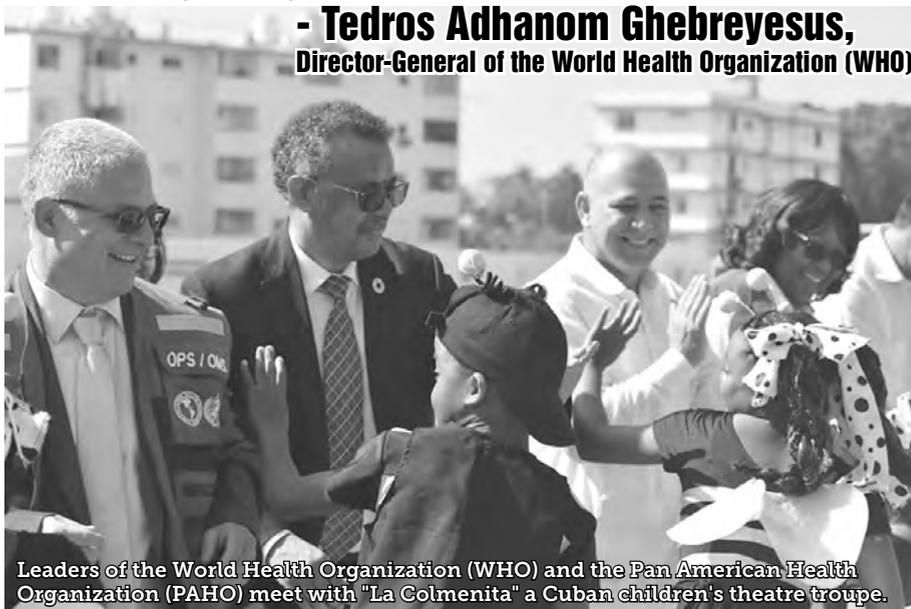
*Lights filling the sky
of this insurrectional land,
and between lights successfully fighting
pursuing our victory.*

*Today walking confidently
through the trenches of history,
where the heroes fought
to achieve victory.*

*Singing and weeping of the earth,
singing and weeping of glory,
and between the singing and weeping of war,
our first victory*

"Visiting Cuba reminds me that #HealthForAll is not a dream for the future [...] Cuba is an example for the world"

- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,
Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO)



Leaders of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) meet with "La Colmenita" a Cuban children's theatre troupe.

By Tamara Hansen

International leaders from healthcare sectors in over 80 countries were welcomed to Cuba, April 23-27, for "Cuba Salud 2018" the country's third International Health Convention. This event also included Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as Carissa Etienne, Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Adhanom tweeted, "Visiting Cuba reminds me that #HealthForAll is not a dream for the future, it's not just an aspiration; it's a reality now. Cuba is an example for the world."

#HealthForAll a Reality Now?

While countries like the United States continue to debate the merits of universal and free healthcare for all, since the triumph of the Cuban socialist revolution in 1959, Cuba has made people's health a top priority. Even though Cuba remains a so-called "third world" country, the success of their revolutionary healthcare model is evident. Cuba's health indicators are some of the best in Latin America and the Caribbean, often even surpassing Cuba's so-called "first-world" neighbours to the north, the U.S. and Canada. For

example, in the case of infant mortality, one of the most important indicators of human development, Cuba has lower numbers than the United States or Canada. Another example is the ratio of doctors and healthcare professionals to the population. According to the WHO, Cuba has the highest ratio of skilled health professionals to the population in the Americas, with 155 skilled professionals to 10 000 people. Canada sits at 119.5 professionals and the U.S. at 117.8 professionals per 10 000 people. When one looks at numbers of physicians, rather than just healthcare professionals, according to the CIA World Factbook, Cuba is soundly ahead with 75.2 physicians per 10 000 people, while Canada sits at 25.4 physicians and the U.S. at 25.7 physicians both per 10 000 people.

Some of the other excellent developments Cuba has been recognized for by the World Health Organization include:

>> Since 2005, Cuba's "Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade" (HRIMB) has travelled to 21 countries to help more than 3.5 million people affected by emergency disasters and epidemics, saving an estimated 80,000 lives. The



HRIMB was awarded the prestigious Dr. Lee Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health from the WHO in 2017.

>> Cuba's vaccination campaigns have led to it being the first country in the region to eliminate polio.

>> In 2017 for the 10th consecutive year, Cuba has an infant mortality rate below six per 1,000 live births, and in 2017 closed with 4.4, the lowest rate in the Americas, including that of the United States (5.8) and Canada (4.5). (CIA World Factbook)

>> Life expectancy of Cubans at birth is almost 80 years, one of the highest in the Americas

Vaccination Week in the Americas

Before the opening of "Cuba Salud 2018", international representatives inaugurated the 2018 Vaccination Week of the Americas in Cuba. The PAHO website explains why Cuba was chosen to host this year's event. "Cuba was chosen to host the regional launch of the campaign because of the great strides the country has made in vaccine development and in eliminating vaccine-preventable diseases including polio, neonatal tetanus, diphtheria, measles, rubella, congenital rubella syndrome, whooping cough and mums."

Jose Angel Portal Miranda, Cuba's Deputy

Health Minister, added that in Cuba, "vaccination is available to everyone, free of charge, and can be accessed from primary health care providers. As a result, vaccination coverage in Cuba for all vaccines currently stands at 98 percent, resulting in high population immunity."

Healthcare vs. Blockade

Despite this success, an ongoing challenge for Cuba remains the U.S. blockade on Cuba. According to Cuba's Granma International, "the accumulated financial losses to the Cuban Public Health sector currently stand at around 2.5 billion dollars since the blockade was first imposed in 1960." While many believed that the reestablishment of formal diplomatic ties between Cuba and the United States would mean a gradual end to the unjust blockade, it has been reinforced under U.S. President Trump.

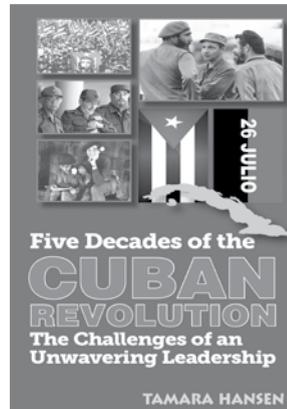
While Cuba claims \$2.5 billion worth of financial damage to its healthcare sector it is impossible to estimate the accurate cost of the blockade on Cuba's healthcare system, because the price is not only financial, it is human. The blockade forbids Cuba from purchasing certain medicines and medical supplies from the U.S. Because many patents are held in the United States, often Cuba is barred from buying medicines from companies who may be located elsewhere, but are closely linked to pharmaceutical companies in the U.S. Also, medical equipment that has over 10% of its components made in the U.S. is off-limits to Cuba because of the U.S. blockade. International scientific exchanges and collaboration are also a challenge. The blockade also means travel limitations for Americans who want to go to Cuba and Cubans who want to go to the U.S. This restricts the scientific community's ability to share and learn from each other.

If the blockade is so harsh, how is Cuba able to do so much? Cuban creativity helps. The government has invested to what Cuba calls, 'green medicine,' since 1996, when the Ministry of Health developed a program to integrate natural

continued on page 31

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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.

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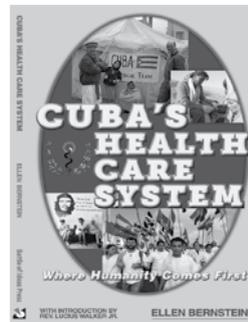
Battle of Ideas Press

CUBA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM WHERE HUMANITY COMES FIRST

BY ELLEN BERNSTEIN

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

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



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CANADA INVOLVES ITSELF IN LIES AGAINST CUBA

By Manuel Yepe

The Ottawa government, which maintains cordial relations with Cuba despite the enormous pressure against the United States, seems to have given in to the manipulations led by Republican Senator Marco Rubio. He is presented as an exile from Cuba – a country where he was not born and has never visited – to carry out an agenda of dissimulations and lies to Havana’s detriment.

Senator Marco Rubio aspires to be Donald Trump’s replacement in the U.S. presidency. His promoters have prepared an anti-Cuban program for him that is based on the calculation that the next president of the United States will be Latino and Republican. Rubio’s family fled Cuba, it is true, but this happened in 1956, during the bloody tyranny of Fulgencio Batista imposed by the United States in 1952 through a coup

d’état and was deposed in 1959 by the popular revolution. He was born in Miami and has never set foot in Cuba. Calling Marco Rubio as Cuban is like defining Donald Trump as European.

Canada established diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1945 and maintained them uninterrupted after the triumph of the Cuban revolution. Cuba was the first country in the Caribbean region with which Canada exchanged diplomatic missions.

Cuban-Canadian ties were particularly warm in the 1970s and 1980s, during the government of Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, father of the current Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, since November 2015.

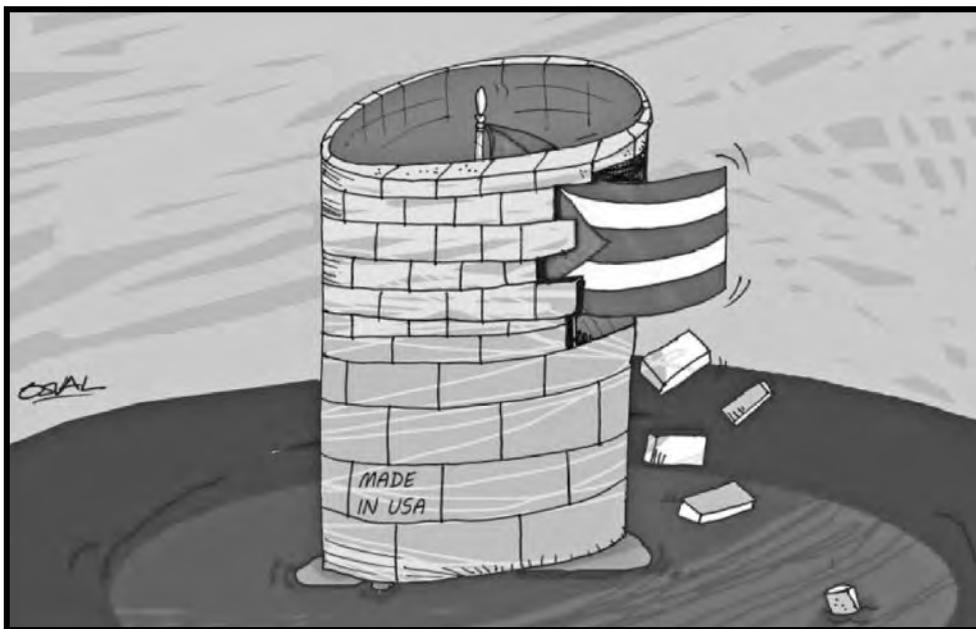
Pierre Elliot Trudeau and Fidel Castro had a very close relationship of friendship, solidarity and respect. This was symbolized by the fact that, at the death of the Canadian leader in 2000, Fidel Castro was one of his pallbearers

at the state funeral.

In 1994, a joint venture was formed between the Cuban Nickel Union and the Canadian company Sherritt International, which operates a mining and processing plant in Moa, on the eastern tip

of the island. A second joint venture, Cobalt Refinery Co. Inc. was established in Alberta, Canada, to refine nickel. All together, there are 85 Canadian companies and subsidiaries of various profiles in Cuba.

Canada has consistently criticized the blockade against Cuba and has strongly opposed the extraterritoriality of the Helms-Burton Act.



In 1996, the Godfrey-Milliken Bill was introduced in Canada’s Parliament in rejection of the extraterritoriality of the Helms-Burton Act. It was a law that would have trained some three million Canadians of British Empire loyalist descent who fled the U.S. revolution to demand retribution for property and land confiscated by the U.S. government in the late 16th century as a result of that revolution.

Such a law would have placed a financial burden of many trillions of dollars on a number of large and medium-sized economic entities in the United States, given the current valuation of expropriated property.

The Godfrey-Milliken bill did not become law but resulted in an amendment to the Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act that

effectively neutralized any attempt to impose the Helms Burton Act on Canadians and Canadian entities.

The Canadian government also imposed a \$1.5 million fine on any Canadian entity that contributed in any way to the implementation of the Helms Burton Act in Canada.

Canada has also protested against the presence of U.S. agents at Canadian airports trying to catch U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba as tourists in defiance of U.S. blockade laws.

Canada has operated an embassy in Havana since 1945. Cuba has its own in Ottawa and consulates in Toronto and Montreal.

Marco Rubio has declared himself the architect of the current stage of U.S. aggression against Cuba. He’s also the inventor of the hoax of sonic attacks on U.S. diplomats on the island. In this capacity, he advises on the drawing up of lists of Cuban persons and entities that Washington sanctions as violators of the provisions of the U.S. blockade.

It is not easy to understand why the govern-

ment of Canada, the nation that is the biggest source of tourists to Cuba, could have aligned itself in a campaign against Cuba that has as its axis someone with such a fuller trajectory.

To disavow for security reasons the travel to Cuba of the relatives of Canadian diplomats accredited to the island is extremely strange considering that there has never been any report of a fact indicative of insecurity against any Canadian among the millions who, many years ago, enjoyed

the goodness of the Cuban climate and the sincere affection of its people.

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

A CubaNews translation. Edited by Walter Lippmann.

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* EN ESPAÑOL *

CANADA SE INVOLUCRA EN MENTIRA CONTRA CUBA

Por Manuel Yepe

El Gobierno de Ottawa, que sostiene relaciones cordiales con Cuba pese a las enormes presiones en contra de Estados Unidos, parece haber cedido a las manipulaciones que lidera el senador republicano Marco Rubio, que se presenta como un exiliado de Cuba -país en el que no nació ni ha visitado jamás- para ejecutar una agenda de simulaciones y mentiras en perjuicio de La Habana.

El senador Marco Rubio ambiciona ser el relevo de Donald Trump en la presidencia estadounidense y sus promotores le han preparado a tal fin un programa anticubano que parte del cálculo de que el próximo presidente de Estados Unidos habrá de ser hispano y republicano. La familia de Rubio huyó de Cuba, es cierto, pero ello ocurrió en 1956, durante la cruenta tiranía de Fulgencio Batista impuesta por Estados Unidos en 1952 mediante un golpe de Estado y fue depuesta en 1959 por la revolución popular. Nació en Miami y jamás ha puesto un pie en Cuba. Conceptuar a Marco Rubio como cubano equivale a definir a Donald Trump como europeo.

Canadá estableció relaciones diplomáticas con Cuba en 1945 y las mantuvo ininterrumpidamente tras el triunfo de la revolución cubana. Cuba fue el primer país de la región caribeña con el que Canadá intercambió misiones diplomáticas.

Los vínculos cubano-canadienses fueron especialmente cálidos en los años 70 y 80 del pasado siglo, durante el gobierno del Primer Ministro Pierre Elliot Trudeau, padre del actual Primer Ministro, Justin Trudeau, desde noviembre de 2015.

Pierre Elliot Trudeau y Fidel Castro tuvieron una muy estrecha relación de amistad, solidaridad y respeto, simbolizada en el hecho de que, a la muerte del líder canadiense en el año 2000, Fidel Castro fue uno de los portadores de su féretro en el funeral estatal.

En 1994, surgió una empresa conjunta entre la Unión Cubana del Níquel y la empresa canadiense Sherritt International, que opera una planta de minería y procesamiento sita en Moa, en el extremo oriental de la isla. Una segunda

Estados Unidos una carga financiera de muchos billones de dólares, dada la valoración actual de las posesiones expropiadas.

La Godfrey-Milliken no llegó a constituirse en ley pero dio lugar a una enmienda de la Ley sobre Medidas Extraterritorialidades

Extranjeras que efectivamente neutralizó todo intento por imponer la Ley Helms Burton a canadienses y entidades de Canadá.

El gobierno canadiense impuso además una multa de un millón y medio de dólares a cualquier entidad canadiense que de alguna forma contribuyera a la aplicación en Canadá de disposiciones de Ley Helms Burton.

Canadá también ha protestado contra la presencia de agentes de Estados Unidos en aeropuertos canadienses intentando capturar a ciudadanos estadounidenses que viajan a Cuba como turistas

en desafío de las leyes del bloqueo impuesto por Estados Unidos.

Canadá opera una embajada en La Habana desde 1945. Cuba tiene la suya en Ottawa y consulados en Toronto y Montreal.

Marco Rubio se ha declarado arquitecto de la actual etapa de la agresión estadounidense contra Cuba e inventor de la patraña de los ataques sónicos a diplomáticos de Estados Unidos en la isla. En ese carácter, asesora la confección de las listas de personas y entidades cubanas que Washington sanciona como transgresores de las

disposiciones del bloqueo estadounidense.

No es fácil comprender los motivos por los que el gobierno de Canadá, nación que es el mayor emisor de turistas a Cuba, pueda haberse alineado en una campaña contra Cuba que tiene como eje a alguien de trayectoria tan fullera.

Desautorizar por motivos de seguridad los viajes a Cuba de los familiares de los diplomáticos canadienses acreditados en la isla es sumamente extraño considerando que jamás se ha reportado algún hecho indicador de inseguridad contra algún canadiense de entre los millones que hace muchos años disfrutaban de las bondades del clima cubano y el afecto sincero de su gente.

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

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empresa conjunta, Cobalt Refinery Co. Inc., fue creada en Alberta, Canadá, para refinar el níquel. En total hay en Cuba 85 empresas y subsidiarias canadienses de varios perfiles. Canadá ha criticado sistemáticamente el bloqueo contra Cuba y se ha opuesto con firmeza a la extraterritorialidad de la Ley Helms-Burton. En 1996, en el Parlamento de Canadá se introdujo el Proyecto de ley Godfrey-Milliken en rechazo de la extraterritorialidad de la Ley Helms-Burton. Era una ley que habría capacitado a unos tres millones de canadienses descendientes de personas leales al imperio británico integrados en la United Empire Loyalists que huyeron de la revolución en Estados Unidos, para demandar retribución por las propiedades y tierras confiscadas por el gobierno estadounidense a fines del siglo XVI, a raíz de aquella revolución.

Esta ley habría significado para un buen número de entidades económicas grandes y medianas de

continued from page 28

medicine techniques into the mainstream healthcare system in Cuba. Green medicine can include herbal remedies, eastern or Asian natural cures, and other plant-based medicines which are now being grown, researched, and prescribed across the island. Across the island, technology is also heavily integrated into Cuba's healthcare system, medical professionals are very careful to take care of their machines and often come up with imaginative solutions for spare parts when things break down. Cuba's health initiatives are also very grassroots, with doctors who live and work in specific neighbourhoods, so they know their patients, their families and are integrated into the community. Integration facilitates community education, vaccination, and preventative care.

Cuba's Revolutionary Internationalist Preventative Healthcare Model

Cuba's revolutionary internationalist preventative healthcare model did not just appear out of thin air. It was designed, planned, and built by the visionary leadership of the Cuban government, which has created an accessible, universal, and free healthcare system for all people.

It is 'revolutionary,' because it is a socialist model, not a capitalist one, putting human need before corporate profit.

It is 'internationalist' because Cubans are not isolationist, they are using their high ratios

of healthcare professionals to bring health to poor and working people around the globe.

It is 'preventative' because rather than waiting for people to get sick and paying hundreds of thousands to pharmaceutical companies to 'cure' people, Cuba believes in preventing illnesses through ongoing education and accessible local healthcare workers.

As human loving people around the globe, we have a responsibility to defend the people of Cuba against U.S. aggression and the unjust and immoral U.S. blockade on Cuba. We also have a responsibility to remind the various levels of government in our own countries, especially in the United States and Canada, that our healthcare system is not for sale!

Cuba reminds us that a broader and more accessible universal healthcare system is both possible and necessary. As the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus tweeted, "Cuba is an example for the world."

Follow Tamara on Twitter: @THans01



A Cuban healthcare professional during an Internationalist mission in the Caribbean

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MONTHLY PICKET ACTION

LIFT THE U.S. BLOCKADE ON CUBA!

RETURN GUANTANAMO TO CUBA!

THURSDAY MAY 17 2018
U.S. CONSULATE @ 5PM
 1075 W. PENDER ST
 DOWNTOWN, VANCOUVER

QR CODE

@NOBLOQUEOYAN

FRIENDS OF CUBA AGAINST THE U.S. BLOCKADE-VANCOUVER
WWW.VANCUBAVSBLOCKADE.ORG

KINDER MORGAN PIPELINE?

DON'T BANK ON IT!

RALLY + MARCH
SAT. MAY 12 1PM
TD BANK TOWER
 700 W. GEORGIA @ HOWE (DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER)

WWW.CLIMATECONVERGENCE.CA

HANDS OFF SYRIA

ANTIWAR PUBLIC FORUM
 SPEAKERS • MULTIMEDIA • DISCUSSION

MONDAY MAY 14TH 2018
 BRITANNIA COMMUNITY CENTRE
 LEARNING RESOURCE ROOM
 1661 NAPIER STREET
 VANCOUVER, B.C. CANADA

MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR & OCCUPATION
MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG
 @MAWO_VAN

U.S./CANADA HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!

NO REGIME CHANGE IN VENEZUELA!

FRIDAY JUNE 8 2018

1. PROTEST ACTION 4PM
 > U.S./CANADA HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!
 US CONSULATE IN VANCOUVER - 1070 WEST PENDER ST.
2. INFO TABLING & PETITION 5:30PM
 > NO MORE U.S./CANADA SANCTIONS & THREATS!
 > RESPECT THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF VENEZUELAN PEOPLE!
 VANCOUVER ART GALLERY - ROBSON ST. AND HOWE ST.

FIRE THIS TIME - VENEZUELA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN
WWW.FIRETHISTIME.NET