

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



# Fire This Time!

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**END THE WAR ON YEMEN!**

**2019**

STOP THE WAR ON YEMEN

Ahmed Jahaf @aa7medja7af

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# THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS “CLEAN BC” WITH LNG

By Thomas Davies

The betrayal of the BC New Democratic Party (NDP)/Green Party government’s approval of the \$40 billion LNG Canada mega-project sunk in one month later when they presented their “Clean BC” climate plan. What kind of plan is 25% short of its initial goal to begin with - as they are in their goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions 40% by 2030? As Wilderness Committee organizer Peter McCartney succinctly pointed out, their climate plan has “an LNG-sized gap.”

We aren’t supposed to worry though, because the government has given itself two years to try and figure out how to make it work. What miracle are they expecting in the next two years?

## “Biggest Capital Project in B.C. History... and Probably the Most Climate Polluting As Well”

Barry Saxifrage has done some excellent reporting and graph production for the National Observer on the project. He summarizes, “The LNG Canada project is massive. It will sprawl from new fracked gas wells in northern B.C., across the coast mountains via the hotly-contested, 650 km ‘Coastal GasLink’ pipeline, to a new liquefaction terminal in Kitimat. From there, the gas will be loaded onto supertankers and shipped to Asia. The LNG terminal is designed to be built in two phases, each of which will produce 13 million tonnes of liquid natural gas. The first phase is now going ahead.

If both phases get built, it will become the ‘biggest capital project in B.C. history.’ And probably the most climate polluting as well, with projections for up to 10 million tonnes of climate pollution (MtCO<sub>2</sub>) per year. For scale, that’s more than the emissions from all passenger cars, trucks and SUVs in the province today.”

## They Knew, and They Know

Let’s be clear. The provincial government approved the LNG Canada mega-project knowing full well two vital facts:

- The UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently

issued a dire report that calls for governments to reduce carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 from 2010 levels or face catastrophic consequences

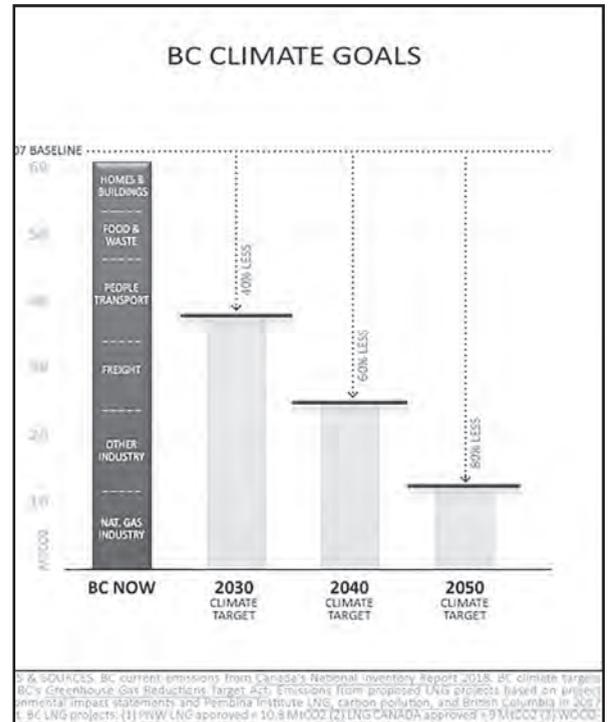
- The LNG Canada project makes it virtually impossible to do this and puts BC way out in outer space as far as meeting its 2040 and 2050 targets of 60% and 80% emission reductions

Saxifrage has probably the most damning observation of all: “When it comes to calculating the project’s benefits, the government uses numbers that assume phase two will be built — \$40 billion in spending and \$22 billion in revenue. But when it comes to calculating climate pollution, and what to do about it, the government uses numbers that assume phase two will not be built.”

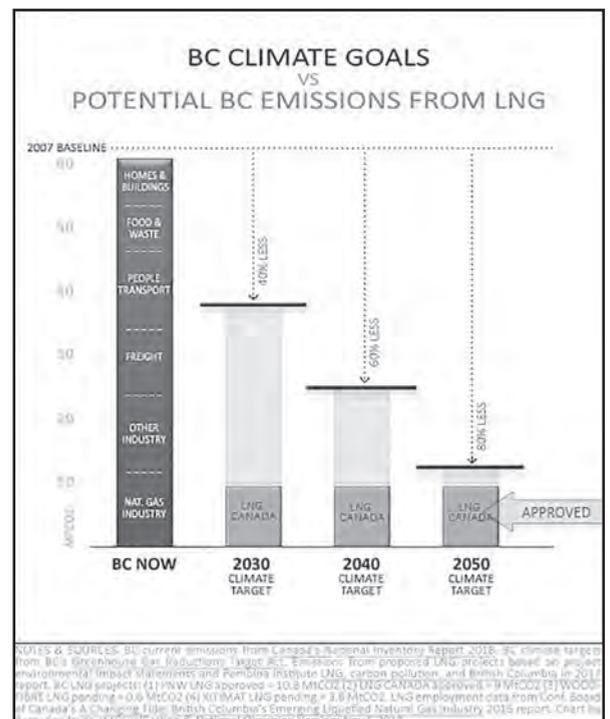
## LNG is Terrible for BC

The world’s best and broadest scientific consensus has sounded the emergency alarm...and the provincial government is asking us to check back in a couple of years. Have they already forgotten the global warming aggravated wildfires last summer in BC? They burned more than 1.2 million hectares of the province, eight times more than the 10-year-average.

What will they tell us this summer?



Infographics by Barry Saxifrage for National Observer show how much of BC’s proposed carbon budget would be taken up by the LNG Canada project - even before other LNG projects under consideration.



**Vancouver solidarity rally the Unist'ot'en Camp, who are fighting the Coastal Gas pipeline which would cross their traditional territories to serve the LNG Canada mega-project in Kitimat. December 17, 2018.**



In December 2018 issue of *Fire This Time* we outlined some of the major concerns of LNG production:

- There is significant opposition from Indigenous Nations whose territory the plant and associated pipeline would be built on
- “Fracking,” which is used to extract LNG from underground, wastes massive amounts of fresh water, pollutes the land, releases incredibly harmful greenhouse gases, and causes spikes in earthquakes
- In many cases, communities see a short-term boom in construction growth which inflates the cost of living, and then they are quickly left with relatively few long-term jobs and the health consequences of proximity industrial production
- Domestic gas prices end up increasing as the new LNG supply is used almost exclusively for export.

These concerns were once again reinforced when the B.C.’s Oil and Gas Commission recently concluded that a trio of significant earthquakes in the area around Fort St. John at the end of November were caused by Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. (CNRL) LNG-related fracking operation.

Adding insult to injury is that CNRL predicted its operations would cause earthquakes in its pre-assessment report, “but events larger than magnitude three were not expected.” So the government and corporations are already moving forward

with fracking projects it knows will cause earthquakes!

#### **Wildfires. Earthquakes. Who Benefits?**

The LNG Canada project received more than \$5.35 billion in tax-payer funded financial incentives from the BC government. They include a break on the carbon tax, the elimination of the LNG income tax, cheaper electricity rates, a PST exemption, and a natural gas tax credit which gives companies an additional three percent corporate income tax cut.

The only person besides BC NDP Premier John Horgan who seemed genuinely delighted with the “Clean BC” plan was Greg D’Avignon, president and chief executive of the Business Council of B.C. “If you use too much stick, you might reach your [greenhouse gas] reductions because the capital will have fled. That’s not a threat, it’s a reality,” he said, “We think it [Clean BC] will be a lot of carrots.” Of course, it will be -

for corporations. D’Avignon intervened directly with the BC government to make sure of it.

#### **Nothing Less**

No one is saying that the tasks which confront current governments are easy. After decades of willful neglect by previous Liberal governments and their corporate allies to maximize profits at the expense of the planet – humanity faces massive, decisive challenges in the next decade. However, this is no secret. Anyone holding public office has no excuse to be ignorant of the facts of the unfolding climate crisis, nor of being timid in confronting them. Corporations are using everything in their power to make sure their interests are maintained. We, the poor and working people must work together to hold the BC government and their executives accountable for their decisions and their consequences.

Currently, that means educating, organizing and mobilizing to stop the LNG Canada mega-project and the expansion of the LNG industry in B.C. The science is clear; the alternatives are there – and so is the urgency. The next few months will be crucial as the corporations will try and rush the project forward. We need to be clear that LNG is not a “green” alternative, and that we are willing to organize to oppose its reckless and dangerous expansion.

*Follow Thomas on Twitter: @thomasdavies59*



By *Azza Rojbi*

As people in North America get ready to welcome the new year with their loved ones, families in Yemen are still desperately fighting for their daily survival against the Saudi-led coalition war on their country.

“With its bombs and missiles, this war has brought immense fear to our lives. We live under constant threat, we are socially unstable, our chance of education is dead, and our country is politically insecure and economically broken. We are never free of anxiety.” This is how Hadil Al-Senwi, a 27-year-old education officer in Sana’a, described life under war to the Guardian Newspaper.

Hadil’s words and feelings are shared by millions of Yemeni families whose lives have been destroyed by over three years of war and aggression. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), over 60,000 people have been killed in the war on Yemen. Those that survive the indiscriminate Saudi airstrikes, have to face the threats of disease and starvation. The United Nations reports that over 20 million people in Yemen, two-thirds of the population, face severe food insecurity. Save the Children, the international children’s relief organization estimates that 85,000 children under the age of five have died from extreme hunger or disease since the start of the war in March 2015.

These numbers paint a grim picture of the reality of life in Yemen, as the United Nations (UN) called it “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.”

### Behind this Humanitarian Crisis

In an article titled “Arms Sales to Saudis Leave American Fingerprints on Yemen’s Carnage” the New York Times (NYT) details the direct complicity of the U.S. in the war on Yemen:

# YEMEN & THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE AFTER THE CEASEFIRE



“When a Saudi F-15 warplane takes off from King Khalid air base in southern Saudi Arabia for a bombing run over Yemen, it is not just the plane and the bombs that are American. American mechanics service the jet and carry out repairs on the ground. American technicians upgrade the targeting software and other classified technology, which Saudis are not allowed to touch. The pilot has likely been trained by the United States Air Force. And

at a flight operations room in the capital, Riyadh, Saudi commanders sit near American military officials who provide intelligence and tactical advice.”

In another investigative article, New York Times’ David Kirkpatrick exposes Saudi Arabia for recruiting children from Sudan’s impoverished Darfur region as mercenaries to fight their war in Yemen. The Saudi government offered Sudanese families as much as \$10,000 for their children to join the Saudi-led forces fighting in Yemen. “At any time for nearly four years as many as 14,000 Sudanese militiamen have been fighting in Yemen,” NYT estimates that 20-40 percent of those fighting were children, many are 14-17 years old.

Saudi Arabia and its allied coalition have shown again and again a complete disregard for any human life and human rights. They have no interest in the well-being of children in Sudan, Yemen, or anywhere in the region. They continue to claim their war on Yemen is a war for peace, stability, and legitimacy, what a complete farce! Their goal in Yemen is to expand their influence in the region and serve the interest of their imperialist masters in Washington.

What the Saudi-led coalition failed to account for is the steadfast resistance to their plan by the Yemeni people. With all the support from the U.S. and after dropping over 44,039 bombs on Yemen, Saudi Arabia has not achieved any of its so-called goals in Yemen.

### Has the U.S.-backed Saudi-led Coalition Suddenly Acquired a Conscience?

After the latest round of UN-sponsored talks in Stockholm, an agreement was reached for a ceasefire in the port city of Hodeida. The Saudi-led coalition and its mercenaries have been attacking Hodeida for the last seven months in an attempt to take control of the city over from the Houthi government, known

officially as Ansarullah. This assault intensified the humanitarian crisis in the city and the country as a whole. Hodeidah is a vital entry port for 70% of humanitarian aid into Yemen.

This ceasefire is not a victory for the U.S.-backed Saudi-led coalition, nor is it an honest move towards peace, it is a compromise and a necessary crisis management tactic by imperialists. The U.S. and their puppet monarchies in the region couldn't crush the resistance of the Yemeni people and failed to take control of the country. They couldn't win, therefore now they have to come to the table, not seeking a just solution for this catastrophic situation in Yemen, but to buy the time they need for more military preparation and maneuvering against the Houthi government with help from the UN.

As the humanitarian crisis in Yemen intensifies, they can no longer hide the bloodshed and destruction they are causing in Yemen; they can no longer justify continuing the war. People around the world are becoming aware of the plight of the Yemeni people, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. are using this ceasefire as a strategy to manage the crisis and counter the growing opposition to the war.

### Is This "Ceasefire" Working?

We can't trust the motives of the Saudi-led coalition for the ceasefire, are they really having a change of heart or are they hoping to win more time for their mercenaries on the ground in Yemen? Ahmed AbdulKareem, a local Yemeni journalist, reported to MintPress News in an article published December 17, 2018:

"Saudi Arabia has violated the Hodeida ceasefire at least 50 times since Thursday when the truce was agreed upon — launching 50 airstrikes as the ink on the deal was still drying. Saudi artillery fired more than 300 mortar shells on Hodeida's residential areas, and Saudi mercenaries attempted to breach Hodeida's western defences multiple times."

On December 29, 2018, Al Jazeera



reported that "Yemen's Houthi rebels have started to redeploy inside the port city of Hodeida as part of the United Nations-sponsored peace agreement signed in Sweden earlier this month, a UN source and a spokesperson for the group said on Saturday." On that same day, the Saudi-led coalition continued its air raids in Hodeida province and escalated its military offensive in other provinces in Yemen.

The following day the UN and mainstream media were questioning the Houthis' commitment to the the ceasefire agreement, while completely failing to hold the U.S. backed Saudi-led coalition accountable for not upholding their part of the agreement.

Another example of the UN and mainstream media bias position in favour of the Saudi-led coalition is the recent investigation released by Associated Press (AP) about food aid being stolen in Yemen. The article states that:

"The problem of stolen aid is common in Taiz and other areas controlled by Yemen's internationally recognized government, which is backed by the Saudi-led military coalition. It is even more widespread in territories controlled by the Houthi rebels, the struggling government's main enemy during the nearly four years of warfare that has spawned the world's worst humanitarian crisis."

After the release of this article by AP,

the mainstream media found another golden opportunity to vilify the Houthis and put the full blame on them, headlines read:

"Food aid meant for people starving in Yemen being stolen by Houthis: UN Food Program" CBC News

"UN says Yemen food aid being stolen in Houthi-run areas" The Globe and Mail

"Food aid is stolen in 'Houthi-controlled areas' as Yemen starves" France 24

In response to all of this, the Ansarullah movement welcomed an independent investigation and called on the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to back up its accusations with proof. At the same time, there was zero response or accountability from the Saudi-led coalition and their mercenaries, even

*Continued on page 10*

**Battle of Ideas Press**

**WAR AND OCCUPATION  
IN AFGHANISTAN  
WHICH WAY FORWARD?**

By Nita Palmer

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

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197th Weekly Protest at Vancouver City Centre Station, December 10, 2018.

# BILL C51/59: THE STRUGGLE FOR OUR HUMAN AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS CONTINUES

By Thomas Davies & Max Tennant

*"This is truly a case where the RCMP manufactured the crime."*

The above quote is from a unanimous 142-page ruling released by Justice Elizabeth Bennett, which

will hopefully be the beginning of the end of a five year nightmare for John Nuttall and Amanda Korody. The B.C. Appeal Court has upheld a lower court ruling which found the RCMP responsible for entrapment of the couple accused of plotting to bomb the BC provincial legislature buildings in 2013.

The court found that the couple were under the direction of an undercover RCMP officer who acted as their leader and facilitator. Nuttall and Korody were both vulnerable recovering drug addicts living on social assistance when the RCMP moved in on them. The entire operation to entrap them involved over 240 officers who billed almost a million dollars in overtime alone during the five month operation.

Korody and Nuttall spent three years in jail, and another two with restricted freedoms due to a "peace bond" they were forced to agree to under threat of being re-imprisoned under new powers created by Bill C-51.

It begs the question: If the Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and now Liberal Justin Trudeau have insisted we need to curtail our freedoms under new laws to protect us from terrorists - why is the RCMP spending so much time and energy trying to fabricate false cases?

## Don't Believe the Hype

Could it be that Harper's "Anti-Terrorism" Bill C-51, and Trudeau's Bill C-59 have a lot less to do with protecting us from terrorism, and a lot more to do with limiting our rights

and freedoms?

A newly disclosed report from the Security Intelligence Review Committee details how CSIS, Canada's spy agency, collected information about peaceful environmental groups opposing pipeline construction. The heavily censored report is only now being made public because of the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association's challenge of the findings in the Federal Court of Canada.

The report acknowledges concerns we've emphasized since the introduction of Bill C-51 - about a "chilling effect" on free speech created as people know that no matter how peaceful or lawful their activism is, there's a real possibility they will be spied on by CSIS. The report, however, justifies this as "only incidentally in the process of investigating legitimate threats to projects such as oil pipelines."

Just as damning, the heavily censored report also found CSIS took part in meetings with oil industry representatives at their headquarters. There are no details given about what was discussed, but these are justified, as always, as "national security matters."

## Patterns

*"Promising public safety as an exchange for sacrificing individual liberties and democratic safeguards is not, in our view, justifiable or realistic. Both are essential and complementary in a free and democratic society. Safety cannot be won at the expense of Canada's constitutional rights and freedoms."*

- Canadian Bar Association, which represents 37,000 lawyers, in its statement opposing Bill C-51

What we see emerging is a pattern of civil liberties and human rights violations which are enabled by these broad "Anti-Terrorist" laws, which end up targeting a lot more than the so-called "Islamic extremists" we are told

justify their existence. We are constantly asked to trust that these powers won't be abused and then are constantly reminded -even in heavily censored reports which took years of legal fighting to make public- that they are.

Another disturbing angle of this is a new law passed by the federal government on December 18. Police officers no longer need "reasonable suspicion" to ask drivers they stop for a breath sample - now they can demand it without suspicion or justification. We are told this is a public safety matter, but drunk driving deaths are steadily declining and "reasonable suspicion" is already an extremely low standard.

Groups like the Canadian Civil Liberties Association are again pointing out that lowering the bar to zero opens the door wide open to abuse by police forces. This is especially important when we know that already a Toronto Star report found that police "carded Black people three times as often as others, though they made up 8.4 percent of the Toronto population."

"Carding," involves police stopping people and gathering their information when they are not suspected of any specific criminal offence.

In 2017 the BC Civil Liberties Association and Union of BC Indian Chiefs also launched a joint complaint after Vancouver Police Department's data showed that between 2008 and 2017, 15 percent of the street checks performed by its officers involved Indigenous people, despite them representing just two percent of the city's population.

It's completely dishonest to say these powers aren't used by police to target already marginalized communities, just like it's completely dishonest of the Canadian government to say that expanded "anti-

terrorist” police powers aren’t used to target legitimate, peaceful opposition to its policies.

### The Struggle is Always Worthwhile

It’s important to remember that a decisive reason why Stephen Harper and the Conservative lost the last Federal Election was public outrage over their imposition of Bill C-51. It’s also important to remember that Justin Trudeau, and every single Liberal MP at the time, voted in favour of Bill C-51.

The Liberals were then elected and promised to “fix” the law. They then ignored their survey of 58,000 responses which found that “A majority of stakeholders and experts called for existing [measures] to be scaled back or repealed completely, particularly Bill C-51, the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015... Many individuals and organizations were skeptical of measures proposed ... and expressed concerns about how these would affect individual rights and freedoms.”

They’ve now delayed their own diet Coke version of Bill C-51, called Bill C-59, well past two years after being elected. It still doesn’t address our fundamental concerns, while adding new ones of vastly expanded cyber surveillance. Meanwhile, we have clear demonstrations that police forces and CSIS continue to use their new powers to target groups and individuals unjustly.

The Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 was an important leader in the fight against Bill C-51 when it was a cross-Canada campaign of tens of thousands of people. It has continued to organize weekly actions despite a slow down in momentum following the last Federal Election. Many people had hoped that a new government would take their concerns seriously. The Liberal government most definitely has not, and so the campaign most definitely has not stopped either. Previous movements for civil and human rights also had ups and downs, ebbs and flows, but persistence in the struggle for justice is a prerequisite to winning. We are motivated by the victories of poor, working, and oppressed

people before us, and by the understanding that we must defend our rights or risk losing them completely.

Repeal Bill C-51!

Scrap Bill C-59!

Our Security Lies in Defending the Rights of All!

Follow Thomas on Twitter: @thomasdavies59

Follow Max on Twitter: @MaxTennant

## Bill C-51 January Actions Weekly Picket & Petition Drive

Weekly Action #200  
Wednesday January 2  
Commercial and Broadway  
Vancouver

Weekly Action #201  
Monday January 7  
22nd Street Station  
New Westminster

Weekly Action #202  
Monday January 14  
Scott Road Station  
Surrey

Weekly Action #203  
Monday January 21  
Nanaimo Station  
Vancouver

Weekly Action #204  
Monday January 28  
Broadway-City Hall Station  
Vancouver

**All Actions are at 4:30pm**

## “By Any Means Necessary...”



### MALCOLM X SPEAKS

As long as the black man in America thinks of himself as a minority, as an underdog, he can’t shout but so loud; or if he does shout, he shouts loudly only to the degree that the power structure encourages him to. He never gets irresponsible. He never goes beyond what the power structure thinks is the right voice to shout in. But when you begin to connect yourself on the world stage with the whole of dark mankind, and you see that you’re the majority and this majority is waking up and rising up and becoming strong, then when you deal with this man, you don’t deal with him like he’s your boss or he’s better than you or stronger than you. You put him right where he belongs. When you realize that he’s a minority, that his time is running out, you approach him like that, you approach him like one who used to be strong but is now getting weak, who used to be in a position to retaliate against you but now is not in that position anymore.

Afro-American History  
(January 24, 1964)



199th Weekly Protest at New Westminster Station, December 27, 2018.

# CLIMATE CONVERGENCE: STRUGGLE MATTERS, A BALANCE SHEET



*By Thomas Davies*

As 2018 comes to a close, major news networks are all lining up panels of experts to go over their picks for “Top News Stories the Year.” Without a doubt, the ongoing fight over the construction of the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion is on all of their lists. It should be. The government of Canada bailed out Texas oil giant Kinder Morgan by buying the existing oil pipeline from Edmonton to Burnaby for \$4.5 billion and committing close to \$15 billion more to get a new pipeline built. They then slid down the snakes and ladders board as the Federal Court of Appeals ‘quashed’ their original approval of the project - citing an incomplete review process and a failure to conduct meaningful consultations with Indigenous nations.

So it should be on all the lists.

But the “experts” are missing something fundamental. While they constantly frame it as a showdown between Provincial leaders and the Federal government – they neglect the fact that tens of thousands of people in British Columbia and across Canada mobilized together in Indigenous-led opposition to the project. Without this organizing, the pipeline would be well on its way to construction. That’s the real news story.

Climate Convergence Metro Vancouver was an important part of this resistance and was able to demonstrate the power of grassroots organizing. In the year 2018

alone, the 100% volunteer group was part of organizing 23 public actions. This included eight Rallies, seven Art Builds, three Banner Drops, two Community Discussions, two Fundraisers and one Die-In. This also included organizing two petition campaigns, two new educational brochures, and ten hand-painted banners. All through people power!

## **TD + KM = Partners in Climate Crime**

At the beginning of the year, the coalition focused on demanding TD Bank divest from the Kinder Morgan Canada stocks it had bought to build the pipeline. The campaign also targeted five other major Canadian banks which together had invested billions in buying stocks and credit. During the “TD Bank Blitz” organizers split into teams and held protest actions at all seven TD Bank locations in Burnaby in one day. The campaign also organized the largest ever divestment action in Vancouver, with 1,000 people marching through downtown Vancouver from bank to bank to demand they



**Kinder Morgan Pipeline? Don't Bank On It! rally & march. May 12, 2018.**



**TD- Totally Divest From Kinder Morgan protest in Burnaby. Mar. 24, 2018.**

stop funding the “climate crime.”

This was also the first time coordinated “protest umbrellas” were used. 16 hand painted umbrellas spelling “STOP KINDER MORGAN” were an impressive sight spanning 50 feet total when held together.

### Can't Stop Won't Stop

This organizing happened in the context of constant mobilization against the pipeline expansion, especially in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Two protest camps were set up around



**Rise for Climate International Day of Action in Vancouver. Sept. 8, 2018.**

the Kinder Morgan Tank Farm to stop its attempted expansion – Camp Cloud and the Watch House. The Protect the Inlet campaign sometimes organized daily mobilizations at the Tank Farm gates. More than 230 people, from all walks of life, were arrested as part of this non-violent civil disobedience campaign.

Many have bravely faced increasing fines and jail time for standing up for

and press conference when the group’s organizers were part of those facing the judge.

It was also community support which allowed the legal case which led to the “quashing” of the government’s pipeline approval to proceed. \$600,000 was raised through community donations by the Pull Together campaign

to support the Indigenous nations-led legal challenge.

### Build Our Future – Not a Pipeline!

In May when the Federal government bailed out Kinder Morgan with \$4.5 billion, the campaign shifted to highlight this massive waste of taxpayer dollars - all over the other

important alternatives like Education, Clean Energy and Healthcare which the government is neglecting at the expense of the massive bailout. Three simultaneous banner drops were organized the day after the announcement, and Climate Convergence

their beliefs, and regular court support actions continue at the Federal Court in downtown Vancouver. Climate Convergence has organized fundraisers for this ongoing campaign and helped organize a rainy action

also organized it’s first Day of Action – which involved a Rally, March and Community Discussion in succession. The mix of action and education was successful – and it was clear despite the bailout people we still committed to stopping the pipeline.

### No Trudeau Pipeline! Not Now, Not Ever!

Climate Convergence also worked with student organizations and other grassroots groups to organize as part of the “Rise for Climate!” International Day of Action on September 8th. The



**Public Forum with UN Climate Change Report Lead Author Dr. Kirsten Zickfeld in Vancouver public library. Nov. 23, 2018.**

Vancouver rally was one of the largest in North America, and among 900 actions which took place on all seven continents.

Organizers knew when Federal governments lost the court case of its pipeline approval that it wouldn’t be long before they came back with some new manoeuvres to try and force the project forward. Trudeau demanded a sped up



**Climate Convergence organizers and volunteers at an art build in preparation for an upcoming IntersAction.**



**TD- Totally Divest From Kinder Morgan march towards TD branch in Burnaby, Mar. 24, 2018.**

National Energy Board review of the pipeline's marine impacts - but with all of the same structural problems as the previous bogus process. Likewise, the government has hired a retired Supreme Court Judge to organize the "meaningful consultations" with Indigenous nations, which so far have been closed-door meetings which have excluded Indigenous pipeline opponents.

At the same time, the United Nations

climate report found that the world has 12 years to reduce CO2 emissions or face catastrophic and irreversible consequences drastically. Speaking at a Climate Convergence organized "Salish Sea Vs. NEB!" Day of Action, SFU professor and lead author of the report Dr. Kirsten Zickfeld emphasized that building the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion was absolutely incompatible with the steps needed to save the planet.

Given this reality, the coalition has shown no signs of slowing down. United community action has not stopped the project entirely, but it does have government and business leaders scrambling to find a way to force it through. The Climate Convergence coalition was able to adapt campaigns to changes like bailouts and court decisions and find creative and new ways to engage in consistent public actions. This

is a good example of the power people have when they are united and organize together. We need to bring more people together to up the organization and the action as we move forward into 2019! As



**Rally in front of MP Terry Beech's Office, Oct. 10, 2018.**

Fidel Castro said once, we have no other option but to continue the struggle until final victory.

*Follow Climate Convergence on Twitter: @climate604*

*Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter: @thomasdavies59*

*Continued from page 5*

though the AP investigation mentions the existence of documents and reports proving their involvement in stealing food aid destined to people in Taiz. Why is the WFP or the UN not asking to review these documents?

### Yemenis Deserve Safety and Peace

It remains to be seen if this ceasefire in Hodeida will alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people, a compromise is a viable option for now, but we shouldn't be deceived by this imperialist strategy. We shouldn't let it deter us from organizing and mobilizing to demand an immediate end to the bombing, and all aggression by the U.S.-backed Saudi-led coalition, and their imperialist allies France and England on Yemen. We must demand the land, sea and air blockade on Yemen be stopped immediately.

As Hadil Al-Senwi told the Guardian Newspaper, "We used to have dreams, but now we live in a nightmare. We are so eager to hear the sound of peace and to rebuild our country. We deserve better than this."

It is our human responsibility to join Hadil and all the Yemeni people in their fight for peace, freedom and self-determination without foreign interventions and aggression. We need to hold imperialist countries like the U.S., France, England and Canada accountable for their support of the Saudi-led war on Yemen and continue to challenge the mainstream media's biased narrative about the war. Yemenis deserve real peace!

**Stop Bombing Yemen!**

**All Foreign Troops Out of Yemen!**

**Lift the Naval, Aerial, and Land Blockade on Yemen!**

*Follow Azza on Twitter: @Azza\_R14*

## Battle of Ideas Press

### Upcoming Book Release

# SYSTEM CHANGE NOT CLIMATE CHANGE

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### By Thomas Davies

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# MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR & OCCUPATION - MAWO



## MAWO Forum Discusses Threats and Sanctions Against Iran

By Janine Solanki

On November 5, 2018 the U.S. government enacted new brutal sanctions against Iran that target their banking, oil and shipping sectors. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared, “These sanctions are the toughest ever put in place on the Republic of Iran,” and are intended to “alter Iran’s behavior.” U.S. sanctions and threats against Iran, coupled with a constant campaign against Iran in the mainstream media, are an important escalation in ongoing U.S.-led wars and occupations in the Middle East and North Africa which began 17 years ago with the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan.

To discuss these recent U.S. aggressions against Iran, on December 14 Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) organized a public forum titled “U.S. Hands Off Iran! Sanctions and Threats of War, What Next?” at the Vancouver Public Library in downtown Vancouver.

The first speaker for the evening was Arash Sharifi, an Iranian community activist and organizer with the Iranian Community Against War (ICAW). Arash, who recently returned from visiting Iran, spoke about the human effects that the brutal U.S. sanctions are having on the Iranian people, and the great danger that the U.S. poses for Iran and the whole region. He also reminded the audience that for many years Iran has endured crippling U.S. sanctions, and won’t now submit to U.S. imperialism.

The second speaker was Ali Yerevani, the political editor of the Fire This Time Newspaper. Ali gave a historical perspective into the politics and culture of Iran, highlighting the mass and revolutionary movements over the last hundred years, up to his own experience from the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Ali also described the influence that Iran has in the region, both politically in their steadfast resistance the U.S. imperialism and formerly British colonialism, as well as culturally as Iran’s diverse ethnic makeup connects Iran to ethnic groups across the region. These factors and the central and strategic position of Iran in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia explain the U.S. imperialist motivations against Iran, as they cannot have a total hegemony in the region so long as Iran remains independent from imperialist powers and a sovereign country.

The event wrapped up with a discussion period, in which participants discussed the U.S./Iran relationship as well as Canada’s sanctions and hostilities against Iran. Also discussed was the role of the antiwar movement in defending Iran against imperialist aggression, and in this MAWO’s ongoing campaign against war on Iran with both protest and education.

To find out about upcoming antiwar events and actions in Vancouver visit [www.mawovancouver.org](http://www.mawovancouver.org) or follow on Facebook or Twitter @MAWOVan

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# MOTHER OF ALL STRUGGLES!

## Indigenous struggle against colonialism



Ellen Gabriel  
(1959-)

*Turtle Clan Member and Indigenous Human rights activist, Gabriel was well-known when she was chosen by the People of the Longhouse and her community of Kanehsatà:ke to be their spokesperson during the 1990 “Oka” Resistance; a 78 day standoff to protect their traditional territories from the expansion of a golf course.*

“As Indigenous people who have been in the invisible so-called minority in Canada, we’re good targets.

It’s not just us experiencing it now, but the multigenerational experiences that sort of make us feel more defiant, and say, well, you know, we’re used to how you treat us...

You know, these problems are not problems that we’ve created — these are problems that have gone under the status quo of imperialism ... that if we stand in the way of Canada’s prosperity, we’re dispensable.

When government ... only listens to the corporations, not only are Indigenous people in trouble, but the society as a whole is in trouble because we are all experiencing climate change. So let’s work together.”

*Excerpts from CBC Interview, November 16, 2018*

THE HEREDITARY CHIEFS HAVE SPOKEN

## NO TO ALL PIPELINES

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I STAND WITH UNIST'OT'EN

*By Alison Bodine*

A summary of the words most commonly appearing in mainstream news headlines about Venezuela in 2018 would include “humanitarian crisis,” “chaos,” “dictatorship,” and “failed state,” among other alarming buzzwords.

Far from reflecting the reality facing Venezuela today, these headlines are parroted from the words spoken by the likes of U.S. President Trump, or Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada or people from the government of Britain and the European Union. These are all countries that are working to overthrow the Venezuelan government and reverse the gains made by the mass majority of people in Venezuela over the past 20 years of the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

### **The Fear-Mongering of the U.S. Government Towards Venezuela**

The U.S. government and their allies have spent the last year shouting threats against the independent and sovereign government of Venezuela and imposing brutal sanctions. Out of the other side of their mouth, they sing sweet tunes of sympathy for a so-called “humanitarian disaster” to justify their intervention. Meanwhile, they have been escalating their lies and manipulations about Venezuela in statements, press releases, international conferences, mainstream media and any other corner where somebody is willing to listen to them.

The campaign to overthrow the democratically elected government of Venezuela has also given the opportunity for the infamous war-hawk John Bolton, who has joined the U.S. Trump administration as National Security Advisor, to beat the drums for U.S. intervention in Venezuela. On November 1, Bolton spoke in Miami, Florida, and gave a new name to the U.S. government’s targets in Latin America, stating, “The Troika of Tyranny in this Hemisphere—Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua—has finally met its match.” And continuing, “This Troika of Tyranny, this triangle



# VENEZUELA FIGHTS BACK!

## *the Bolivarian Revolution Continues!*



**(From Top) Mural reads "Chavez Forever! Maduro President!"; Venezuela rallies against U.S. intervention in Latin America; Protest sign reads "Trump out! Venezuela must be respected!"; President Maduro speaks to supporters on December 20, 2018; a Venezuelan woman participating in the 2nd National Congress of Women in October 2018 proudly shows her support for the government of President Maduro.**

of terror stretching from Havana to Caracas to Managua, is the cause of immense human suffering, the impetus of enormous regional instability, and the genesis of a sordid cradle of communism in the Western Hemisphere.”

### **Why the Lies About Venezuela?**

Fear-mongering and threats like these coming from the mouths of officials in the United States must be taken seriously by poor, working and oppressed people around the world. Not only have they already fueled the U.S. governments sanctions and intervention against Venezuela, but it must also be considered

t h a t wars and occupations by U.S. government and their allies are responsible for the deaths of millions of people around the world, and the complete destruction of entire countries, even over only the last 20 years.

However, it must be asked – why is it that the U.S. government and their allies must go so far to demonize the government of Venezuela and - why are they so forceful in this campaign? Why must they use lies and manipulations?

Would it not be simpler if they could tell the truth about Venezuela? If they could substantiate their claims? For example, if they could explain the record of former Venezuelan Vice-President, now Minister of Industries and National Production, Tarek El Aissami rather than accusing him of being an “international drug kingpin”?

These exaggerations are so extreme because the U.S. government and imperialism are covering up the truth about Venezuela. The truth about the reality of Venezuela today does not suit the interests of imperialism, which are to promote international intervention in Venezuela, and the overthrow of the independent government of President Nicolas Maduro.

### **Silence About Sanctions**

This includes an especially brutal truth – that the people of Venezuela are suffering under U.S., Canada, and EU sanctions. This simple fact is almost always absent

in any news about Venezuela – from the CBC in Canada to CNN in the United States. These supposed “objective” media institutions write thousands of words about the economic crisis and lack of food and medicines in Venezuela, and they do not mention the word sanctions once. How can one discuss economic hardships and even “crisis” in a country and not mention the impact of sanctions?

In one rare example, the Washington Post published an article that does mention the word “sanctions.”

“But most sanctions — imposed by the United States, Canada and the European Union — are limited

they have bought, parts for oil refineries, medicines. Also, the signal that the U.S. government sends out to multinational corporations – the implication is to get out of Venezuela, or we will not do business with you.

On November 27, 2018, the Washington Post published a letter to the editor by Lissett Hernandez the Charge d’Affaires of the Venezuelan Embassy in the U.S. (in response to the Washington Post article referenced above). As she explains, “The sanctions have caused billions of dollars in damage to our oil industry, frozen hundreds of millions more in

gouging and other sabotage. Venezuela’s capitalist class continues to control the production and distribution of food and basic goods in Venezuela, and therefore have control of availability.

The Miami Herald has also reported that, “Venezuelan opposition leaders are asking the Bank of England to keep 14 tons of Venezuelan bullion safely locked up in Britain rather than return it to the administration of President Nicolás Maduro because he’s likely to steal or squander it amid the country’s economic collapse.”

In the cold, calculating minds of the

**Left to Right: December 9, 2018, municipal election day rally. This election was the 26 to take place in Venezuela in 20 years and the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) won over 90% of the seats; Rally in support of the Bolivarian revolutionary process organized by people with disabilities.**



to cancelling visas and freezing assets of key officials implicated in abuses and corruption. They have no impact on the Venezuelan economy.”

No impact? This article was written on November 26, 2018. At that point, the Trump administration alone had enacted four rounds of sanctions against Venezuela. These sanctions have blocked the government of Venezuela from receiving \$1 billion of profits from Citgo, a petroleum company that operates in the U.S., but is a majority owned by the government of Venezuela (Venezuela Analysis). They have prevented Venezuela from completing financial transactions necessary to continue their standard imports, including food, medications and basic goods. And these are only a few of the impacts.

Restrictions on financial transactions mean they cannot pay for things that

banks overseas, and delayed or prevented the importation of billions of dollars’ worth of food and medicine, among other costs. For example, our assets frozen in Euroclear Bank have depreciated by \$264 million. With that \$264 million, our public health service could have guaranteed vaccinations for the entire country for three years.”

And yet the government of the U.S. and their allies are claiming to care about the people of Venezuela?

The counter-revolutionary Venezuelan opposition funded by the U.S. government lead this economic war. They are attempting day and night to strangle the economy of Venezuela. Under sanctions, and before sanctions were imposed, this so-called opposition has been determined to make the struggling economy worse.

These counter-revolutionaries have attempted to overthrow the democratically elected government of President Nicolas Maduro through an economic war of hoarding, price

opposition, they have no problem with the people of Venezuela struggling from the lack of food and medicines.

### Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolutionary Government Fights Back

Through the Bolivarian revolutionary process, the people of Venezuela have been working to take their country into their own hands and kick the U.S. government and their allies out of Venezuela. Within Venezuela, this has meant electing a revolutionary government that has put the needs of poor, working and oppressed people in Venezuela before the interests of profits for multi-national corporations and Venezuela’s capitalist class.

Outside of Venezuela, this has meant the development of organizations such as the Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples (ALBA). ALBA was founded 14 years ago by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Cuban President Fidel Castro to provide a counter-balance to the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) imposed by the United States. Today countries throughout Latin America have found new trade relationships based on solidarity and in-kind trade that have threatened the U.S. influence and control.

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The government of Venezuela is also signing new trade deals with countries outside of Latin America, such as Russia, China and Iran, who can work around the U.S. government sanctions. Venezuela has signed 28 agreements with China alone, in sectors of oil production, technology, food and medicine.

### What is the Alternative?

As reported by the Guardian newspaper “Hundreds of thousands of people have fled the so-called northern triangle – El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – over the past five years. More than 161,000 people from these three countries applied for asylum to the US



(Left to Right) President Maduro delivers the keys to one of the 2.5 million homes provided by the Great Housing Mission for the most marginalized people in Venezuela. The plan of the revolutionary government is to build at least 5 million homes by the end of 2025; A new maternity clinic is opened in the Province of Miranda, Venezuela.

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between 2011-2016. At least 714,000 more are internally displaced.” The recent migrant caravan, which has been met by brutality by the U.S. government is the most recent example of the devastation wrecked on these countries by foreign debt and imperialist intervention.

Without the Bolivarian revolutionary government, this too would be a reality for the people of Venezuela.

Together, the U.S., Canada and E.U. governments, and their allies in Venezuela’s counter-revolutionary opposition have completely disrupted the political, economic and social order in Venezuela through their vicious threats, sanctions and intervention, but they have not stopped the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

However, this is a critical time for Venezuela. Samuel Moncada, Venezuela’s representative to the UN in September, said Venezuela is in “most dangerous phase of the aggression. We are talking about how the migration and socio-economic issues have been manipulated to turn them into a matter of regional peace and security.”

**Venezuela Is Not Alone, We Are All**

### Venezuelan

On January 10, 2019, President Maduro will be inaugurated for his second term, after winning the Presidential election in May 2018. There is no shortage of threats against this important event, whether from the U.S. government and their allies, or the counter-revolutionary opposition.

In the first week of 2019, U.S. Secretary of Defense Mike Pompeo is planning to go to Colombia, where a right-wing government has recently taken power. U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton, the same John Bolton that has branded Venezuela part of the “Troika of

Tyranny” has also already met with the new far-right President of Brazil. These two countries both lie at Venezuela’s borders. The U.S. government is not slowing down in their campaign to overthrow the democratically elected government of Venezuela.

However, the people of Venezuela are not alone in their struggle to continue the Bolivarian revolutionary process and with it, defend their sovereignty and self-determination. As the President of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel said at the 16th ALBA-TCP Summit in Havana December 17, 2018:

“The unwavering conviction that Our America is one, from the Río Bravo to Patagonia, is imperative, and that we have a fundamental duty to prevent them from plundering our natural resources and subjugating us to their hegemony. The hostility of imperialism is today directed against our most genuine values. They are bothered by the solidarity that characterizes us; they do not tolerate social justice... They irrationally hate the peoples’ sovereign vocation and do not respect our right to the political systems we choose.”

Now, it is more important than ever in the last 20 years of the Bolivarian revolutionary process that poor, working and oppressed people around the world stand in solidarity with Venezuela. As the U.S. government and their allies including the government of Canada beat their drums of war, we must demand an end all imperialist threats against Venezuela and close all U.S. military bases in Latin America. As people living in the United States and Canada, we have the responsibility to demand that the sanctions against Venezuela by the U.S., Canada, the E.U and Switzerland must be lifted immediately. U.S. and imperialists hands of Venezuela!

**Battle of Ideas Press**

**Revolution & Counter Revolution in Venezuela**

**By Alison Bodine**

Writer and researcher on Venezuela. She is a member of the Fire This Time Newspaper Editorial Board and is the coordinator of the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign. Alison Bodine is an electrical designer based in Vancouver, Canada.

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# Vancouver Monthly Action Defends Venezuela Against U.S./Canada Sanctions & Threats!



By Janine Solanki

For 1,160 workers of the Goodyear tire factory in Venezuela, the effects of the brutal U.S. sanctions on Venezuela have a direct impact on their livelihood. On December 10, 2018 Goodyear announced that they were closing down their tire production factory in Venezuela, in a statement saying, "Our goal had been to maintain its operations, but economic conditions and the U.S. sanctions have made this impossible." In response the Venezuelan government has vowed to support the workers, and in a statement from the Maduro government declared that they would "begin all mechanisms to re-establish production". These words have been consistently backed by action in previous cases of multinational corporations ceasing operations in Venezuela, as they are impacted by U.S. sanctions as well as perpetuate the U.S.-led economic war in Venezuela by laying off workers and cutting production.

On December 7 2018, Fire This Time's Venezuela Solidarity Campaign came together with Venezuela solidarity activists and supporters to show their support for Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution in front of the U.S. Consulate in downtown Vancouver. In between rounds of picketing, speakers condemned the inhumane U.S. sanctions and economic war against Venezuela, and the dangerous U.S. government campaign of regime

change in Venezuela. Protesters chanted and held up picket signs and banners demanding "U.S./Canada Hands Off Venezuela!" and "Self-Determination for Venezuela!" After this monthly action wrapped up, the protesters moved up to the busy downtown plaza in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery to set up an information table, where passersby stopped to find out more information. Teams of activists collected signatures on a petition demanding Canada end its sanctions on Venezuela and calling attention to the role that the government of Canada has in the campaign against Venezuela.

The action ended with the next monthly action planned for January 4<sup>th</sup> – starting



out 2019 strong in defense of Venezuela! To find out more about upcoming actions in solidarity with Venezuela go to [www.firethistime.net](http://www.firethistime.net) or follow on Facebook or Twitter @FTT\_np

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## OUR HERITAGE



María de Lourdes León Gibory  
(1937 -)

Revolutionary Venezuelan fighter, member of the National Constituent Assembly and leader in the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV).

Excerpt from her prologue to the book "Huellas neoliberales" by Simón Colmenares Silva

Gender equality is necessary. Inequality is a problem that women have historically suffered and that has led them to be victims of exclusion, marginalization and self-perception of weakness; Although life proves to the contrary, the woman is the one who most resists and carries the most responsibilities on her shoulders, but she has the perception that she is weak, it is a self-perception of fragility, undoubtedly the result of a dominant model where submission is sought. As Hugo Chávez mentioned, on some occasion: "there are different forms of exclusion designed by capitalism, the exploitation of man by man, the exploitation of women by men, children by men, workers by men; a thousand ways, a thousand ways to exploit the masses."

We must empower women, but we must not leave man aside, because it is about equality. The man must be an ally in the fight for equality, it is necessary to sensitize them to the problem of the marginalization and exclusion of women. We must fight for equality for both, that is what the concept of gender explains. Not to see the problem as the woman is the only victim. It is true, she is victim and he the victimizer, but in sacrificing her, he is also harmed. In other words, as the French novelist and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir says: 'a woman is not born, she becomes one'. But this does not only apply to women, but to men too. Because a man is not born, he becomes so. They impose it on him and prepare him as an oppressor, as a ruler, although man by nature is simple and sensitive, and wishes to occupy another place in society. The established patterns force him to be a certain way, otherwise he is not considered a man. This is the dominant model, savage and inhuman.

# FIDEL!

1926 - 2016



Painting by Samuel Dubroccq

**CELEBRATING 60 YEARS  
OF THE CUBAN SOCIALIST  
REVOLUTION**

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*A Special Section of Fire This Time Newspaper  
Celebrating 60 Years of the Cuban Revolution*

# CUBA AS AN EXAMPLE

**CELEBRATING 60 YEARS  
OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION  
& CUBA'S REVOLUTIONARY  
SOCIALIST LEADERSHIP**



*By Tamara Hansen*

For those who know that there is something fundamentally wrong with the current direction of humanity on a global scale, whether we are discussing war and occupation, human rights, or environmental degradation – the question remains – what can we do about it?

In Cuba, you will often see and hear the slogan, “un mundo mejor es posible” or “a better world is possible.” This better world is not only possible; it is increasingly necessary. Since the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959, Cuba and its revolutionary leadership have embarked on a different path, a path towards self-determination, sustainability, improved health and education, unity, and creativity – a socialist project towards socialism. This is an important example we can all learn from.

## THE CUBAN REVOLUTION: A BRIEF HISTORY

This month the Cuban people, as well as people around the world, are celebrating the

60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, which triumphed on January 1, 1959. Led by Fidel Castro along with the great leadership of Ernesto “Che” Guevara and Raul Castro, as well as countless others; the revolution succeeded with the defeat of U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista, who had been president of Cuba since coming to power through a coup d'état in 1952.

In 1953, 90% of people in Cuba were illiterate or semi-literate, with only 3.2% of the school-aged population over the age of 10 being enrolled in junior or senior high schools. One-third of all homes in Cuba were classified as huts, while only 56% of homes had electricity. An employment census taken for the year 1953 showed that 8.4% of the workforce was unemployed. This high unemployment rate does not even give the full picture of the poverty facing Cubans, as the census was taken during the height of the sugar harvest when unemployment was at its lowest. It is estimated that real unemployment throughout the year was closer to 30%.

Under the leadership of Fidel Castro, the Cuban revolution promised: jobs to the jobless; healthcare and education to those who had never been able to afford it; electrification and proper housing; land for peasant farmers who had always worked the land of rich landowners; nationalization of many industries previously owned by U.S. corporations; the creation of a planned economy; and the list goes on.

Here is a section of the First Declaration of Havana written and delivered by Fidel Castro in September 1960:

*“The right of the peasants to the land; the right of the workers to the fruit of their work; the right of children to education; the right of the ill to medical and hospital attention; the right of youth to work; the right of students to free, experimental, and scientific education; the right of Negroes and Indians to “the full dignity of Man;” the right of women to civil, social and political equality; the right of the aged to a secure old age; the right of intellectuals, artists, and scientists to fight, with their works, for a better world; the right of nations to their full sovereignty; the right of nations to turn fortresses into schools, and to arm their workers, their peasants, their students, their intellectuals, the Negro, the Indian, the women, the young and the old, the oppressed and exploited people, so that they may themselves defend their rights and their*



*destinies.”*

While Fidel Castro and the revolutionaries planned for the implementation of these promises, the U.S. government saw its colonial and imperial ambitions threatened. The U.S. government tried to defend its interests in Cuba by imposing severe economic sanctions. On April 16, 1961, Fidel Castro declared the Cuban revolution a socialist revolution. On April 17 the U.S. government orchestrated invasion at the Bay of Pigs. However, the revolution pushed forward and in less than 72 hours kicked out the invasion forces.

In February 1962, a full trade embargo – or blockade – against Cuba was announced by U.S. President John F. Kennedy. For over 55 years, numerous U.S. administrations, both Democrat and Republican, have claimed these sanctions are meant to punish the revolutionary government of Cuba, not the Cuban people. However, over 55 years of the blockade has demonstrated that this cruel and unjust U.S. policy hurts the entirety of Cuban society: cutting access to medicines, school supplies, construction materials, and countless other needed items.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY CUBA IS AN EXAMPLE?

### 1. Women's Rights

Throughout the world, women are struggling for their rights, the right to equal pay, the right to make decisions about their bodies, and the right to have a voice and be treated equally in society.

In the early days of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro recognized that one of the deepest challenges Cuba would face was the emancipation and full participation of women in a severely machista society. In 1960 the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) was founded, and since that time it has been developing policies and programs aimed at achieving full equality for women. This is not a small feminist grouping; the FMC has become one of the world's largest feminist organizations with over 4 million members, meaning over 90% of women over the age of 14 in Cuba.



Left to Right: Leaders of the Cuban revolution Fidel Castro, Raul Castro & Che Guevara; In 1961 Cuba celebrates the successful end of the literacy campaign; In 2018 a mother carries her baby while riding a horse, Cuba's infant mortality rate is the lowest in the Americas; Cuban Idalys Ortis won gold in Judo at the 2012 Olympics.

According to a March 2018 article in Granma International, journalists Danae González Del Toro and Nuria Barbosa León, explain, “Cuban women make up 48% of the state sector workforce, with a similar percent occupying management positions. Excellent employment, participation and leadership opportunities are open to women. [...] Likewise, 78.5% of healthcare professionals are women, as well as almost half of all of those conducting scientific research. Women also constitute 66% of the country's highly trained technicians and professionals, receiving the same salary as their male counterparts for the same work. Cuban women also have access to free and universal education and healthcare, and represent 60% of all university graduates.”

Recently Cuba has launched a dynamic campaign titled, “¡Evolucional!” or “Évolve!” it is a powerful campaign being led by youth everywhere on the gender spectrum, against violence against women. Their main slogan is “el machismo te atrasa, el acoso te atrasa” or “machismo holds you back, harassment holds you back.” It is a positive campaign raising awareness and getting young people involved in making change in their communities.

The inclusion of women in politics in Cuba is an ongoing challenge. However they have made tremendous gains with Cuba's new National Assembly elected in March 2018. Today 53.22% of representatives to Cuba's National Assembly are women. Cuba now ranks second in the world for the highest participation of women in parliament (Rwanda has the highest percentage of women in parliament in the world). Women also make up 48% of top officials in the State leadership. All this demonstrates the dynamic contribution of women in society.

### 2. Healthcare

Free and universal healthcare should be a fundamental human right, although the

world today, including in wealthy countries like the United States,

people are forced to pay out of pocket, often insurmountably high sums of money, for something they should have the right to as a human being living on this planet.

Today, the Cuban constitution guarantees access to universal medical care and citizens receive free healthcare from dental to major surgery, to regular check-ups – everything is covered. Cuba has one doctor for every 156 citizens, that is the most doctors per capita of any country in the world. In 1959, life expectancy in Cuba was 45 years. Today, even according to the CIA's World Factbook, Cuba's infant mortality rate is the lowest in the Americas - 4.40 / 1,000 births, Canada (4.50 / 1,000 births) and the U.S. (5.70 / 1,000 births) suffer from slightly higher infant mortality rates. While this may seem like any other statistic, infant mortality is seen as an important indicator for human development as it demonstrates how a society treats its most vulnerable members. Life expectancy at birth is another important indicator of health in a country, Cuba has one of the longest life expectancy rates in Latin America at 78.9 years.

### 3. Public Education

In wealthy countries like the U.S. and Canada, young people are taking on years of debt to get a post-secondary education. Many teachers, especially in the U.S., are forced to take on a second job to support their underfunded classrooms in the public education system. While Cuba is



## "REVOLUCIÓN Y MÁS" by Samuel Dubrocq

We wish to recognize that the beautiful logo for this section is from a painting by 21-year-old Cuban artist, Samuel Dubrocq. Dubrocq titled this piece, "REVOLUTION AND MORE" in honour of the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution.



considered a so-called “third world country,”

with limited natural resources and wealth, they have made public education, including post-secondary education, a priority.

Prensa Latina News agency explains the findings of the 2017 UNESCO report (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) writing, “Cuba is the Latin American country with the highest rate of educational development and the only one that has met the global objectives of Education for All. Cuba also devotes about 13 percent of its Gross Domestic Product to education. This year, the funds planned for Education amounted to 8.2 billion Cuban pesos (more than 331 million dollars), equivalent to 23 percent of budgetary expenditures.” Today education is fully funded in Cuba by the government up to and including university. Cuba also works to remove barriers to accessing education. For example, if a student is studying a specialty away from home, they will be provided with free residence, meals, etc. This is an example of what is possible when education is a true government priority.

#### 4. Environment & Sustainability

The fight for food security and a sustainable way of life is becoming an increasingly large concern for people around the world. The World Wildlife Fund’s “2006 Living Planet Report” named Cuba as the only country in the world developing towards sustainability. This report balances each country’s Human Development Index and Ecological Footprint. This means that environmental protection is not the only factor that is considered in sustainability, a high human development index (a healthy and educated population) is also a key factor.

According to the 2017 “State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World”

released by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Cuba is the only country in the Caribbean and Latin American with a “prevalence of undernourishment” of less than 2.5% of the population, this is considered highly developed and is the same rate as Canada.

Another interesting fact about the environment in Cuba is that in 1959, only 14% of Cuba’s territory was considered “forest-covered.” As of 2000, the forest had recovered to 23% of the total land area according to a World Resources Institute report in 2003. According to the revolutionary government of Cuba’s reforestation plans Cuba would continue this trend towards a balanced figure of 25% by 2008. In 2016, Cuba surpassed this goal, announcing 30.6% forest cover in Cuba according to the “Environmental Outlook: Cuba 2015”, published by the National Office of Statistics and Information.

#### 5. LGBTQ+ Rights

In 2017, UNESCO representatives participated in Cuba’s International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. The UNESCO delegates reported on the agency’s website, “Activities are organized by the National Centre for Sexual Education (CENESEX), an organization whose Director is Dr. Mariela Castro Espín, who is also a Member of Parliament and the daughter of the President of the Republic of Cuba, Mr. Raúl Castro. This year the theme chosen by CENESEX was “Schools without homophobia and transphobia.” CENESEX invited UNESCO to participate in the celebration of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, in recognition of the leading role that the organization plays in supporting efforts of countries to prevent and address school violence and bullying, including that based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.”

Battling homophobia, transphobia and biphobia is a major uphill battle in Cuba which is traditionally machista and heterosexist society. The efforts of Mariela Castro and CENESEX are an important

example of a political and militant queer community, that is actively reaching out to the rest of society to make change, with government and education ministry support.

#### 6. Revolutionary Internationalism

Revolutionary internationalism is the foundation of the foreign policy of the Cuban revolutionary government. It means international solidarity with all working and oppressed people politically and materially no matter their country of origin.

One of the most beautiful examples of Cuba’s revolutionary internationalism is the victory at Cuito Cuanavale. In 1987, the South African apartheid army prepared a new assault on Angola. Fidel Castro explained how the South African army “advanced strongly towards Cuito Cuanavale, an old NATO airbase and is prepared to deliver a mortal blow against Angola. Desperate calls were received from the Angolan government appealing to the Cuban troops for support in fending off presumed disaster; it was unquestionably the biggest threat from a military operation in which we, as on other occasions, had no responsibility whatever.” Even though it was not Cuba’s responsibility to defend Angola’s sovereignty, Fidel sent 55,000 soldiers to Angola. Remaining in Cuba, Fidel spent days and nights strategizing the battle in Angola. Fidel’s plans were victorious, and the victory against the apartheid army in Cuito Cuanavale weakened them severely.

Years later when the racist South African apartheid regime was defeated, and Nelson Mandela became the president of South Africa, Mandela would often say, “the defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale has made it possible for me to be here today.” Cuba was celebrated for taking home from the battles only its dead, while countless other governments who came to “help” Africa over hundreds of years always managed to come away wealthier, having plundered the wealth of the continent.

Today Cuba’s revolutionary internationalism is not about soldiers.



Instead, Cuba sends doctors and medical workers around the world. Since its founding in 2005, Cuba's "Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade" (HRIMB) an internationalist emergency medical team has travelled to 21 countries to help more than 3.5 million people affected by disasters and epidemics. Among the 3.5 million people served, they have directly saved an estimated 80,000 lives. For example, during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa (2014-2016), the Brigade sent 250 medical professionals. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), this revolutionary medical force constituted the single largest medical operation on the ground in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. In 2017 the HRIMB was awarded one of the WHO's most prestigious and lucrative prizes, the Dr. Lee Jong-wook Memorial Prize.

### HOW WAS CUBA ABLE TO DO ALL OF THIS?

We could also look to the gains the Cuban revolution has made in culture, music, sports, and art. Cuba's achievements in the Olympics and other international sports events; Cuba's huge contributions and achievements in music; Cuba's achievements in ballet; and so many other dynamic fields due to government support which has meant Cuban's have excelled and been recognized on a world stage.

We must remember that all of these gains and initiatives have happened despite over 55 years of U.S. blockade against Cuba.

One important and decisive factor in the success and gains of the Cuban revolution is Cuba's revolutionary socialist leadership. First, this means the central importance of Comandante Fidel Castro who was honest, sincere, courageous, knowledgeable, foresighted, farsighted, intuitive, intelligent, and most of all an internationalist revolutionary thinker able to envision both an ideal world and understand the objective world. In other words, a complete revolutionary, as Che Guevara called him.

Secondly, Fidel had many other incredible leaders who worked with him, from

Che Guevara, to Raul Castro, to Celia Sanchez, to Haydee Santamaria, to Camilo Cienfuegos, to Juan Almeida, to Vilma Espin, to Melba Hernandez, to Armando Hart and so many others. This was a leadership that was audacious in its vision and hopes for the future of humanity, but also able to turn that vision into something tangible and concrete at the service of the Cuban people. This leadership was most successful in its ability to take criticism and rectify itself, basically, learn from its own mistakes, as a healthy, honest, and revolutionary leadership must be.

Third, Cuba has successfully built a broader leadership, integrating working people from across all sectors into the fabric of the Cuban revolution and its leadership. It has continued to mobilize people for various campaigns and asked working people to be involved and to take ownership of their country, of their revolution and its future.

### FUTURE OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

In one of his final public speeches on April 19, 2016, Comandante Fidel Castro addressed many of the concerns of the Cuban people and the international community now that the revolution will be handed over to a new generation who were not yet alive during the battles in the Sierra Maestra. Fidel Castro said, "I shall soon turn 90, such an idea would never have occurred to me, and it was never the result of an effort, it was a sheer chance. I will soon be like everyone else. We all reach our turn, but the ideas of the Cuban communists will remain as proof that on this planet, working with fervour and dignity, can produce the material and cultural wealth that humans need, and we must fight relentlessly to obtain these. To our brothers in Latin America and the world, we must convey that the Cuban people will overcome."

Fidel not only reached out to the Cuban people to encourage them to continue building on the gains of the Cuban revolution. True to his revolutionary internationalist perspective he also spoke out against climate change, imperialism,

war, hunger and poverty.

In 2018, Cuba elected a new President, Miguel



Díaz-Canel Bermúdez. This year the revolutionary Cuban people and government also embarked on a campaign to create a new constitution. A draft of the new constitution was released to Cubans in 2018, which included 224 articles, 87 more than the current constitution. The draft constitution was widely circulated throughout the island, available at newspaper stands for Cubans to pick up and read. Debates and discussions on the draft were organized across the island. According to Havana's Radio Coco, "with more than 110,000 meetings held in communities, workplaces and schools, in which more than 7,300,000 people participated." Throughout December 2018, representatives of Cuba's National Assembly have been meeting to integrate the suggestions into a final draft of the constitution which will be voted on by all Cubans in a referendum expected in February 2019. This is a popular democracy, with a popular process, in which even Cubans living outside of Cuba were invited to participate via online forums.

The Cuban path towards socialism, equality, and a world where human beings no longer exploit one another cannot be fully realized until there are socialist revolutions in other countries. Cuba cannot be expected to build a socialist society on one island surround by a sea of capitalism and imperialism. Cuba and Cuban people are continuing and leading that path, we the working and oppressed of the world must join them!

While the Cuban government is revolutionary socialist; the Cuban state is socialist, and the Cuban economy is organized through socialist planning; it does not mean Cuban society is a socialist

*Continued on page 30*



Left to Right: All of the Cuban 5 are freed from U.S. jails and returned to Cuba, Dec 17, 2014; Cuban youth connect with books and magazines; A family of Cuban medical professionals returns from Brazil, December 13, 2018; Cubans mark the 35th anniversary of the Superior Military School "Comandante Arides Estévez" November 16, 2018; Cuban medical professionals provide free health services in Escuintla, Guatemala, June 13, 2018.



*"We will move forward  
and we will continue  
to be victorious"*

**Excerpts from the speech of Cuban President  
MIGUEL DÍAZ-CANEL**

are those that absorb every minute of our days, and every element of our energies.

On taking stock of efforts and results, I must firstly speak of our deep

the two-person teams that led the more than 133,000 assemblies held throughout the country, the officials responsible for the collection and analysis of the proposals; the Party Central Committee's Center for Socio-political Studies and, in particular, the Commission responsible for drafting the proposed Constitution and, as it has been heartily and rightly expressed here, its president, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz (Applause).

satisfaction with the popular discussion of the new Constitution approved today.

With that debate, we have not only enriched our political culture, the sense of belonging to a nation and the future of the country. We have come closer to the concerns and demands of our people, a fundamental objective of the Revolution, which our opponents have always tried to distract us from, intent on fracturing and dividing Cuban society, aware that unity is its most valuable strength.[...]

And it must also be said that we faced really hard tests, such as the floods that devastated the central provinces and the fall of an airplane that left a painful toll of 112 dead and a single survivor, who in recent days has sent a beautiful message of thanks to her compatriots, and especially to the medical team that kept her alive.[...]

This session of the National Assembly concludes with a transcendental decision for the life of the nation: the approval of the new Constitution of the Republic, which in February will be submitted to a Referendum.

We arrive at this point after an extensive process of popular consultation, where citizens, resident inside or outside the country, had the opportunity to freely express their considerations on the content of the draft text, which included, among other relevant aspects, political and economic foundations, rights and duties, and the structure of the State.[...]

This is a good opportunity, on behalf of the National Assembly, to congratulate those who participated in the assurance and organization of the popular consultation process, including

The Fundamental Law that we have just approved reaffirms the socialist path of the Revolution, and allows us to steer the work of the State, government, organizations and the entire people in the continuous perfection of society; it reinforces institutionalality; the prevalence of the Constitution establishes greater inclusion, justice and social equality in our work, and reinforcement of the empowerment of the people in governing the nation.

This process, which continues with the holding of the Referendum on February 24 of the coming year, is a genuine and exceptional demonstration of the people's exercise of power and, therefore, of the marked participatory and democratic nature of our political system.

Contrary to what the enemies of the Revolution state, Cuba has once again shown that fundamental decisions and consensus on the issues that define the life of the nation are built with the decisive contribution of all. We could dare our detractors to carry out in their countries a process with similar characteristics to the one we are undertaking.

On a date as dear as February 24, 124 years after the resumption of the independence struggle led by National Hero José Martí, Cubans of today, faithful to the traditions of struggle, will go to the polls to approve the Constitution, as an expression of resolve, loyalty to the legacy of the Comandante en Jefe of the Cuban Revolution, compañero Fidel Castro, and we will say with our vote: Yes to the Revolution, to the sovereignty and independence of the Homeland, to unity. Yes

*Excerpts from the speech of Cuban President, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, during the closure of the December 22, 2018 Session of the National Assembly of People's Power.*

DEAR Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Party Central Committee;

Compañeros Machado and Lazo;

Deputies;

Compatriots:

Our first words on Educator's Day are to congratulate and recognize Cuban teachers who, more than their time, dedicate their life's purpose to us.

The year 2018 is almost at an end, and we gather again for the traditional embrace and evaluation of a crucial period in the history of the Cuban Revolution.

The year we bid farewell to today will remain in our national memory as the year in which a new generation, gradually and progressively, in a clear expression of continuity, began to assume the principal leadership tasks, with the good fortune of maintaining the guidance of the Historic Generation, in particular, of Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba.

During the months since the Assembly sessions of April, we have relied on that guide in the face of the most difficult and unexpected challenges, and found in his confidence and collective leadership the fundamental resources to arrive here today to render accounts, committed to the solution of the problems that most concern the people, which

for socialism and for the commitment to heroes and martyrs in more than 150 years of struggles for freedom.[...]

Compatriots:

2019 will be a year of order. The plan will be based on the country's hard currency income and payments, paying more debts than outstanding credits, and complying with the maximum punctuality possible in the payment of commitments.[...]

Moreover, measures related to self-employment activity have recently come into force. The majority of the population accepts them and considers that they are necessary for the organization and control of this process.

In this regard, I want to specify our point of view on this activity.

Self-employed workers are not enemies of the Revolution, they are the result of the process of updating the economic model, they have solved problems that burdened the State and for which it was sometimes inefficient. They have rescued trades that life proved necessary.

We have recognized the non-state sector as a complement to the economy and there is no intention of preventing them from prospering, but their operations must be within the law.

We know that we can rely on most of them to boost and revitalize the economy. We must erase from some minds the prejudices toward their work, which do us as much damage as those inspectors who come to be corrupt and generate distrust and insecurity.[...]

We know that there are still attempts to turn the non-state sector into an enemy of the revolutionary process, but they will not succeed in dividing us. For this we count on the commitment of our self-employed workers and of state institutions.[...]

Compañeras and compañeros:

[...]We have convened and continue an ethical battle against corruption, illegalities, additions and social indiscipline, manifestations that are antagonistic and incompatible with our present and future.

What has been done is still insufficient, and what has been achieved is nothing with respect to our purposes as the Government of the Revolution, but we want to express thanks for the support and understanding of the Cuban women and men who inhabit our geography. We owe ourselves to them.

There are many questions to address and answer. We will provide answers to as many as possible, and for those to which we do not have answers for the moment, we will not cease in the effort to find them.

Cuban women and men:

The year 2018 has been intense, in the midst of a complex international context due to

the increase in imperialist hegemony that mutilates multilateralism in international relations.

Latin America and the Caribbean, our Great Homeland, is no stranger to these influences.

Cuba is accused by the empire of being the source of what they consider "the great evils of the region." The blockade tightens, and financial persecution escalates, to hinder the development of the country.

The result obtained on November 1, in ten successive votes of the United Nations General Assembly, demonstrated the overwhelming support that Cuba enjoys in its fight against the blockade – an aggressive, anachronistic, failed policy that causes enormous damages to the Cuban people, constitutes the main obstacle to our development, and is a violation of human rights. We are greatly appreciative to all the governments that contributed to the demand for its end.

That same day, the United States National Security Adviser, with extremely aggressive and disrespectful language, announced in Miami new measures that reinforce the blockade, which together with other events and threats, foretell that his government is moving toward a course of confrontation with Cuba.

U.S. imperialism has reiterated the validity of the Monroe Doctrine and attacks progressive governments and processes, attempts to reverse the progress made in terms of integration and social justice in the region; carries out a systematic and enormous communications and cultural manipulation operation; and persecutes and

criminalizes leftist political forces and leaders, popular movements and social organizations, with the aim of imposing neoliberalism. It also tries to destroy the genuinely Latin American and Caribbean cooperation and collaboration mechanisms, such as CELAC and UNASUR.

But the peoples do not bow down or abandon the struggle, as demonstrated in the broad and united XXIV Meeting of the São Paulo Forum, held in this city this past July.

I express our deep gratitude to the Commonwealth Caribbean for its encouraging Statement of Solidarity of December 8, 2018, in honor of the celebration



*Continued on page 29*



**Above: A Cuban woman reads the new draft constitution. Below: Cubans of all ages defend workers' rights on International Workers' Day in Havana, Cuba, May 1, 2018.**



# Photo Report

## NEW YEAR'S EVE 2018

### Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba Celebrates 60 Years of the Cuban Revolution!



Video greetings from Cuban Ambassador to Canada, Josefina Vidal



Indigenous drum group opening



Selling raffle tickets



VCSC Coordinator Tamara Hansen



Salsa Dance Lesson



Tribute to Comandante Fidel



Balloon drop at midnight



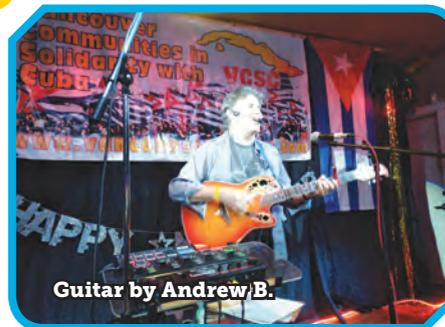
Singing by Nadia B.



Lots of dancing



DJ Carlos Tunes Tunes



Guitar by Andrew B.



Photobooth fun!

# VISTING EASTERN CUBA WITH THE 1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL CALIXTO GARCIA BRIGADE



By Tamara Hansen & Mike Larson

*November 28, 2018 the 1st annual Calixto Garcia Brigade kicked off with 25 brigadistas landing in Holguin Cuba. For 10 days brigadistas got a chance to understand the Cuban reality. Here are some highlights from the trip assembled by Fire This Time organizers, Tamara Hansen and Mike Larson.*



Clockwise from top left: Streets of Bayamo; Brigade Leaders Yunet, Yamil and Claudia getting ready for volunteer work; Community childrens theatre and dance group in Holguin; First day of volunteer work planting tomato plants; Second day of volunteer work planting lettuce; Visting national historic sites such as the "Nico Lopez" Park & Museum; Holguin vs. Santa Clara national baseball game; Meeting with combatants of the revolution; Getting ready for volunteer work; and December 4, march for Comandante Fidel Castro on the second anniversary of his interment in Santiago!



If you want to join the Brigade next year please get in touch:

[calixtogarciabrigade@gmail.com](mailto:calixtogarciabrigade@gmail.com) and [vancubasolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:vancubasolidarity@gmail.com)





**\* EN ESPAÑOL \***

*Extractos del discurso del Presidente de Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, en la clausura del 22 de diciembre de 2018 de Sesiones de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular.*

Querido General de Ejército Raúl Castro Ruz, Primer Secretario del Comité Central del Partido; Compañeros Machado y Lazo; Diputadas y diputados; Compatriotas:

Nuestras primeras palabras en el Día del Educador para felicitar y reconocer a los maestros cubanos, quienes nos dedican, más que sus horas, el sentido de sus vidas.

El 2018 casi termina y volvemos a reunirnos para el tradicional abrazo y la evaluación de un período crucial en la historia de la Revolución Cubana.

El que hoy despedimos quedará en nuestra memoria nacional como el año en que una nueva generación, de manera gradual y paulatina, en clara expresión de continuidad, comenzó a asumir tareas principales de dirección, con la suerte de mantener la guía de la Generación Histórica, en particular del General de Ejército Raúl Castro Ruz, Primer Secretario del Partido Comunista de Cuba.

Durante los meses transcurridos desde las sesiones de la Asamblea en abril, hemos contado con esa guía ante los más duros e inesperados desafíos y encontrado en su confianza y en la dirección colectiva los recursos fundamentales para llegar hoy aquí a rendirles cuenta, comprometidos con la solución de los problemas que más preocupan al pueblo, que son los que absorben cada minuto de nuestros días y cada partícula de nuestras energías.

Haciendo un balance de esfuerzos y resultados, debo hablar, en primer lugar, de la profunda satisfacción que nos deja la discusión popular de la nueva Constitución que hoy se aprueba.

Con ese debate, no solo hemos enriquecido nuestra cultura política, el sentido de pertenencia a una nación y el futuro del país. Nos hemos acercado más a las preocupaciones y demandas de nuestra gente, objetivo fundamental de la Revolución del que siempre han intentado distraernos los adversarios,



empeñados en fracturar y dividir a la sociedad cubana, conscientes de que la unidad es su más cara fortaleza.[...]

Y es preciso decir que también tuvimos pruebas realmente duras, como las inundaciones que asolaron las provincias centrales y la caída de un avión que dejó un doloroso saldo de 112 muertes y una sola sobreviviente, quien en días recientes ha enviado un hermoso mensaje de agradecimiento a sus compatriotas y en especial al equipo médico que la mantuvo con vida.[...]

Esta sesión de la Asamblea Nacional concluye con una decisión trascendente para la vida de la nación: la aprobación de la nueva Constitución de la República que en febrero será sometida a Referendo.

Llegamos a ella después de un amplio proceso de consulta popular donde los ciudadanos, residentes dentro o fuera del país, tuvieron la oportunidad de expresar libremente sus consideraciones sobre el contenido del proyecto, el cual comprendía, entre otros aspectos relevantes, los fundamentos políticos y económicos, los derechos y los deberes y la estructura del Estado.[...]

La ocasión es propicia para, en nombre de la Asamblea Nacional, felicitar a quienes participaron en el aseguramiento y organización del proceso de consulta popular, incluyendo los dúos que condujeron las más de 133 000 asambleas efectuadas en todo el

país, los funcionarios responsabilizados con la recopilación y análisis de los planteamientos; al Centro de Estudios Sociopolíticos del Comité Central del Partido y, en particular, a la Comisión encargada de la redacción del proyecto de Constitución y, como sentida y justamente se ha expresado aquí, a su presidente, el General de Ejército Raúl Castro Ruz (Aplausos).

La Ley Fundamental que acabamos de aprobar reafirma el rumbo socialista de la Revolución y nos permite encauzar la labor del Estado, el Gobierno, las organizaciones y todo el pueblo en el perfeccionamiento continuo de la sociedad; refuerza la institucionalidad; establece la prevalencia de la Constitución en nuestro actuar una mayor inclusión, justicia e igualdad social y un reforzamiento del empoderamiento del pueblo en el gobierno de la nación.

Este proceso, que continúa con la celebración del Referendo el 24 de febrero del venidero año, es una genuina y excepcional demostración del ejercicio del poder por el pueblo y, por consiguiente, del marcado carácter participativo y democrático de nuestro sistema político.

Contrario a lo que exponen los enemigos de la Revolución, Cuba ha dado una vez más muestra de que las decisiones fundamentales y el consenso en torno a los temas que definen la vida de la nación se construyen con el

aporte decisivo de todos. Habría que decirles a nuestros detractores que se arriesguen a hacer en sus países un proceso de similares características al que estamos desarrollando.

En fecha tan entrañable como el 24 de febrero, a 124 años del reinicio de la contienda independentista dirigida por el Héroe Nacional José Martí, los cubanos de estos tiempos, fieles a las tradiciones de luchas, acudiremos a las urnas a aprobar la Constitución, como expresión de firmeza, lealtad al legado del Comandante en Jefe de la Revolución Cubana, el compañero Fidel Castro, y diremos con nuestro voto: Sí a la Revolución, a la soberanía e independencia de la Patria, a la unidad. Sí por el socialismo y por el compromiso con los héroes y mártires en los más de 150 años de luchas por la libertad.[...]

#### Compatriotas:

2019 será un año de ordenamiento. El plan estará en función de los ingresos en divisas del país y su cobro, pagando más deudas que créditos a obtener y cumpliendo con la mayor puntualidad posible el pago de los compromisos. [...]

Por otra parte, recientemente han entrado en vigor medidas relacionadas con la actividad del trabajo por cuenta propia. La mayor parte de la población las acepta y considera que son necesarias para la organización y control de este proceso.

Al respecto, quiero precisar nuestro punto de vista sobre esta actividad.

Los trabajadores por cuenta propia no son enemigos de la Revolución, son resultado del proceso de actualización del modelo económico, han resuelto problemas que recargaban al Estado y para los cuales en ocasiones resultaba ineficiente. Ellos han ido rescatando oficios que la vida probó que son necesarios.

Al sector no estatal lo hemos reconocido como un complemento de la economía y no existe intención alguna de evitar que puedan prosperar, pero su funcionamiento tiene que ser dentro de la legalidad.

Conocemos que contamos con la mayor parte de ellos para impulsar y dinamizar la economía. Hay que borrar de algunas mentes los prejuicios hacia su labor, que nos hacen tanto daño como aquellos inspectores que llegan a corromperse, y generan desconfianza e inseguridad. [...]

Sabemos que persisten intentos para convertir al sector no estatal en un enemigo del proceso revolucionario, pero no lograrán desunirnos. Para eso contamos con el compromiso de nuestros trabajadores por cuenta propia y de

las instituciones estatales.[...]

#### Compañeras y compañeros:

[...] Hemos convocado y proseguimos una batalla ética contra la corrupción, las ilegalidades, las adicciones y la indisciplina social, manifestaciones que son antagónicas e incompatibles con nuestro presente y futuro.

Lo realizado es aún insuficiente y lo alcanzado es nada con respecto a nuestros propósitos como Gobierno de la Revolución, pero queremos agradecer el apoyo y la comprensión



**Los niños cubanos disfrutan después de la escuela, la educación pública gratuita es un logro de la revolución.**

de las cubanas y cubanos que habitan nuestra geografía. A ellos nos debemos.

Hay muchas interrogantes que atender y responder. Les daremos repuestas a todas cuantas sea posible y para aquellas que por el momento no las tengan, no cesaremos en el empeño de encontrarlas.

#### Cubanas y cubanos:

El año 2018 ha sido intenso en medio de un contexto internacional complejo por el acrecentamiento del hegemonismo imperial que mutila el multilateralismo en las relaciones internacionales.

Latinoamérica y el Caribe, nuestra Patria Grande no es ajena a estos influjos.

Cuba es acusada por el imperio de ser la causante de lo que consideran "los grandes males de la región". El bloqueo se recrudece y se intensifica la persecución financiera para obstaculizar el desarrollo del país.



El resultado alcanzado el pasado 1ro de noviembre en diez votaciones sucesivas de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas demostró el abrumador apoyo con que cuenta Cuba en su lucha contra el bloqueo, una política agresiva, anacrónica, fracasada, que causa enormes daños al pueblo cubano, constituye el principal obstáculo a nuestro desarrollo y es una violación de los derechos humanos. Mucho agradecemos a todos los gobiernos que contribuyeron al reclamo de ponerle fin.

Ese mismo día, el Asesor de Seguridad Nacional de los Estados Unidos, con lenguaje extremadamente agresivo e irrespetuoso, anunció en Miami nuevas medidas que refuerzan el bloqueo, las que junto a otros hechos y amenazas, auguran que su Gobierno avanza hacia un curso de confrontación con Cuba.

El imperialismo estadounidense ha reiterado la vigencia de la Doctrina Monroe y arremete contra los gobiernos y procesos progresistas, intenta revertir los avances conseguidos en materia de integración y de justicia social en la región; realiza una sistemática y enorme operación de manipulación comunicacional y cultural; y persigue y criminaliza a fuerzas políticas y líderes de izquierda, movimientos populares y organizaciones sociales con el objetivo de imponer el neoliberalismo. Intenta destruir, asimismo, los mecanismos de cooperación y concertación

genuinamente latinoamericanos y caribeños, como la CELAC y UNASUR.

Pero los pueblos no se doblegan ni abandonan la lucha como se demostró en el amplio y unitario XXIV Encuentro del Foro de Sao Paulo, celebrado en esta ciudad en el pasado mes de julio. Expreso nuestra profunda gratitud a la Mancomunidad del Caribe por su alentadora Declaración de Solidaridad del 8 de diciembre de 2018, en honor a la celebración del Día Caricom-Cuba.

La Declaración de la XVI Cumbre de la Alianza Bolivariana de los Pueblos de Nuestra América, ALBA-TCP, celebrada en La Habana el pasado 14 de diciembre,



abordó estos temas, se pronunció por actuar con determinación en la movilización e indispensable unidad de las fuerzas revolucionarias, progresistas y populares y expresó pleno respaldo y solidaridad a la República Bolivariana de Venezuela y a la República de Nicaragua frente a la hostilidad imperialista y oligárquica.[...]

Todos los días llegan, desde los más remotos rincones del gigante sudamericano, mensajes de agradecimiento a nuestros médicos y de rechazo a la política del nuevo Presidente que los arrancó de aquellos parajes a donde sólo ellos llegaron para salvar vidas.[...]

Nuestros profesionales de la salud son el paradigma que se opone a los egoísmos y la mercantilización de los servicios médicos. Ellos son Cuba y son el más hermoso monumento a la obra internacionalista, humanista, en defensa de los derechos humanos a escala universal, de Fidel.[...]

Queridos Compatriotas:

¡Qué tremendo año estamos despidiendo!

Si solo atendiéramos a los símbolos, bastaría con los 150 años de pelea feroz por nuestra independencia que marca el 2018 y los 60 años de combate, resistencia y creatividad que se cumplen del triunfo definitivo, al primer minuto de 2019.

Transitamos de uno al otro empujados por la imponente hazaña de los que se lanzaron a la manigua, a veces sin más armas que la vergüenza y enfrentaron hambre y escaseces sin límite por hacernos libres.

Hombres y mujeres de propiedades y riquezas heredadas, que renunciaron a ellas para crear una nación nueva.

Este año, un museo local de la antigua metrópoli, nos ha prestado una silla que perteneció a Maceo. De un tronco de palma se hizo el trono del más bravo de nuestros Generales. No tomó ninguna elegante y mullida de los que entonces sometían a su Patria. Por eso la guardaron como trofeo de guerra los que, aun matándole, jamás pudieron vencer nuestra vocación libertaria.

Exactamente 60 años después de la muerte de Maceo, en diciembre de 1956, Fidel, Raúl y sus compañeros del Granma, retomaron el espíritu de aquel guerrero y levantaron campamento en las montañas. Tan criolla y soberana como la silla del Titán de Bronce sería la Comandancia rebelde.

También de tablas de palma y techo de guano es la casa de Fidel en La Plata, el sitio jamás conquistado por el ejército de la dictadura,



custodiado como estuvo y estará siempre, por los humildes habitantes de aquellas tierras, por donde corre sonoro y libre, el arroyo de la Sierra.

Somos una nación marcada por afanes de independencia tan grandes, que también nos salvaron de las dependencias egoístas a las posesiones materiales, cuando el precio de conseguirlas fue la libertad.

Los símbolos a los que hice referencia, esas señales y esencias que la Historia nos deja, nos hablan de un país con carácter, que supo siempre que “la pobreza pasa, lo que no pasa es la deshonra”, como dijo el Apóstol de la levita gastada, que juntó dinero y voluntades para la Guerra Necesaria, sin apropiarse jamás de un centavo.

Ese carácter, que nos viene de los abuelos y de los padres, que por la Patria nos arranca hasta lágrimas, pero sobre todo nos lanza al galope sobre cuantos quieren dañarla; no es, como algunos creen, el libro de Historia que la joven generación no sabe leer.

Sentir pasión y orgullo por lo que somos al mismo tiempo que impaciencia y angustia por lo que no alcanzamos, más que en un sufrimiento, convierte el tránsito entre estos dos años en un arco de triunfo, coronado por todo lo que hemos entregado y la certeza de que pelear es la victoria (Aplausos).

Vamos siempre por más. Y con todas las generaciones vivas juntas, en homenaje a los que lo sacrificaron todo porque el camino hacia la conquista de ese más, siempre pendiente, estuviera custodiado por la paz y la unidad de todos los cubanos.

En nombre de una generación orgullosa de ser, no relevo, sino continuidad, quiero expresarles el profundo compromiso que nos mueve a pelear sin descanso por estar a la altura de la historia, de nuestros próceres y del pueblo, inseparables en el sentimiento y la fidelidad.

Hoy hemos venido a rendirles cuenta de nuestro trabajo y a comprometernos a más: a impulsar todo lo que nos permita salir adelante y vencer, junto con las limitaciones propias y frente a la guerra económica, la persecución financiera y el bloqueo recrudecido.

La mayor motivación nos la brinda el aniversario 60 de la Revolución, con sus imborrables lecciones de que es posible vencer todos los obstáculos si el pueblo nos acompaña.

Será, sin dudas, otro año de desafíos. Pero, como decía Martí hablando de El alma de la revolución, y el deber de Cuba (...): “Nada espera el pueblo cubano de la revolución que la revolución no pueda darle”.

Vamos a salir adelante. Y vamos a seguir venciendo. A eso nos enseñaron los padres de la nación. A eso nos convoca todos los días el pueblo digno y heroico de Céspedes, Mariana, Maceo, Gómez, Martí, Mella, Villena, Haydeé, Abel, Celia, Frank, Vilma, Camilo, Che, Almeida, Fidel, Raúl y sus compañeros de lucha que nos honran acompañándonos.

El 24 de febrero, en el Referendo para ratificar la Constitución, Cuba estará tocando un punto culminante de los 150 años que hemos celebrado y los 60 de la Revolución Cubana, la Revolución de Fidel y Raúl, que festejaremos el próximo 1ro de enero.

Diremos sí y venceremos otra vez. Porque Somos Cuba.

Felicidades a todo nuestro pueblo por el nuevo año.

¡Hasta la victoria siempre!

¡Patria o Muerte!

¡Venceremos!

(Ovación.)

Continued from page 23

of CARICOM-Cuba Day.

The Declaration of the XVI Summit of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, ALBA-TCP, held in Havana on December 14, addressed these issues, committed to act decisively in the mobilization and indispensable unity of revolutionary, progressive and popular forces, and expressed full support and solidarity to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Republic of Nicaragua in the face of imperialist and oligarchic hostility.[...]

Every day, from the remotest corners of the South American giant, messages arrive of gratitude to our doctors, and rejection of the new President's policy that uprooted them from those places where only they went to save lives.[...]

Our health professionals are the paradigm that contraposes the egotism and commercialization of medical services. They are Cuba, and are the most beautiful monument to Fidel's internationalist, humanist work in defense of human rights on a universal scale.[...]

Dear Compatriots:



**Cuban doctors fighting Ebola in Africa.**

What a tremendous year we are seeing off!

If we were to look to symbols alone, it would be enough to consider the 150 years of intense struggle for our independence that 2018 marks, and the 60 years of combat, resistance and creativity of the final triumph, at the first minute of 2019.

We move from one to the other driven by the stunning feat of those who threw themselves into the scrubland, sometimes with no more weapons than their sense of shame, and who faced limitless hunger and scarcity to make us free.

Men and women of inherited properties and wealth, who renounced them to create a new nation.

This year, a local museum of the former mother country has lent us a chair that

belonged to Maceo. The throne of the bravest of our Generals was made from a palm trunk. He did not take an elegant and soft chair from those who then subjected his country. That is why those who, even on killing him, could never overcome our vocation for liberty, kept it as a war trophy.

Exactly 60 years after the death of Maceo, in December of 1956, Fidel, Raúl and their compañeros of the Granma, took up again the spirit of that warrior and set up camp in the mountains. The rebel Command would be as Creole and sovereign as the Bronze Titan's chair.

Also made of palm boards and a palm leaf roof is Fidel's house in La Plata, the site never conquered by the army of the dictatorship, guarded as it was and will always be, by the humble inhabitants of those lands, where the brook of the Sierra Maestra flows sonorous and free.

We are a nation marked by such great independence endeavors, that also saved us from egoistic dependencies on material possessions, when the price of obtaining them was freedom.

The symbols to which I referred, those signs and essences that History leaves us, speak to us of a country with character, that always knew that "poverty passes, what does not pass is dishonor," as the Apostle of the worn frock coat said, who gathered money and wills for the Necessary War, without ever taking a penny.

That character, that comes to us from grandparents and parents, that for the Homeland even brings tears to our eyes, but above all, launches us at full gallop against anyone who wants to harm it, is not, as some believe, the History book that the young generation can not read.

To feel passion and pride for what we are, at the same time as impatience and anguish for what we do not achieve, rather than distress, makes the transition between these two years a triumphal arch, crowned by everything we have devoted, and the certainty that to fight is a victory (Applause).

We always push for more. And with all the living generations together, in tribute to those who sacrificed everything, because the road toward the conquest of that bit more, always pending, was guarded by the peace and unity of all Cubans.

On behalf of a generation proud of being not a replacement, but continuity, I want to express to you the deep commitment that moves us

to struggle relentlessly to measure up to history, to our heroes and the people, inseparable in sentiment and fidelity.



Today we have come to render an account of our work and to commit ourselves to

more: to promote everything that allows us to move forward and overcome, along with our own limitations and in the face of an economic war, financial persecution and the tightened blockade.

The greatest motivation is provided by the 60th anniversary of the Revolution, with its indelible lessons that it



is possible to overcome all obstacles if the people accompany us.

It will be, without doubt, another year of challenges. But, as Martí said on speaking of the soul of the Revolution, and the duty of Cuba: "The Cuban people expect nothing from the revolution that the revolution can not provide."

We will move forward. And we will continue to be victorious. That's what the forefathers of the nation taught us. To this the dignified and heroic people of Céspedes, Mariana, Maceo, Gómez, Martí, Mella, Villena, Haydeé, Abel, Celia, Frank, Vilma, Camilo, Che, Almeida, Fidel, Raúl and their comrades in the struggle summon us everyday, who by accompanying us, honor us.

On February 24, in the Referendum to ratify the Constitution, Cuba will be reaching a high point of the 150 years we have celebrated, and the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, the Revolution of Fidel and Raúl, which we will celebrate on January 1st.

We will say yes and we will triumph again. Because we are Cuba.

Congratulations to all our people for the New Year.

Ever onward to victory!

¡Patria o Muerte!

¡Venceremos!

(Ovation.)



paradise. Even after 60 years of revolution, Cuba is a society in a socialist transition,

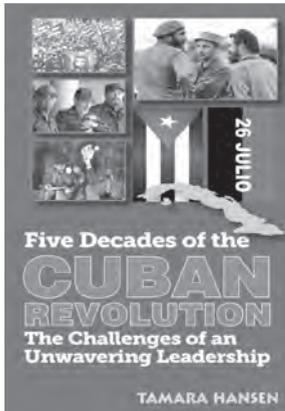
with many capitalist ideas and methods, including prejudices and inequality still exist. However, what makes the Cuban revolution such an important example to follow is its ongoing willingness to take risks, try new paths, to confront old and outdated ideas, and to continue mobilizing masses of people for social projects and undertakings. After sixty years, Cuba's socialist project continues expanding its revolutionary potentials.

### WE NEED TO BUILD UNITY & SOLIDARITY

As the international capitalist and imperialist system continues to destroy the humanity of working and oppressed peoples and our planet, we will not be able to sustain the destruction being reaped by capitalism much longer, if we do not resist and fight back.

## Battle of Ideas Press

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



By Tamara Hansen

Coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC). She is also an editorial board member of The Fire This Time newspaper. She has travelled to Cuba over a dozen times and has written extensively on Cuban politics since 2003.

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The examples and accomplishments of the Cuba's socialist revolution must be used as an example for all poor, working, and oppressed people in our working class struggle, grassroots campaigns, and socialist movement building. With so many struggles against injustice under capitalism, our push for change can seem overwhelming. Cuba is an important reminder of the truth of the words of Ernesto "Che" Guevara who said, "We are

realists, we dream the impossible." Cuba has not only dreamed the impossible, but it has also done the impossible.

We love and respect Cuba, the Cuban people and the Cuban revolution because they are a living example that a future without capitalism is possible and if we are going to save humankind - change is not optional, it is a necessity.

Follow Tamara on Twitter: @THans01

## Blockade Against People of Cuba is an Act of War



By Janine Solanki

During 2018 the U.S. economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba caused daily damages of 12 million dollars, reported Cuba's Minister of Economy and Planning Alejandro Gil on December 21, 2018 at the National Assembly of People's Power. Despite this ongoing intense and hostile economic pressure that Cuba has endured for over 55 years, the country has become a world-wide leader in health and education, and many other fields of human progress - from sports and arts to science and technology - due to the Cuban socialist revolution and ongoing socialist project. With a child mortality rate of 4 per 1000 births, lower than the U.S. which has the worst rate of the 20 wealthiest countries, maybe the U.S. has some important lessons to learn from how Cuba cares for human life?

On December 17 Cuba solidarity activists in Vancouver took the demand "Lift the Blockade on Cuba!" to the streets loud and clear in front of the

U.S. Consulate. This monthly action organized by Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade takes place every 17<sup>th</sup> of the month in Vancouver, alongside actions in Montreal and Ottawa, Canada and Kiev, Ukraine! Alongside the demand to end the U.S. blockade against Cuba, the action also demanded a return of the U.S. illegally occupied territory of Guantanamo Bay back to Cuba. Between rounds of energetic picketing and chanting, the protesters gathered together to hear from speakers, including a solidarity message from Ottawa Cuba Connections, who were protesting in front of the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa.

2019 will see continued action in Vancouver, Cuba and around the world as supporters of Cuba stand up to defend Cuba against this criminal blockade! For information on upcoming actions and events go to [www.vancubavsblockade.org](http://www.vancubavsblockade.org) or follow on Facebook and Twitter

@NoBloqueoVan

Follow Janine on Twitter: @janinesolanki



# 60 YEARS <sup>OF THE</sup> CUBAN REVOLUTION!

**& HOW FAR WE HAVE COME**

**Free Community Event  
FEATURING:**

**TANIA LÓPEZ LARROQUE**  
Consul General of Cuba in Toronto



**\* Film \* Music \* Speakers \***

**SUNDAY JANUARY 20** 2019

**6:30 PM**

**MOUNT PLEASANT  
NEIGHBOURHOOD  
HOUSE**

**800 E Broadway  
@ Fraser St.  
Vancouver, Canada**

**ORGANIZED BY:**

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