

Fire This Time Remembers Our Compañeros

By *Tamara Hansen*

Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada

May 21, 1937-May 1, 2022

On May 1, 2022, International Workers' Day was marked by the passing of a distinguished Cuban revolutionary leader, Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada.

From his university days, Alarcón was linked to the revolutionary struggle and Comandante Fidel Castro's July 26 Movement. In 1959, following the triumph of the Cuban revolution, he was elected president of the University Student Federation (FEU).

Alarcón served as Cuba's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) for nearly 30 years, then acted as Cuba's Minister of Foreign Affairs. From 1993-2013 Alarcón was President of Cuba's National Assembly of People's Power (Cuban Parliament).

Alarcón was a proud and fiery Cuban revolutionary. He spent much of his lengthy career defending the Cuban revolution in hostile environments and educating folks in the Americas about the realities of Cuba, which were often lied about and mischaracterized in the international mainstream and bourgeois press. Alarcón was a steadfast voice internationally demanding freedom for all 5 of our Cuban heroes held for over 16 years in U.S. jails.

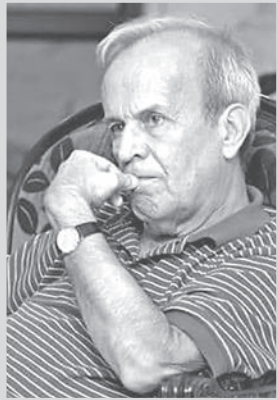
On Facebook, Cuba's Deputy Foreign Minister, Josefina Vidal, wrote, "To the Master of the diplomats of our generation, we will always keep deep respect, admiration and immense affection. Thank you for the privilege and honor of having been his disciples. Our heartfelt condolences to Margarita and Ricardito."

Fire This Time sends our most heartfelt condolences to Ricardo Alarcón's family, the people of Cuba, and all his friends across Canada and around the world.

¡Ricardo Alarcón Presente!



Ricardo Alarcón with Comandante Fidel Castro in the early years of the Cuban revolution



Manuel Eugenio Yepe Menéndez

November 15, 1936 -

May 16, 2022

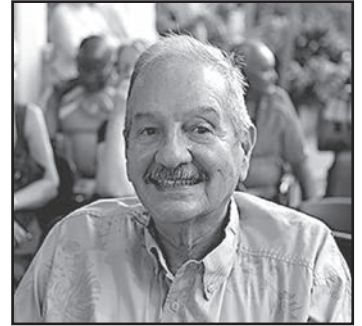
On May 16, 2022, Manuel Yepe, an important Cuban revolutionary leader, passed away in Havana. Manuel Yepe travelled to Canada on many occasions and was a close friend and compañero.

Yepe was a member of the Youth Brigades of the 26th of July Movement leading up to the Cuban revolution. After the triumph of the Cuban revolution, Yepe worked for decades in Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as a Cuban diplomat internationally, and as the general director of Prensa Latina News Agency. Most recently, he was a member of the Secretariat of the Cuban Peace Movement and continued working as a writer and researcher during his retirement years.

I first met Manuel Yepe at an event hosted by the B.C. Teachers' Federation in July 2005, when he visited Vancouver in preparation for the 2006 World Peace Forum. Our first meeting was less than a week before I travelled to Cuba for the first time with the Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade in August 2005. At our first meeting, Yepe took the time to discuss politics and was very encouraging of my work as a young Cuba solidarity activist and organizer.

After that first meeting, I had the immense privilege to visit with Yepe and his wonderful wife Marta on almost every trip I made to Havana. We would sit in his backyard under the mango tree discussing politics for hours. He was a great host, always taking time out of his day to share stories and was always interested in meeting with young people who were visiting Cuba for the first time.

Manuel Yepe travelled to Vancouver three



times for the Vancouver International Che Guevara Conference in 2010, 2011, and 2012. It was an honour to host him for each visit. As someone who worked alongside Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, and many other legendary Cuban revolutionaries, he would always include some personal anecdotes within his more extensive discussions of politics.

Fire This Time newspaper has printed dozens of Yepe's articles over the years. He wrote on a wide variety of topics, including articles titled, "Twisted Justice in Miami: The Case of Cuban 5 and Others...", "Lifting the U.S. Blockade Will Benefit Both Peoples", and most recently, "The Capitalist Crisis is Worse than Covid-19". His writing style was always educational and dynamic, offering Cuba's revolutionary internationalist perspective on countless issues concerning humanity.

Fire This Time sends our most heartfelt condolences to Manuel Yepe's family, the people of Cuba, and all his friends across Canada and around the world.

¡Manuel Yepe Presente!



Tamara Hansen, Marta Nuñez, Manuel Yepe & Alison Bodine in Havana, 2010.