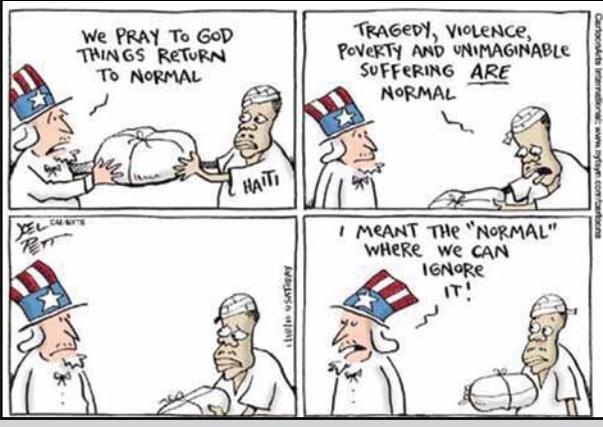


HAITI 3 YEARS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

Page 4



OBAMA: LET THE CUBAN 5 RETURN TO CUBA NOW!

On Saturday January 5th, people around the world took action calling for the freedom of the Cuban 5 political prisoners imprisoned in the U.S. In Vancouver, Canada, supporters of the Cuban 5 gathered in the heart of downtown for the 86th ... Page 23 - 24

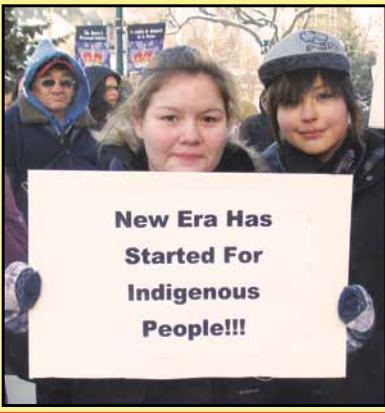
"WE ARE ALL CHÁVEZ"

INTERNATIONAL WEEK IN SOLIDARITY WITH VENEZUELA & PRESIDENT CHÁVEZ

Page 27 - 30

FIRE THIS TIME

We are realists... We dream the impossible - che



INDIGENOUS AWAKENING IN CANADA

What began as a series of grassroots protest actions across Canada against the Conservative government's omnibus Bill C-45 in late 2012 has swept through every corner of the country... Page 7

brigada de trabajo voluntario

Ernesto Guevara

volunteer work brigade

VISITING CUBA WITH THE CHE GUEVARA VOLUNTEER WORK BRIGADE!

Page 16

Page 2

WHO IS BEHIND CIVIL WAR IN SYRIA?

If you've been watching the news lately, you've likely heard about the ongoing civil war in Syria. As the story goes, it is a clash between two opposing forces: a the dictatorial...

HANDS OFF MALI!

Page 18

Since January 10, 2013 when France began deploying the first of its 2500 troops and its countless air strikes began raining down on Mali, the justifications have sounded...

CUBA'S FREE HEALTHCARE

Page 11

On January 24, 2013 the New England Journal of Medicine published an...



By Nita Palmer

If you've been watching the news lately, you've likely heard about the ongoing civil war in Syria. As the story goes, it is a clash between two opposing forces: a the dictatorial government of President Bashar al-Asad on one side, and the Syrian people who are fighting for freedom and democracy on the other.

It's a heart-wrenching story of good versus evil with one major flaw: it is simply untrue.

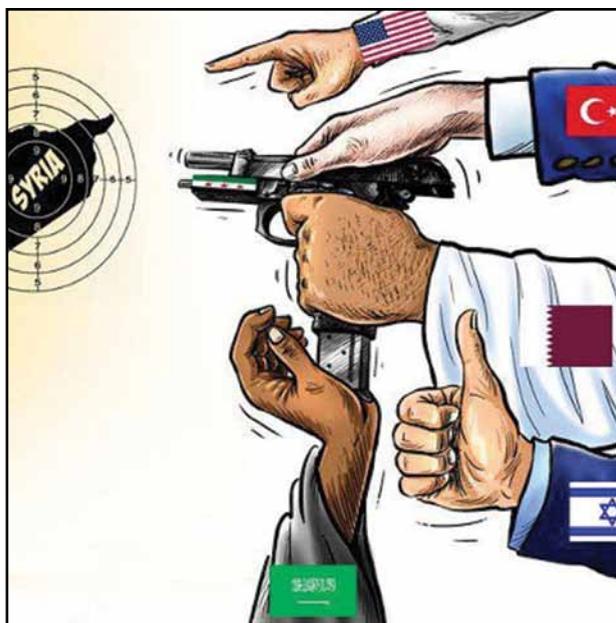
What is Really Going on in Syria?

Unlike many of the other pro-democracy protest movements throughout the Middle East that sprang up with largely peaceful mass demonstrations in major cities, the first protest to take place in Syria was an armed uprising in the small town of Daraa. Unsurprisingly, the violence provoked a response by the Syrian military and police forces.

The militants quickly organized themselves into a group known as the Free Syrian Army (FSA), which from the beginning had Western support. The election of the FSA's military council was attended

by representatives of a number of Western countries, including the United States, Britain, and France. (Reuters, December 8, 2012)

But the FSA has not attacked government



forces alone. They have been responsible for a number of atrocities, including torture and executions, according to a report by Human Rights Watch.

There are also reports of rampant

corruption and thievery by the FSA. Furthermore, in some areas of Syria they have implemented a "religious police" force similar to the force which exists in Saudi Arabia (Daniel Wagner, Huffington Post). This ultra-conservative brand of Islam is being enforced on people who have lived all their lives in a secular country.

Contrary to reports in the mainstream media, the FSA does not have mass popular support. In fact, as American historian Webster Tarpley noted in a recent interview with Press TV, "Ordinary Syrians of all backgrounds are increasingly disgusted by the corruption, incompetence, and oppression of the FSA regime. The rebel chaos is contributing to a significant increase in the popularity of Assad and his regime, which had guaranteed stability and freedom from the worst privations for decades."

Foreign Support for FSA

The situation in Syria would be grave enough if the FSA were all Syrians attacking their own people. However, a recent UN report noted that there are in fact militants from 29 countries fighting along with the FSA. (The Independent, 20 December 2012). The FSA has also

received massive foreign financial, tactical, and military support. Saudi Arabia announced in June that they would be paying salaries to FSA fighters, in order to encourage defections from the Syrian military to the FSA. Last year, the New York Times also reported that CIA operatives were working in Syria, aiding in supplying weapons to the rebels.

In many ways, the civil war in Syria is in fact a proxy war being carried out by the US and its allies against the independent and anti-imperialist government of Syria. The Syrian people are simply the latest victims of a colonial attempt to retake control over the Middle East and North Africa.

What About the UN Ceasefires?

The United Nations has attempted to enforce ceasefires in Syria, none of which have succeeded. Though the Syrian government has largely been blamed for breaking the ceasefires, the FSA has in fact broken them or never agreed to them in the first place. But these ceasefires will never succeed as long as the FSA continues to receive support from the West and their lackeys in the region and remains unaccountable for their actions. In fact, the ceasefires only serve to buy time for the US, NATO, and their allies to further strengthen the rebels and increase the propaganda campaign against the Syrian government.

What is the Solution for Syria?

Although there has been speculation in the Western media about the imminent collapse of the Syrian government, this again is unfounded. If anything, support for the Syrian government in putting an



Dutch military trucks carrying NATO's Patriot Missile Defense System to Turkey-Syria border.

end to this proxy war is increasing – not only in words but actions as well. Fighters from Syria's Kurdish minority, which has long been at odds with the Syrian government, have joined with government forces in an effort to stop these so-called “rebels”.

Seeing that their plan for eliminating one of the last independent governments in the Middle East is failing, the US and their allies have begun to fabricate a reason

for a potential direct attack on Syria: chemical weapons. This is the same unfounded excuse which was used to justify a war which killed millions in Iraq. But the enemies of Syria's independence are



Protest in Turkey against the deployment of Patriot missiles in Turkey near the Mediterranean port of Iskenderun in Hatay province January 21, 2013.

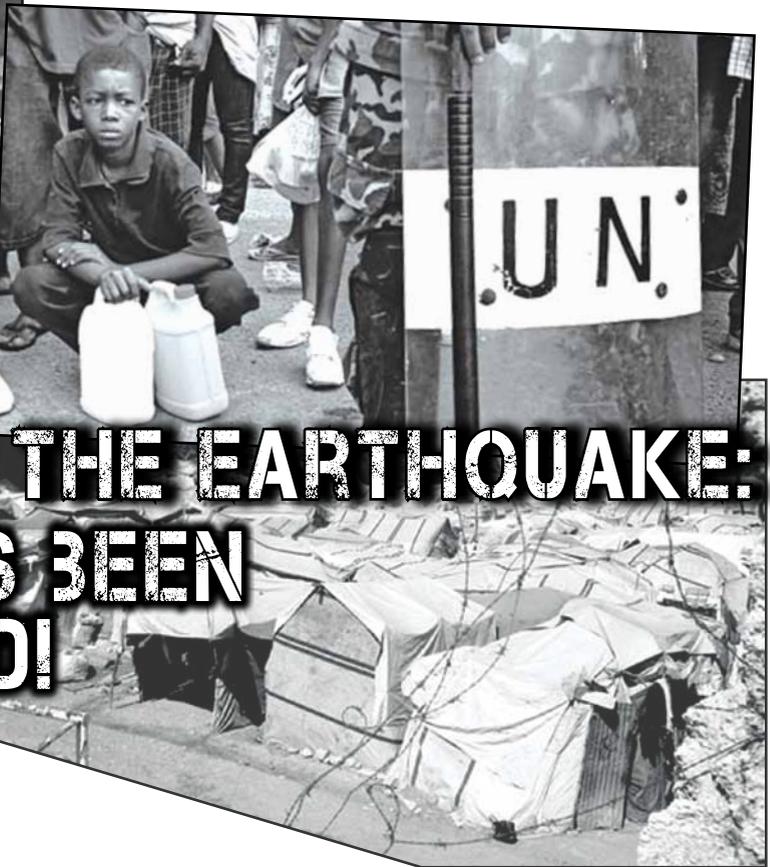
preparing nonetheless, with four hundred US and Dutch NATO troops “massed on Turkey's Syrian border...reloading Patriot missiles three days after NATO agreed to deploy the MIM-104 Patriot surface-to-air missile system in Turkey,” according to Military.com.

Tens of thousands of Syrians have already lost their lives in this war. If the US and their NATO allies were truly the “friends of Syria” and champions of freedom that they claim to be, they would not be preparing for a military attack on a people who have no interest in their “help”.

The only real solution to end the violence in Syria is for the US and their allies to cease all military preparations against Syria and end their proxy war there. The people of Syria must be left to solve their differences and determine the future of their country of their own accord, without foreign interference and meddling.



At least 29 Syrian students and their teacher were killed after a rebel mortar attack hit their school in a camp for displaced people near Damascus. December 4, 2012.



HAITI

3 YEARS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE: NOTHING HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED!

By Alison Bodine

On January 12, 2010 a 7.0 magnitude earthquake shook Haiti. Each hour following revealed the complete devastation caused by the earthquake; over 220,000 people killed, an estimated 1.5-2.3 million people displaced, more than 300,000 homes destroyed or badly damaged, streets, buildings and infrastructure turned to rubble.

International Response to the Disaster: Haiti Needs Doctors Not Soldiers!

Governments and people around the world responded to the crisis situation immediately. According to the Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "Within hours of the earthquake, the Government deployed civilian and military emergency management experts to Haiti to begin a significant humanitarian response." U.S. President Barack Obama "pledged a swift, coordinated, and aggressive effort in response to the earthquake in Haiti." Large international aid organizations, like Oxfam and the Red Cross began calling for donations for disaster relief efforts.

But, instead of emergency rescue teams, food aid, field hospitals and housing supplies the first "aid" to arrive from the U.S. and Canada were armed soldiers mainly

tasked with providing "security." In all the U.S. deployed 22,000 troops and Canada 2,000, as well as military ships, planes and helicopters. As a glaring example of the role of the US and Canadian military deployment to Haiti, Doctors Without Borders reported being prevented from landing with a mobile hospital unit at the Port-au-Prince airport, which was controlled by the US military, they were instead directed to land in the Dominican Republic and carry the hospital overland at a time when emergency medical assistance was needed.

Cuba and Venezuela Vs U.S. and Canada

At the same moment the U.S. and Canada deployed soldiers, other countries sent doctors and immediate humanitarian aid. The revolutionary government of Venezuela was one of the first countries to respond, sending 400 people to construct camps for people displaced in the earthquake, and immediate food aid, humanitarian aid workers, reconstruction supplies and 225,000 barrels of gasoline. In the year following the earthquake Venezuela delivered 8,139 tons of food, medicine and humanitarian aid to Haiti, as well as forgave 400 million dollars of debt and continued to provide Haiti with much needed energy

assistance in the form of gasoline and the construction of power plants.

The 350 Cuban doctors already working in Haiti at the time of the earthquake were the first to set-up emergency medical facilities. In the first 24 hours after the earthquake they treated 1,987 patients, carrying out 111 surgeries alone at 5 different medical facilities and field hospitals. In six months, the medical brigade had treated 70,300 patients, and performed more 2,500 surgeries. Cuban doctors and Haitian graduates of the Latin American School of medicine in Havana Cuba (where tens of thousands of young people from Latin America, Africa, Asia and the United States study to become doctors for free), make up the largest medical brigade in Haiti, with over 1200 personnel, including doctors, nurses, and mental health and rehabilitation experts sent with medical supplies and equipment including 400,000 tetanus vaccines.

Three Years After the Earthquake - Where is the Reconstruction?

Now three years have passed since the devastating quake and it's immediate aftermath, but the people of Haiti are still suffering under the weight of what could

hardly be called a “natural” disaster. When it comes to the basic everyday lives for people in Haiti, nothing has been accomplished by the billions of dollars in aid and military operations led by the U.S., Canada, and U.N. Over 350,000 people are still living in 496 tent camps, half of which don't have access to water or toilets at the camp sites. 21% of these people are under threat of eviction from the camps with no other place to live. Women living in camps are especially affected, with lack of access to birth control and maternal care, as well as increased sexual violence. According to the Office of the Special Envoy to Haiti from the United Nations governments have allocated 13.34 billion dollars in humanitarian and reconstruction aid since the earthquake. So, the question is where has all the money gone?

In a Dec. 23, 2012 New York Times article (“Rebuilding in Haiti Lags After Billions in Post-Quake Aid”) it was reported that of the 7.5 billion dollars in aid disbursed so far, only 215 million dollars has been allocated to home construction, while over half has gone to band-aid solutions, providing supplies for people in camps or funding short-term cash grants or job creation programs. The article goes on to describe how much of the donated money is eaten up by the administrative overhead costs of programs and aid organizations, or how reconstruction projects are being out-sourced to foreign companies. According to the article, “Oxfam spent \$96 million over two years and devoted a third to management and logistics. Doctors Without Borders spent 58 percent of its \$135 million in 2010 on staff and transportation costs.”

One project that has been highlighted by the U.S. government as an example of the “success” of reconstruction in Haiti is the Caracol Industrial park. This park cost 300 million dollars to construct and is supposed to create over 100,000 jobs. The trouble is that the jobs it will create are minimum wage factory sweatshop jobs that can barely sustain a person, let alone a family. On top of this the industrial park is built upon

land that was being used for farming when people in Haiti are already facing a food shortage crisis.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) continues to be the main source of aid to Haiti from Canada. CIDA reports that they have contributed 1 billion dollars in aid to Haiti from 2006-2012, but this money has been funnelled through NGO's that operate in Haiti, which are not accountable for the money they spend. None of the projects that CIDA has funded have been in cooperation with the government of Haiti.

Cholera Outbreak

Another devastating outcome of the lack of reconstruction is the cholera outbreak -



Canadian soldiers, fully armed, patrol the streets of Haiti, August 24, 2012



Cuban doctors provide free medical care to the people of Haiti, 2012

break that began in Haiti 10 months after the earthquake. The origins of the cholera have been linked to the soldiers of the United Nations mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). MINUSTAH currently has 9,988 military troops and police in Haiti. The operation first began following the US/Canada/France backed coup of Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004. The cholera outbreak, which has killed at least 7,000 people and

made over 600,000 people sick, despite the tremendous efforts of especially the Cuba medical brigade, is only one of the many devastating effects of the UN occupation, where MINUSTAH forces have also raped, tortured and abused Haitians.

Cuba and Venezuela Leading the Way

Since the earthquake the governments of Cuba and Venezuela have maintained their revolutionary commitments to the people of Haiti in a way very different from that of the US, Canada and the UN. Rather than sending aid money through NGO's with large administrative costs and short-sighted relief plans that only mask the devastation in Haiti, Cuba and Venezuela are working together to provide sustainable solutions to the crisis that respect the sovereignty and independence of the people of Haiti.

In January of 2013 Cuba and Haiti signed eight bilateral agreements to expand their cooperation. This included agreements for development in the agricultural and industrial sectors like food and steel production, as well as continuing commitments to health and education. For example, the Cuban medical brigade of 723 personnel continues to operate in Haiti providing free medical services and Cuba's world-renowned literacy program “Yes I can!” is also being implemented in Haiti.

Venezuela and Cuba also are leading projects in Haiti through the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), an organization of economic cooperation for countries in the Caribbean and Latin America, that include tree planting initiatives (Haiti is

nearly entirely deforested with only 2% of it's forest remaining) and home building projects, as well as the installation of power generators to help people in Haiti have access to electricity.

In the 2012 agreements between Haiti and Venezuela, the largest percentage of 369 million dollars of funding was directly towards home construction and infrastructure projects. 20% of electricity in Haiti is provided by power plants installed by

Venezuela, who has also committed to providing 24 hours a day electricity to Port-au-Prince which had been experiencing black-outs.

Self-determination for Haiti!

The extreme amount of destruction and devastation in Haiti after the earthquake and continuing on to today was made possible because even before the earthquake Haiti was the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. 77% of households in Haiti lived on under \$2 a day and 67% of people in Haiti's urban areas lived in unbearable conditions in slums. After 500 years of colonization, slavery, wars, occupations, invasions, U.S. and imperialist backed dictators and puppet-regimes and economic exploitation and environmental destruction, Haiti was left defenceless when the earthquake hit.

Despite the remarkable aid and solidarity effort by the governments of Cuba, Venezuela and ALBA members, the people of Haiti still face the tremendous challenge of rebuilding their country flooded with foreign sweatshop construction, aid money that never makes it to the grassroots movements and organizations in Haiti, and a government backed and paralysed by the U.S., Canada, France and other imperialist powers intervention and sabotage.

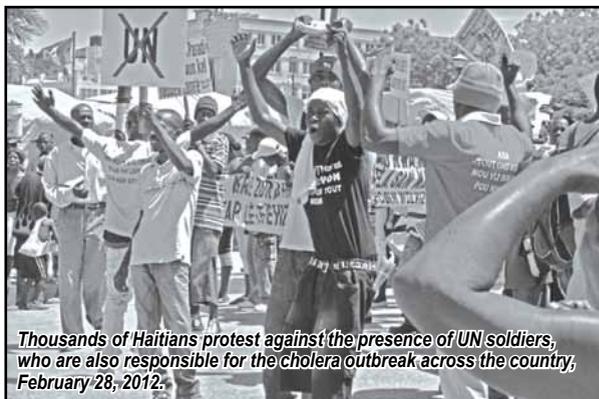
So how can the people of Haiti really begin to clear the rubble and rebuild their country? With self-determination and control over their own resources. Natural disasters in Haiti are not going away. Since the earthquake, tropical storms, hurricanes and flooding have continued to displace hundreds of thousands of people. The solution is not more tents, but more houses, not more minimum wage jobs, but real economic growth where the profits got to the people of Haiti, not imperialist corporations, not U.S. and Canada style aid and charity, but Cuba and Venezuela led support and solidarity!



A Haitian man is stopped at a UN & Haitian military checkpoint, July 10, 2012.



Cuban doctors continue to provide free medical care for the people of Haiti, March 2012.



Thousands of Haitians protest against the presence of UN soldiers, who are also responsible for the cholera outbreak across the country, February 28, 2012.



Venezuela sends 180 tons of aid to Haiti, December 4, 2012.

The Newspaper of
FIRE THIS TIME
MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

www.firethistime.net
Volume 8 Issue 1
January 28, 2013
Published every 3 weeks

Political Editor:

Ali Yerevani - editorftt@mail.com

Editorial Board:

Tamara Hansen, Aaron Mercredi, Alison Bodine, Nita Palmer, Janine Solanki, Thomas Davies, Ali Yerevani
 editorialboardftt@mail.com

Layout & Design:

Janine Solanki, Tamara Hansen, & Ali Yerevani

Copy Editors:

Tamara Hansen & Nita Palmer

Publicity & Distribution Coordinator:

Thomas Davies

Production Managers:

Janine Solanki, Thomas Davies

Contributors to this Issue:

Azza Rojbi, Sanam Soltanzadeh, Max Tennant, Shakeel Lochan, Sarah Alwell, Mike Larson, Noah Fine & Pejvack Pejvack.

Contact:

Phone - (604) 322-1764 **Fax** - (604) 322-1763

Email - infoftt@mail.com

Mail - PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC, V5L 5G3

Subscriptions

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

Distribution

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

Phone : (778) 889-7664 Email : distroftt@mail.com

Submissions & Suggestions

We welcome articles, letters, unsolicited submissions, and suggestions. However, we cannot promise publication. Submissions and suggestions can be made by email by contacting infoftt@mail.com, fax, or regular mail. Submissions will not be returned.

The opinions expressed in the newspaper are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of Fire This Time.

Donations

If you find Fire This Time to be an effective tool in the struggle of oppressed people for justice, more than ever, we need your support. On top of our regular costs of production, we regularly send members of our editorial board on assignment throughout North America, the Caribbean and beyond in order to make Fire This Time a better resource. These efforts have strained our finances.

If you would like to help with a donation, please make cheques payable to "Nita Palmer".

Fire This Time is an independent newspaper and publishing Fire This Time could not be possible without the generous contributions from our supporters.

Reprint Policy

Reprinting of articles from Fire This Time by progressive media is welcomed, with source credit to the author and Fire This Time Newspaper. All other media or institutions must request permission

Advertisement Policy

Fire This Time does not accept commercial ads. Ads in this paper are political ads and Fire This Time makes no profit off of these ads. The presence of ads are solely for political purposes.

-ISSN-1712-1817-

Next Prints:

Volume 8 Issue 2, February 18, 2013
Volume 8 Issue 3, March 11, 2013



Indigenous Awakening



By Aaron Mercredi

What began as a series of grassroots protest actions across Canada against the Conservative government's omnibus Bill C-45 in late 2012 has swept through every corner of the country, as well as with support from actions around the world, in a widespread protest to fight for Indigenous people's rights. Along with this, the often ignored subject of Canada and Canadian society's relationship to Native people is polarizing living rooms and inserting itself in to coffee breaks across the country as this grassroots movement gains steam. With this Indigenous awakening growing day by day, the future of Canada's political and social landscape will not be the same.

From remote reservations, to small towns and to the bigger cities, Native people and their allies have come out in the tens, the hundreds, and the thousands to the hundreds of different actions across Canada to oppose the anti-Native policies of the government of Canada. Under the banner of #IdleNoMore, these grassroots actions have created a different dynamic of demonstrating; from the Flashmob Rounddance, an expression of Native culture and community in shopping and urban centres, to marches and rallies across the country. Many communities have brought forward their own direct actions, including temporarily blocking railways and highways to major industrial centres like the Alberta Tar Sands, and border crossings with the United States. This has included the hunger

strike by Theresa Spence, former Chief of the Attawapiskat First Nation, along with Raymond Robinson, not far from Parliament Hill demanding a meeting between Canada, a representative of the Queen and Indigenous leaders. It has also included the highly publicised meeting between Prime Minister Stephen Harper and members of his government with a delegation from the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), a boycott and protest by other members of that organization and a ceremonial meeting with the Governor General of Canada. Solidarity actions have taken place all over the United States, in parts of Latin America, across Europe and as far away as Cairo, Egypt and Colombo, Sri Lanka, to draw attention to the critical situation for Native people in Canada. The popular nature of the protests have brought the support of Canadian celebrities, influenced recent winners of the Royal Diamond Jubilee Awards to reject the recognition award from the Queen, and even brought an on-line soundtrack from musicians across Canada.

In the Vancouver area alone, the #IdleNoMore Flashmob Rounddances have popped up in dozens of shopping centres around the lower mainland, parks, including the Vancouver International Airport, in a strong demonstration of Native culture, pride and resistance. There have also been marches and rallies at the West Coast Canada/US border crossing, throughout Vancouver's streets, on the lawn of

Vancouver City Hall and in front of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada office. With each new day comes an announcement for another action taking place.

The level of anger among Indigenous people and organized response to Bill C-45 and the government of Canada's policies haven't been seen in this country since the Pierre Trudeau era when, in 1969 through then Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chretien, the government of the time introduced the White Paper on Indian Policy. This proposed the complete abolition of the Indian Act, removing any federal responsibility to Native people, the rejection of land claims, and the loss of Native people's status.

Opposition to the White Paper was so widespread that the government had to rescind it, and the actions brought forward a new level of organizing among Native people across the country.

This Bill has its own ancestors

Bill C-45 was written in the same spirit as the White Paper. This time, Instead of being a policy paper that was rejected, Bill C-45 was rammed through the different layers of government and passed in to law without any room for discussion among the major political parties, let alone the people in Canada the bill affects.

The anger and opposition to Bill C-45 from Native people across Canada comes from the sweeping changes this bill makes to current laws and acts that directly affect them. These include amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act which reduces the federal government's protection and oversight to merely one percent of waterways in Canada and makes the other 99 percent to be 'open for business' for environmental exploitation through quick development access by resource extraction industries. We are talking about 97 out of the 32,000 major lakes and waterways in Canada. Along with the changes to the Fisheries Act, where industry will no longer be responsible for fixing the environmental and fish habitat they damage, this has an incredible impact on many of the traditional territories and livelihood

of Indigenous people across the country.

Even more angering were the changes the government made to the Indian Act which governs Canada's relationship with (see 'control of') First Nations. At the Crown – First Nations Gathering in January 2012, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said that his government had no intention of repealing the 137 year old Indian Act, that its 'roots run too deep,' but that minor changes would be made. These changes, some of them made law with Bill C-45, are not meant to improve the relationship with or the conditions of Indigenous people in Canada, but serve the corporate and industrial interests of the Canadian ruling class. The federal government increases its role in the decision-making over land and property issues on reservations, while reducing the role of the actual members of those First Nation communities. Now, decisions over forfeitures and sale of property on reserves can be made by less than a handful of band members, and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs also now has the power to call for meetings and referendums over these dealings. By doing this, the Canadian government will carve out parcels of reservation land.

Bill C-45 is part of a continuing campaign to terminate the 'Indian Question' in Canada. Last spring, there was outrage across Canada to Bill C-38, which was based on the same Conservative government budget plan and also had a disastrous effect on environmental protection, among other things. But, there is a lot more legislation that the government has

passed or is trying to pass through with the same goal as these budget bills — to reduce federal government's responsibility to Indigenous people, strip Native people of their rights and remove the question, once and for all, of self-determination of Indigenous nations. Some of these include Bill C27: First Nations Financial Transparency Act, Bill S-2: Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act, Bill S-6: First Nations Elections Act, Bill S-8: Safe Drinking Water for First Nations, and Bill C-428: Indian Act Amendment and Replacement Act, and follow the same direction as Bill C-45. An important factor in all of these bills is the growing widespread protests for Native rights.

Why now?

The reasons for the mass protests are undeniable. Aside from the new bills, conditions for Native people in Canada have deteriorated under the Conservative government from an already unacceptable level. Looking at the high level of poverty on reserves, the housing crisis which has hit epic proportions, and the fact that on average there are more than 120 Native communities under boil-water advisory at a time, it is no wonder that Native people get frustrated when the government of Canada stalls bringing such basic necessities as a school for their children to attend. Add to that the high suicide and incarceration rates among Native youth, it is quite clear that the situation of Native people in Canada was a powder keg waiting to be lit. As well, Native people face the racist stereotypes from Canadian society and perpetuated

by the ruling class and its media that Native people have actually got it good, but just can't manage their own affairs, along with a deceitful government who extends one hand of friendship by apologizing for the Native

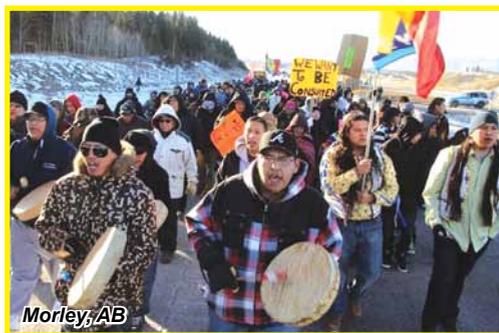
Idle No More ~ Indigenous Protests organized & united across Canada



Llistuguj Miigmaq, QC



Meadow Lake, SK



Morley, AB



London, ON



Victoria, BC



Regina, SK

residential school system and the other behind its back with its fingers crossed. While these manipulations were taking place, the ruling class was trying to exploit the land and resources of Indigenous people with the growing push for construction natural gas and oil pipelines against the wishes of the majority of the Indigenous nations who it will affect.

It is no wonder then the Bill C-45 became a tipping point. Begun as a grassroots protest, #IdleNoMore has encompassed many young Indigenous people who are new to activism and who are fed up with the conditions that government after government has forced them to live under. Whether living in the city or on the reserve, the sentiments of these protests have activated all layers of the Native community. Young Native women, many of them young mothers, have taken leadership in many communities across the country. They represent an important segment of the Native population, given how much Native women have been historically dispossessed under colonialism in Canada. From the Indian Act, which stripped Native women and their children of their recognized Indian status for simply marrying a non-Native until the 1980s, to the Highway of Tears and the more than 600 missing Native women across Canada, Canada's policies and Canadian racism have had their highest toll

on Native women.

Government response

Once Native people respond to the government of Canada's attacks is where the situation for many people starts getting hazy. Whenever it is put on the defense, the ruling class' main tools are to discredit those involved in making change and employ the classic 'Divide and Conquer' strategy to obstruct the real issue. Throughout Canadian history, the same trend develops. They vilified Louis Riel and the Red River struggle in 1869, they labelled the Mohawks at Kanesatake 'terrorists' in what was known as the 'Oka Crisis' in 1990. Recently, federal Minister of Natural Resources Joe Oliver, even called opponents to the Northern Gateway and Enbridge pipelines 'environmental and other radical groups' who 'use funding from foreign special interests groups to undermine Canada's national economic interest'. It is no coincidence that the audit on the Attawapiskat First Nation's finances was released just one day before the meeting between Harper and the Assembly of First Nations. Of course, the media doesn't talk about the mismanagement of federal government agencies who are supposed to deal with Native people's issues, the recent funding cuts to First Nations organizations, or the international outcry over Canada's treatment of Native people. The media has focussed so much and amplified the divisions among Native leadership right now that



different factions within the Assembly of First Nations are at work, with some boycotting and protesting while others meet with government, doesn't change the fact that Native people and their supporters across the country are standing up for Indigenous rights and raising the issue of the deplorable situation the government has created for them in Canada.

Not just an Indigenous issue

While the greatest opposition to Bill C-45 has come from Indigenous people, there is good reason for all people across Canada to join Native people in protest. Aside from the devastating changes to the Indian Act, the omnibus bill erodes many aspects of quality of life in Canada. With the changes to the Fisheries Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act, it is pretty clear that the consequences of these changes go far beyond just affecting the traditional territories of Indigenous people, but pose a severe danger to the quality of life and environment throughout the country. Through changes to the Canada Grain Act, Bill C-45 threatens the livelihood of independent grain producers while further protecting the rights of multinational corporations, and remove regulations that ensure the quality of Canada's internal and external grain supply.

it becomes the newsmaker, not the implications of Bill C-45.

Whether or not Chief Theresa Spence decided to attend the Chiefs meeting, or whether or not

Workers in Canada will also feel the effects of Bill C-45 in a number of different ways. The Canada Revenue Agency, formerly an independent employer, is also now placed

back under the authority of the Treasury Board, affecting the members of the Union of Taxation Employees who work there and who have attained two consecutive collective agreements. The changes made to public sector pension plans include increasing the normal retirement age from 60 to 65 for new hires beginning in 2013. This is an attack on younger generations who make up the majority of new hires, generating a two-tier system and forcing the new generation of public sector workers to retire at an older age. As well, Bill C-45 eliminates the Hazardous Materials Information Review Commission, which helped protect workers from hazardous materials in the workplace, by transferring its responsibilities to the Minister of Health. The sweeping cuts that come with Bill C-45 should bring people from all over Canada out to protest.

Self-determination for Indigenous nations!

While the government of Canada and its media have tried to play down the protests and divert the issue, Native people across the country have shown that they have no intention of giving up their rights. On January 11th, more than 263 actions took place around the world leading up to the meeting between the government and the chiefs in Ottawa. Actions continued around Canada throughout the following weeks and continued with dozens of coordinated actions with solidarity actions around the world on January 28th. Now is an important time for non-Indigenous people to support Native people standing up their human rights and dignity.

Within the protests, flashmobs, and

blockades is a genuine desire for self-determination for Indigenous nations in Canada. It is a historical crime that this continues to be denied by the government of Canada, while continuing to make conditions for Native people more and more unbearable. We have seen the priorities of the government of Canada. While it allocates billions of dollars on weapons of destruction that were used on the people of Afghanistan and Libya, and with the current aspirations to be used against the people of Syria and Iran, it has had no problem closing its wallet when it comes to improving the situation on reservations in Canada, or improving the well-being, education and health of its new generations.

A change is coming in Canada and that is going to require breaking down boundaries and destroying stereotypes. While Indigenous people have historically defended their rights, it is a fact that the lack of support from the majority of the Canadian population helped in their defeats. The inherent rights of the 1.3 million Indigenous people in Canada cannot be won without the 33.5 million non-Indigenous people backing them up for their common interests. Let's learn from mistakes of the past and unite to oppose the government of Canada's attacks on Native people and demand self-determination for Indigenous Nations!

International Solidarity with Indigenous Struggle in Canada



Japan



Washington DC, USA



Gisborne, New Zealand



Australia



Cuba Has Lowest Infant Mortality in the Americas!

Cuba's Free Universal Healthcare System: How do they do it?

By Tamara Hansen

On January 24, 2013 the New England Journal of Medicine published an article entitled, "A Different Model — Medical Care in Cuba". As visitors from the United States to Cuba the authors of the article, Dr. Edward Campion and Dr. Stephen Morrissey explain in the introductory paragraph, "The whole system seems turned upside down. It is tightly organized, and the first priority is prevention. Although Cuba has limited economic resources, its health care system has solved some problems that ours has not yet managed to address." So the question we need to ask is how do they do it?

In this article Fire This Time will explore Cuba's revolutionary healthcare system and the gains made in family planning, life expectancy, infant mortality and for transgendered people. We agree with the New England Medical Journal article that Cuba's healthcare system has solved some problems that the healthcare systems in Canada and the United States have not. We agree that it is partly due to Cuba's focus on prevention, but want to go deeper. We believe Cuba is an example and leader in healthcare world-wide because they are putting people before profit in their healthcare system. They are also making these developments under very difficult conditions, especially those imposed on Cuba by the United States' 50 year blockade, which has severely limited the amount of items Cuba can import or trade with other countries from high-tech medical

equipment to pharmaceutical drugs to Band-Aids and Aspirin.

To start with, Cuban doctors are trained to put families and family health first. Dr.

Edward Campion and Dr. Stephen Morrissey write, "Cuba's medical faculties, of which there are now 22, remain steadily focused on primary care, with family medicine required as the first residency for all



Quotes *What people are saying about their healthcare system in the US & Canada.*

Here are some jokes that sadly reflect some of the reality of the American and Canadian healthcare systems today, these humorous comments can remind us of the necessity of changing the way we view healthcare and why the advances Cuba has made are an important example for us:

- (1) "President Obama says that Congress is very close to getting a new health care plan, but due to compromises, it 'won't include everything that everybody wants.' For instance, it covers everything except trips to the doctor or the hospital." --Conan O'Brien, Comedian
- (2) "If conservatives get to call universal healthcare 'socialized medicine,' I get to call private, for-profit healthcare 'soulless, vampire bastards making money off human pain.'" --Bill Maher, Comedian
- (3) "Of course, a lot of right wingers are very upset about this because they believe this health care bill will cost a lot of money. You know what I think? Just pretend it's another unnecessary war. You'll feel better about it already." --Jay Leno, Comedian
- (4) "Two patients limp into two different Canadian medical clinics with the same complaint. Both have trouble walking and appear to require a hip replacement. The first patient is examined within the hour, is x-rayed the same day and has a time booked for surgery the following week. The second sees his family doctor after waiting a week for an appointment, then waits eighteen weeks to see a specialist, then gets an x-ray, which isn't reviewed for another month and finally has his surgery scheduled for a year from then.

Question: Why the different treatment for the two patients?

Answer: The first is a Golden Retriever; the second is a Senior Citizen." - Unknown

physicians, even though Cuba now has more than twice as many physicians per capita as the United States.” This is important as this means doctors cannot just go after the highest paying careers, they first have to learn how to treat patients directly. Working with people directly from all different backgrounds and many different ailments teaches doctors to not only treat the patient, but also to focus on the health of their whole community.

A Different Model

The article, “A Different Model — Medical Care in Cuba” explains, “care delivery is organized at the local level, and the patients and their caregivers generally live in the same community.” In Canada most people avoid going to the doctor whenever possible, because in the doctor’s office you have a limited amount of time, the doctor always seems rushed and usually the advice you get is just to deal with an immediate problem, they don’t know you well enough or have enough time to give advice on long term health concerns. In Cuba many people will have the same doctor from childhood, a doctor who knows their neighbours, their family and their friends, because they live in the same neighbourhood. Most family doctors know who’s parent has diabetes and might be at risk, who might be dealing



Community Health Clinic, Cuba



with depression or alcoholism, who is elderly and in need of extra attention. The idea with preventative medicine is that it cannot just be a national media campaign or a top down approach, the community must take responsibility for the health of community members.

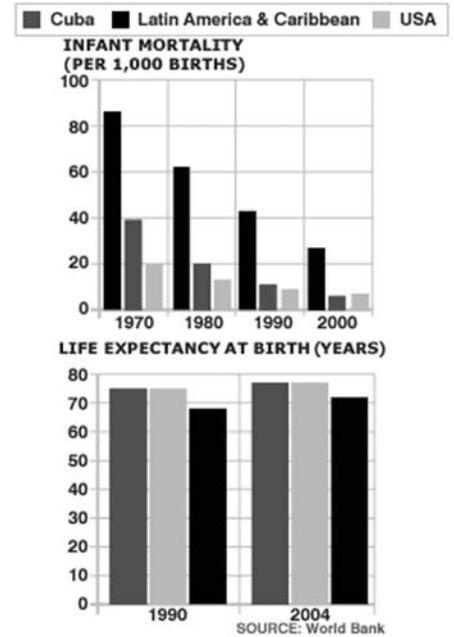
Family Planning in Cuba

Cuba is known for many things from its cigars, to rum, to baseball, to 1950s classic cars and of course its socialist revolution. However Cuba is also known worldwide for its spicy and exciting dance and music. Sometimes when you see a 2 or 3 year old dancing in Cuba you think they must just dance their way out of their mother’s womb and into the world!

Part of this culture means that many teenagers and young adults have an active sex life. This is treated as a norm in Cuba, not something to be awkward or ashamed of. However, it does come with some health concerns. This is where having a community-based medical practice helps. Dr. Edward Campion and Dr. Stephen Morrissey explain, “House calls and discussions with family members are common tactics for addressing problems with compliance or follow-up and even

for failure to protect against unwanted pregnancy.” Can you imagine, in the United States or Canada, your doctor doing a follow-up visit to your home to make sure you are following through with their advice? Or to sit in your living room to have a difficult conversation about how to protect against unwanted pregnancy? The idea seems so foreign you might even think, ‘that sounds awful and unpleasant, I wouldn’t like that,’ but if you really think about how important you and your family’s health is and how much you could learn from a professionally trained doctor, wouldn’t it be worth it?

In July 2012, Venezuelan news agency Telesur reported that in 2010 Cuba reported 13,900 births by women between the ages of 15 and 19, an increase of 10% from previous years. This increase



in teen pregnancy is worrying to Cuban experts because many methods of contraception, including the pill and condoms, are already free for Cubans of all ages. The Telesur report explained how Cuba will be increasing its education campaign, but that the education must start in the family and be reinforced by health institutions and at school. It also spoke to community leaders who explained that in Cuba teen pregnancy is considered the responsibility of everyone – basically meaning it is a social problem, not the problem of the young woman or young man and their families. This is very different than in Canada as it is uncommon for us to hear about teen pregnancy as an issue that must be discussed and solved by the community. Free birth control is also not readily accessible to most teens across Canada, especially those living outside of urban centers. Another important point about Cuba’s healthcare with relation to pregnancy which is discussed in the New England Journal of Medicine about is that in Cuba, “abortion is legal but is seen as a failure of prevention.” Abortion in Cuba has been free and legal since 1965 and is an achievement of Cuban women in their struggle for equality.

To be a new born baby in Cuba today

To be born in Cuba today is to be born with rights. According the Cuba’s Ministry of Foreign relations (MINREX), “The state regulates the rights of children and adolescents through the Constitution of the Republic and various codes, laws and decree-laws, including the Child and Youth Code, the Family Code, the Civil

Code and the Penal Code. The rights of Cuban children and adolescents are also protected through a system of social policies, programs and projects in the areas of health care, education, social security, the environment, and others. Cuba was one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child.” This is important as we cannot see healthcare simply as a solution for what ails us. If babies are healthy, but raised to be uneducated and uncultured then society cannot advance.

A few accomplishments that a Cuban baby born today could look forward to are summarized in the article from the New England Journal of Medicine: “This highly structured, prevention-oriented [healthcare] system has produced positive results. Vaccination rates in Cuba are among the highest in the world. The life expectancy of 78 years from birth is virtually identical to that in the United States. The infant mortality rate in Cuba has fallen from more than 80 per 1000 live births in the 1950s to less than 5 per 1000.” In fact, once you are born in Cuba you have the highest chance of surviving past the first year of your life than in any other country of the Americas as Cuba has a lower infant mortality rate than even Canada and the United States. According to UNICEF, in 2010 Canada’s infant mortality was 5 per 1,000 and The US was 7 per 1,000. The low infant mortality rate in Cuba, 4.6 per 1,000, did not just happen, it is an important success built by the leadership of the Cuban government, which has created an accessible, universal and free healthcare system for all people.

To be Queer in Cuba today

Cuba has national campaigns for sexual health which include discussions not only about heterosexual sex, but also homosexual relationships. These are organized by the Cuban Center for Sex Education (CENESEX). Dr. Edward Campion and Dr. Stephen Morrissey write, “A recent national program to promote acceptance of men

who have sex with men was designed in part to reduce rates of sexually transmitted disease and improve acceptance of and adherence to treatment.” Throughout Cuba the struggle against homophobia is breaking down barriers led by the director of CENESEX, Mariela Castro, who also happens to be the daughter of Raul Castro (Cuba’s president) and the

projects to improve social acceptance of queer people in Cuba, the healthcare system is also responding, from the education campaigns mentioned above, to the decision in 2008 to resume offering sex-change surgeries.

In October 2012 Fox News Latino published an article explaining, “The number of Cuban transsexuals who have had sex-change surgery has risen to 20, according to figures released by Mariela Castro, director of the National Center for Sex Education, or Cenesex.” This was accompanied by two widely published news stories about two transgender people in Cuba, Juani Santos, who was born a woman, but has lived as a man since childhood. Juani completed his surgery at the age of 61 in 2011. CNN reported on Juani’s story and the fact that the Cuban government is offering sex-change surgeries for free, writing, “Although his parents were fairly understanding from the time he was young, his older brother used to burn Juani’s clothes when he dressed like a boy. “But he was clever,” Fernando Santos said. “As soon as I left the house, he would just wear my clothes.” The brothers now live together, with Fernando taking care of most domestic duties while Juani works at the factory and tinkers with his motorcycle at home.” The second story which was reported in

November 2012 was the election of Adela Hernandez, which the Associated Press called “the first known transgender person to hold public office in the country, winning election as a delegate to the municipal government of Caibarien in the central province of Villa Clara.” This is a great advancement, not only for trans-gender people in Cuba, but also for the international bourgeois media which generally does not like to admit that Cuba has elections! While these are social gains they are being supported by Cuba’s free and universal healthcare system and the sex-positive and inclusive message being brought to society by some great leaders, including Mariela Castro and those working with



Cuban AIDS Prevention Campaign Posters



Cuban Poster Campaign Against Homophobia

niece of Fidel Castro (leader of the Cuban revolution). CENESEX has offices across the country which organize regular events for the queer community and its supporters. Clubs and discotheques across the country now have “gay” nights. While the difficulty of growing up gay, lesbian, transgendered or bisexual is clear, in Cuba or any country in the world, In roads are being steadily being made across the country from the Cuban government sponsored film, “Strawberry & Chocolate” released in 1993 to the recent hit song by Buena Fe “Ser de Sol” which is about a love affair between two women.

While CENESEX is involved in many

her at CENESEX.

Why Canada's healthcare system sick?

In Canada very little emphasis is being placed on preventing sickness or injury. Yes there are national media campaigns against smoking, or drinking and driving, but the healthcare system is not set up to really discuss key-issues with people about how to improve their health. Healthy organize food can be very expensive or take longer to prepare. Many sceptics agree that pharmaceutical companies make more money when we are sick and so these multi-billions dollar corporations have a big interest in keeping the level of health low, and prevention of illness is the last thing on their minds.

Also the statistics about Canada's health are unreliable and cover up some disturbing facts. For example, it was mentioned earlier that while Cuba has an infant mortality rate of 4.6 per 1,000 born, Canada sits at 5 per 1,000. However, In the report "Infant mortality among First Nations versus non-First Nations in British Columbia" published by the International Journal of Epidemiology, research indicated that between 1981 and 2000 Infant mortality among First Nations families in British Columbia, Canada was twice as high as infant mortality in non-First Nations families.

In the Health Canada study from 2001/2002, "A Statistical Profile on the Health of First Nations in Canada" the authors write, "Infant mortality rate is the single most

comprehensive indicator of the level of health development in a society and is recognized internationally in its inclusion in the Millennium Development Goals." While this may be true the authors also write that "current Canadian

data systems fail to capture a significant number of First Nations infant deaths, resulting in incomplete data on this important indicator -- it is therefore not possible to report infant mortality for First Nations populations in Canada." How is it that research shows that First Nations women are losing double the amount of infants in their first years of life in British Columbia, and yet the government has not made investigating it a priority? How is it that Canada, a so called "first-world" country, has a section of the population with such poor healthcare standards? As the article says, "Infant mortality rate is the single most comprehensive indicator of the level of health development in a society," doesn't that mean that this should be cause for concern? protest? change? Unfortunately the fact that infant mortality is a "comprehensive indicator" means that health statistics about all other aspects of First Nations peoples' health will also be lower than the Canadian average, from life span to maternal mortality to mental health concerns and suicide.

The culture of medicine world-wide and in Canada is also such that doctors are not taking their personal health seriously. In an article published by MedScape News in June 2011, Kate Johnson writes, "Sleep deprivation in physicians and nurses working extended-hour hospital shifts is compromising patient safety and

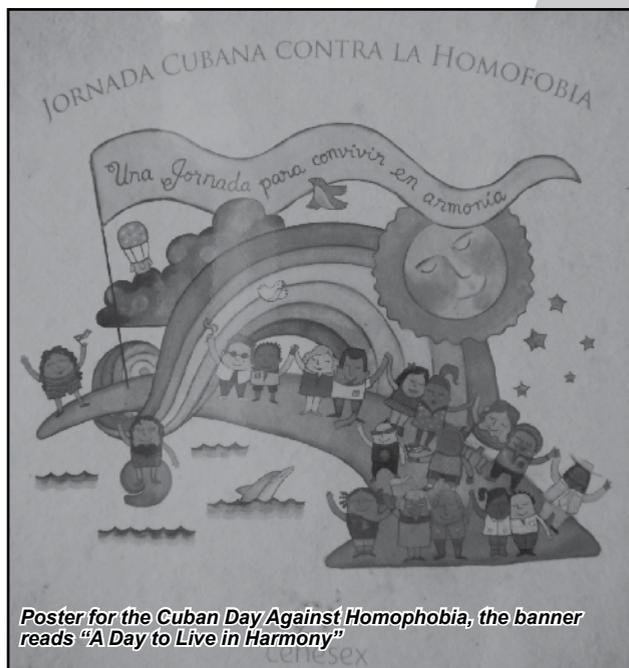


Mariela Castro, Director of CENESEX at the 10th Anniversary of the Project TransHavana August 12, 2012

increasing the risk for car crashes in both Canada and the United States, according to 2 studies presented here at SLEEP 2011: Associated Professional Sleep Societies 25th Annual Meeting." According to Canadian Medical Association data, 64% per cent of Canadian doctors feel their workload is too heavy, while 48% have had an increase in their workload in the past year. Many doctors and nurses are working in Canadian hospitals are working 12 hour shifts or longer, would you like to be the patient receiving care at the end of one of those shifts?

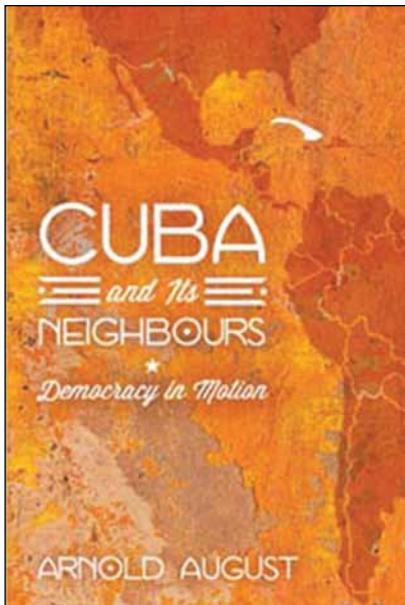
Cuba's healthcare system – Where Humanity comes first!

We began this article with a question, how does Cuba have a free universal healthcare system with a focus on prevention. The reason we need to ask this question is because every time we discuss making healthcare more efficient and affordable in Canada or the United States the response is always the same, there is no money. Yet Cuba is funding a very efficient healthcare system and offering the service free of charge and Cuba is a developing or "third-world" country, so how can they afford it? The simplest answer is that the Cuban government is a revolutionary socialist government and people of Cuba and its communist government together have made healthcare a priority or societal obligation. When will people living in Canada and the US demand the same of their governments? For us working and poor people living in Canada and around the world there is only one way: Follow revolutionary Cuba!



Poster for the Cuban Day Against Homophobia, the banner reads "A Day to Live in Harmony"

MUST-READ BOOKS



CUBA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS Democracy in Motion

Arnold August

**Cuba's Neighbours Under Consideration:
United States, Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador**

In this groundbreaking book, Arnold August explores Cuba's unique form of democracy, presenting a detailed and balanced analysis of Cuba's electoral process and the state's functioning between elections. By comparing it with practices in the U.S., Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, August shows that people's participation in politics and society is not limited to a singular U.S.-centric understanding of democracy. For example, democracy as practised in the U.S. is largely non-participatory, static and fixed in time.

Cuba, by contrast, is a laboratory where the process of democratization is continually in motion, an ongoing experiment to create new ways for people to participate. August argues forcefully for the need to develop mutual understanding of different political systems and, in doing so, to not be satisfied with either blanket condemnation or idealistic political illusions, both resulting from a refusal to analyze the actual inner workings of each process.

Visit Arnold August's website at www.democracycuba.com

If you are in Canada and would like to buy the book, or order an examination copy, go to:
www.fernwoodpublishing.ca/author/Arnold



If you are anywhere else in the world and would like to buy the book, or order an examination copy, go to:
zedbooks.co.uk/paperback/cuba-and-its-neighbours



Battle of Ideas Press



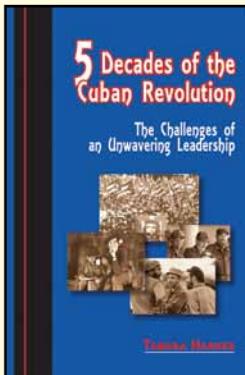
WWW.BATTLEOFIDEASPRESS.COM
INFO@BATTLEOFIDEASPRESS.COM

5 DECADES OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION THE CHALLENGES OF AN UNWAVERING LEADERSHIP

BY TAMARA HANSEN

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

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



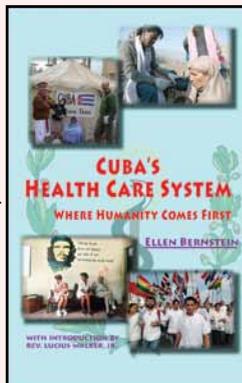
April 2010, paperback, 312 pages, illustrated, \$10.00
ISBN 978-0-9864716-1-2 | Copyright © 2010 by Battle of Ideas Press

CUBA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM WHERE HUMANITY COMES FIRST

BY ELLEN BERNSTEIN

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

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



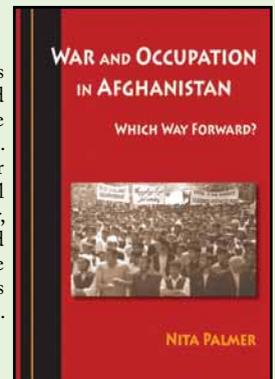
September 2010, paperback, 149 pages, illustrated, \$6.00
ISBN 978-0-9864716-2-9 | Copyright © 2010 by Battle of Ideas Press

WAR & OCCUPATION IN AFGHANISTAN WHICH WAY FORWARD?

BY NITA PALMER

"The problem of Afghanistan boils down to just two words: foreign occupation. The Canada/US/NATO occupation forces claim that corruption, poverty, drug production, the presence of the Taliban and other social or political crises are the fundamental problems of Afghanistan which they must fix. The irony of this claim is that the same occupation forces have proven themselves completely incapable of fixing these problems or of bettering the lives of Afghan people"

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



January 2010, paperback, 155 pages, illustrated, \$7.00
ISBN 978-0-9864716-0-5 | Copyright © 2010 by Battle of Ideas Press

HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION WITH THE CHE GUEVARA VOLUNTEER WORK BRIGADE TO CUBA VOLUNTEERING SOLIDARITY EDUCATION & FUN!



By Thomas Davies

Cuba is so full of life! The people, the politics, the arts, the culture, the nights, the mornings, the children, the elders, the streets, even the soil of their organic gardens...so full of life! Somehow it all mixes and moves together in ways which make you forget about sleep and language barriers as you dive into it all. How do I know? I've traveled on the Ernesto Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade and experienced it for myself. The Brigade is a unique 3 week journey that for the past 20 years has given people across Canada the opportunity to volunteer in Cuba and be exposed to life on the island in ways unimaginable on any other trip.

Last year's 2012 Che Brigade was centered in the province of Holguin, with a major excursion to the city of Santiago de Cuba. Over 40 people from all ages and from across Canada participated as 'Brigadistas'.

On one of our first days we woke up in the early morning

darkness of May 1st, and as the sun rose we saw hundreds of thousands of Cubans streaming in to celebrate International Workers Day with their annual march and rally. There was literally no end in sight to the people joining the rally from 3 directions, all carrying colourful signs and flags, and singing and chanting to celebrate their Revolution.

We worked side by side with Cubans rebuilding houses destroyed by hurricanes – sharing work, water, and laughter with new friends. We also worked in one of Cuba's famous urban organic agriculture farms, cultivating rich soil with the knowledge that the produce provided not only for the farmers and their families, but was given to the daycare across the street and the hospital around the corner.

We walked through Holguin City during the world renowned 'Romeras de Mayo' Festival. For one week every storefront and every corner of every public square was taken up with countless artists presenting their crafts. The city itself became one giant living art exhibit created by the people and for the people, and which never stopped moving and never slept.

We entered high schools, hospitals, trade union centres, women's centres, universities, and factories to tour them all directly and speak with the professionals (and professionals in training) making them all run. Nothing compares to the clean calmness of a Cuban hospital or the enthusiasm of an international student from Angola studying medicine for free in Cuba.

We also met economists, judges, parliament members, and historians whose knowledge and patience surpassed even the eager questions of more than 40 'Brigadistas'!

We ventured through the winding, neon sign filled streets of Santiago de Cuba, a historical epicenter of the Cuban Revolution. We imagined the young underground revolutionaries darting between the narrow buildings around us, and saw the bullet holes in the Moncada Army Garrison, a former site of violence and torture which has now been converted into a museum and elementary school.

Of course we did our best to keep up with the dance lessons provided at block parties filled with young and old Cubans who invited us into their houses to share smiles and stories. We also swam where the two clear blues of the sky and the Caribbean Ocean met, and then walked from the most beautiful beach we have ever seen to an even more beautiful beach

around the corner!

In the end we were left wondering how time can be so full and pass so fast. We also learned some of the answers to how a tiny island which has been blockaded and attacked by the most aggressive and dominant country in the world for the past 50 years, can still be so full of life and an example for building the better world we all know is necessary.

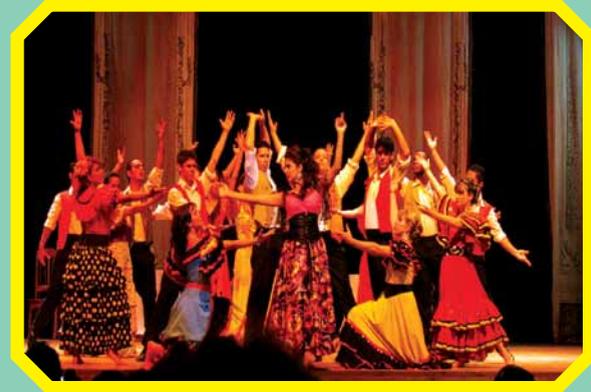
You know what the best part is? You can join the Che Guevara Brigade this year and see it all for yourself! There is no age limit. Brigadistas from 7 to 77 have all enjoyed incredible and fulfilling experiences on the Brigade.

This year's Che Brigade takes place from April 23rd to May 15th, and will once again be led by National Coordinator Dave Thomas. We will be in Havana for the march of over a million people on May Day, and also making a very special trip to the historical Isle of Youth. All of the fundamental aspects of the Brigade will be included, such as the volunteer work with Cubans, the tours to places of interest, the presentations and question and answer sessions, the art exhibits, the exploring, the swimming, the dancing, the friendships, and the learning.

If you have never visited Cuba before, this is the absolute best way to go as the Brigade cost covers your food, accommodation, transportation, and translation. All you need to do is focus on really experiencing everything around you! If you have already been to Cuba, this your best opportunity to dig deeper into a fascinating society and also make an important contribution through your volunteer work.

So what are you waiting for?

Join the Brigade!



Author Thomas Davies doing volunteer work!



If you would like more information about the Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba, you can visit the website at <http://www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade>, e-mail chevolbrigade@gmail.com, or in British Columbia, you can also contact B.C. Coordinators Tamara Hansen and Thomas Davies at 778-882-5223 or vancubasolidarity@gmail.com

IMPERIALISTS HANDS OFF MALI

THE NEW ERA OF WAR & OCCUPATION SPREADS TO AFRICA



By Thomas Davies

"If you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing."

-Malcolm X

Since January 10, 2013 when France began deploying the first of its 2500 troops and its countless air strikes began raining down on Mali, the justifications have sounded very familiar. Once again, we are told they are waging a war against "Islamic Extremists" and "Terrorists". Since September 11th, 2001 we have witnessed the devastation and destruction imposed on the people of the Middle East by the armies of the US, UK, Canada, and France using the exact same excuses. Now these imperialist countries are trying to move their horrific wars and occupations to Africa. Even a little bit of critical thinking unravels their Islamophobic justifications and reveals the criminal reasons for their interventions.

The Scars of Colonialism

Mali is a landlocked country in the Northwest of Africa. It borders 7 other countries, and is almost exactly two times the size of France. It was one of the largest and most important empires in the world during the 1300's, and an important center of mathematics, astronomy, literature, art, and religion. Islam came to Mali over 800 years ago, and 90% of the population is Muslim.

During the colonial "Scramble for Africa"

in the late 1800's, France seized control of Mali as part of its larger empire of "French Sudan." In 1960 Mali finally achieved independence, although French remained the official language and the scars of long decades of colonization remained. In the years following independence Mali was no stranger to instability despite holding national elections since 1992.

While held up by Western governments as a symbol of democracy in Africa, Mali remained one of the 25 poorest countries in the world, with an average life expectancy of 53 years. Mali's infant mortality rate is also second only to Afghanistan as the worst in the world. This is despite being the third largest exporter of gold in Africa as gold prices have increased almost 500% in the last 20 years. Foreign investments and aid programs related to Mali's many other natural resources also increased in this time as well, while quality of life continued to stagnate.

Mali in the Crosshairs

Simmering unrest within the population began to boil over, and on March 21, 2012 a group of army officers led by Captain Amadou Sanogo staged a military coup against President Amadou Toumani Touré. The military said that Touré had not been doing a good enough job containing growing rebellion in the North of the country. Prior to this, the United States Military Africa Command (AFRICOM) had established joint operations with the Malian military, and Captain Sanogo had traveled to the United States for special training. Dioncounda Traoré was then imposed as interim President, promising to "wage a total and relentless war" against opposition in Northern Mali.

Speculation about the composition of the rebellion of the North has been

exaggerated and manipulated beyond belief, but the fact is that it was clearly defeating the Malian army and taking control of increasing parts of the country. It was when the balance of forces became obviously against the Malian army that we began to hear all of the stories about the rebels being “Islamic Extremists with connections to al-Qaeda”.

However, based on this overplayed messaging, France was able to get a unanimous UN Security Council Resolution in December 2012 authorizing a military force of a 3000 troops for an “African-led” mission to invade Mali. But how can it be “African led” if the orders are coming from the Security Council and it is directed by France? France also wasted no time in putting together its own force of 2500 troops, and also received military assistance from Canada, the US, UK, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, and the United Arab Emirates. The European Union has also promised to pay the salaries of African soldiers.

A simple question has been left unanswered in all of this: Why is there such a massive and coordinated military push against Mali by so many countries?

New Era of War and Occupation Continues

Trying to understand Mali disconnected from the rest of the world and recent history only serves to confuse and overwhelm. Since September 11, 2001 the list of countries invaded, occupied, and ransacked by Mali’s new best friends has continued to grow. Afghanistan has been occupied since 2001, Iraq since 2003, and Haiti since 2004. US drone strikes have rained down on the people Pakistan and Yemen, and imperialist countries continue



to arm and fund a mercenary army trying to overthrow the government of Syria. This is while they continue imposing inhumane sanctions and threaten an invasion against Iran.

The human consequences have been beyond description. The UN Refugee Agency sites more than 4 million Afghans who are “Population of Concern”. This includes more than 2.5 million refugees and half a million internally displaced people. Their forecast for the future? “It is expected that humanitarian access will continue to be limited, and perhaps worsen, in 2013.” Meanwhile, based on data from several studies including the prestigious Lancet Medical Journal, Just Foreign Policy estimates almost 1.5 million Iraqis have died due to the U.S invasion in a country with almost an identical population to Canada! The list could go on and on, but the most important fact is that in every single country where imperialists have invaded and occupied, the situation for people has worsened catastrophically despite billions of dollars spent and even more promises made.

Why do they do this? As the capitalist market and financial crisis deepens and

imperialist competition increases, the western colonial countries which have dominated the world for so long are scrambling to secure whatever remains of the world’s natural resources, cheap labour forces, new markets, and strategic areas to expand their influence. Importantly as well, they can no longer rely on local puppets to control increasingly unhappy and frustrated populations demanding change. This was the situation in Mali.

The Scrambling for Africa

While September 11th provided imperialists with a convenient excuse to begin their assaults in the Middle East, it is clear the battle will take place across the world and Africa is the next target. Already we have seen attempts. In 2006 the US backed 8000 Ethiopian troops and carried out its own air strikes to overthrow an emerging government in Somalia. In 2007 there was an attempt to use the United Nations to occupy Sudan, but the rag-tag army they put together was not effective. In 2011, France intervened with air strikes to support one side of a civil war in its former colony of Cote D’Ivoire, and in 2011 we saw NATO forces violently overthrow the government of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya.

The US has also established a new central military command in Africa (AFRICOM), and announced in December of 2012 that it had decided to send approximately 3,500 US troops into as many as 35 of Africa’s 54 countries. Their reasoning? Again, to “fight extremists”. In a more honest moment, the first Deputy to the Commander for AFRICOM, Admiral Robert Moeller stated in 2008 that



Canadian Minister of Defence, Peter MacKay and CFB Trenton Commanding Officer Col Sean [Name] while Canadian forces board a C-17 Globemaster, Trenton, Ontario, Tuesday January 15, 2013.

AFRICOM was about preserving “the free flow of natural resources from Africa to the global market”.

Another factor adding to the urgency of the new surge into Africa is China’s emergence as a major player there. According to the Chinese Daily Newspaper Xinhua, “Trade between China and Africa soared from \$10 billion in 2000 to \$166 billion in 2011, and is expected to have exceeded \$200 billion in 2012. China’s direct investment on the continent has also been on the rise, with the accumulated total having exceeded \$15 billion and related projects covering 50 countries on the continent.”

Canada’s Colonial Role in Mali

Canada has been right in the thick of it all. The Canadian government has been negotiating to set up military bases in Tanzania, Senegal and Kenya. According to a military briefing note, the bases are to improve the Canadian Forces’ “ability to project combat power/security assistance and Canadian influence rapidly and flexibly anywhere in the world.”

In Mali specifically, the Canadian Embassy in Mali’s website states, “Since 1972 and until the recent coup d’état, Mali had been receiving official development assistance from Canada and had figured prominently in Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) programming since that time. In 2009, Mali had been designated as one of CIDA’s country of focus. The aid program in the country was one of Canada’s largest programs with an overall

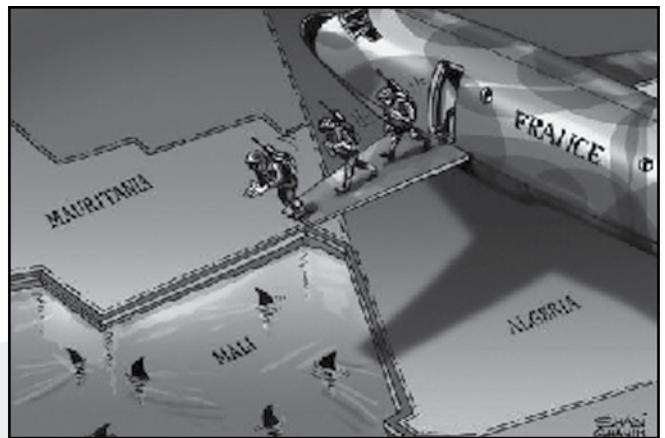
contribution over \$110 million for 2010-2011.”

This might have had something to do with the fact that as of 2011, Canadian mining assets in the country were nearly \$500 million and there are more than 15 Canadian mining and exploration firms working in the country, according to Natural Resources Canada.

New documents reveal the Canadian government and military began discussing military intervention in Mali as early as last spring. After initially saying it would not get involved in the French operations in Mali, the Canadian government sent a C-17 heavy-lift transport aircraft and 40 military personal for “one week” which quickly became “one month.” As the situation unfolds the truth comes out more and more. CBC News has now also revealed that Canadian special forces soldiers have also secretly entered Mali to “protect Canadian interests”.

What next?

Unfortunately when Canadian parliament opened on January 28th, the Conservative Party asked for, and got, broad agreement from the New Democrat Party (NDP) and Liberal Party for the continuing military operation in Mali. Federal NDP



Leader Thomas Mulcair even went so far as to say, “The French are our longstanding allies. They have long, deep roots in the region. They asked us for a hand and we’re giving a very material, technical support and I think it’s the right thing to do.” What does he mean “long, deep roots”? Roots of violence, theft, and tyranny!

Keep it Simple

Imperialist countries are moving towards Africa as part of the new era of war and occupation. They are fighting to carve up the world and it’s resources to delay their economic collapse. The government in Mali was not able to do the job of controlling the population and protecting business interests, so it was time to literally bring in the big guns. Mali is also a convenient entry into Africa as it is one of Africa’s minority of predominantly Muslim countries. This fits with their already established narrative of fighting against “Islamic Extremists”.

The imperialist governments are trying to sell a mirage in the deserts of Mali. They promise their tank tracks lead to an Oasis of freedom. The people of the Middle East can tell the world where those same tank tracks have led, and it is to anything but freedom and social justice. As people living in Canada, we need to be clear that the Canadian government is one of the primary aggressors on the world stage today, and we have an important role to play in the international movement against war and occupation from the Middle East, to Africa, and beyond. We must join together to demand:

*All Foreign Troops Out of Mali!
Self-determination for people of Mali!
Imperialists Hands Off Africa!*



French troops in Mali offensive.

By Janine Solanki

2012: MAWO in Full Campaign Against Imperialist Aggression

Looking back over the past year, 2012 was a busy year for Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO). 2012 brought with it the continuation of historical mass movements and uprisings throughout the Middle East and North Africa, which are ongoing in Tunisia and Egypt as well as in Bahrain, Yemen and Saudi Arabia against US-backed regimes. 2012 also brought the imperialist response to the fact that it's position in the region is threatened by oppressed people who have had enough of US regimes controlling and exploiting their countries. That response being the increase of sanctions on Syria and Iran, the heightened mainstreamed media campaign against these two countries, the imperialist-fomented civil war in Syria and the threats and preparation for potential military action against Syria. Turning to Palestine, in November 2012 yet another war was launched by Israel against Gaza, killing over 170 Palestinians in the eight-day bombing campaign. This brutal and criminal campaign against Palestinians will mark it's 65th year in 2013

Throughout all of MAWO's work, both education and action are two pillars for organizing antiwar activity. In the mainstream media people are constantly fed misinformation, the skewing and fabrication of facts, and often no facts at all when critical issues are simply left out of our daily news. Wars are waged through lies told and believed, and it is up to antiwar activists and organizations to fight back with the truth, which is why education is so important in the struggle against war and occupation.

However knowing the truth is one thing, doing something about it is what really matters, which is where action is of vital importance for antiwar organizing.

MAWO closed 2012 with a both action and education, at MAWO's Saturday December 15th monthly antiwar rally and petition campaign. People walking down busy Robson street in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery in downtown Vancouver could not miss the big banners and picket signs held by protesters that read "Hands Off Syria!" "No War on Iran!"

organizers and those who stopped to sign petitions or who visited the info table, and new people signed up to find out about future antiwar events and to get involved.

2013: We Will Increase Our Antiwar Campaign

After ringing in the new year, MAWO began 2013 with education, through a public forum on January 8th, 2013 titled "Two Years of Struggle Against U.S.-Backed Puppet Regimes in North Africa & the Middle East! What We Have Learned Since the Death of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia". On December 17th, 2010, just a little over two years ago Mohamed Bouazizi, a street vendor in Tunisia, took his life by setting himself on fire outside of a government office. His act of protest in response to a life of poverty, constant harassment and humiliation ignited a mass uprising that brought down Tunisia's U.S.-backed dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Soon after, Egyptians overthrew their own U.S.-backed dictator, Hosni Mubarak, as part of a surging wave of uprisings in countries throughout North Africa and the Middle East. The review of these huge historical events that impacted the world over the last two years gave way to a better perspective for entering a 2013 of struggle against war and occupation.

The forum started out with a series of video clips that included news clips, footage, and even music videos that followed events surrounding the uprisings from it's beginnings until today. The videos were followed by the forum's speaker, Ali Yerevani, who is the political editor of the Fire This Time Newspaper and of the Battle of Ideas Press, and was a participant in the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Ali provided an analysis of not only



and "Self-Determination for Palestine!" As this action took antiwar demands to the streets, it also asked passers-by to take action against war and occupation, and to sign petitions demanding an end to the government of Canada's sanctions and war mongering threats against Syria and Iran. This rally and petition campaign is an action but within itself is an educational tool too. Hundreds of MAWO newsletters and leaflets were handed out, discussions took place between



the last two years since the uprisings began but also the economic, social and political situation that existed in countries ruled by U.S.-backed puppet regimes throughout the Middle East and North Africa for decades before the death of Mohamed Bouazizi. Ali spoke about how the movements and demands have matured and developed in countries which are still in the process of



overthrowing their U.S.-backed dictators, or are struggling to establish and further the gains made in Tunisia and Egypt, where the dictators were overthrown. Ali also spoke about the role the U.S. government has in attempting to suppress the movements against U.S.-backed dictators

while heavily intervening in countries with independent governments, both through military force as in Libya and now in Syria with the backing of a civil war and a build up for a potential military intervention. Ali posed the question, "Who has the right to change a government, do a revolution or organize a mass uprising? The indigenous people inside that country, people who are a member of that country... or foreign forces who have their own agenda and own interests who most of the time, almost 99% of the time, are against the indigenous people of that country?" This came to the most critical issue for antiwar activists – to organize on the demand of imperialists, hands off Syria. In the discussion that followed many people brought forward their question or expanded on the topic of the forum.

Building Antiwar Movement

Looking forward for 2013, with the imperialist war drive against Syria and Iran escalating, the destruction of Libya continuing,



and the occupations of Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine becoming more and more an obvious tragedy for the people of these countries, the necessity of building a united and effective antiwar movement is a critical task for the coming year. As Mobilization Against War and Occupation plans for a year of antiwar activity, it will be with consistent education and action to struggle for an end to this new era of war and occupation, and to build a better world. For more information on MAWO events and to get involved, go to www.mawovancouver.org

MALI: MISSION CREEP ON SPEED

Statement by Stop the War Coalition UK - January 29, 2013

This is mission creep on speed.

Two weeks ago we were told Britain would have no combat role in Mali and we would send just two transport planes. Now we are told the government is sending 350 British military personnel to Mali and West Africa to support French forces.

Prime Minister David Cameron is "keen" for Britain to get more involved in war on a new continent. He sent national security advisor Sir Kim Darroch to Paris to discuss what help Britain could provide. He has personally phoned French Prime Minister Hollande to offer more help and he is "keen to continue to provide further assistance".

The British government says it is prepared to send a "sizeable amount" of troops to provide military assistance to France.

This is how major wars begin. In the early 1960s, the United States started with a few "special advisors" in Vietnam. More than a decade later it left defeated, with over 50,000 American troops and at least two million Vietnamese killed.

Forgetting historical example is one thing. Ignoring the last few years is extraordinary. The disastrous wars in Afghanistan and Iraq -- and the attack on Libya -- were presented as humanitarian operations, complete with images of cheering local populations greeting western intervention -- soon replaced by the devastation of the countries and huge death toll for the people they were meant to "liberate".

The spread of the "war on terror" to the Sahel region in Africa is a result of the chaos created by the Libyan intervention. It is also driven by the same motivations as previous wars, the desire to control vital energy reserves and other mineral resources. The region contains some of Europe's most important energy sources.

The Mali intervention will end with the same results: destruction, loss of life and deep anger against the west.

How long before the presence of thousands of western troops in their old colonial stomping grounds inflames new violence and resistance? www.stopwar.org.uk

FREE THE CUBAN 5 NOW!

OVER 100 PEOPLE ATTEND MONTREAL CARTOON EXHIBIT OF GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ

By the Comité Fabio Di Celmo pour les 5 of the Table de concertation de solidarité Québec-Cuba

The exhibition/meeting was jointly organized on January 24 by the local Montreal branch of the CSN (one of the largest Quebec unions) and the Comité Fabio Di Celmo. The attendees examined and reflected upon the exhibit. Dominique Daigneault, General Secretary of the Conseil central du Montréal métropolitain (CCMM-CSN), the sponsor of the event, said in her introductory remarks that she was moved to see so many people despite the record-breaking close to minus 40 degrees centigrade temperature. (The organizers were hoping for 50 people, but the result was the standing-room only attendance.) She explained how the CSN has been supporting Cuba for a long time, and lately specifically the Cuban Five in their struggle against their unjust imprisonment. Her introduction was followed the screening of the video "The Bird and the Prisoner." American actor Danny Glover outlined Gerardo's incredible outreach from his prison to save a newborn orphaned bird that had wandered into the prison. This ongoing action, we saw, won the support of the prison population.

The next to speak was the Consul General of the Republic of Cuba in Montreal, Alain González. Through his personal story, he vividly brought to light the terror carried out by the U.S. against the Cuban people.

Montreal writer and journalist Arnold August, representing the Comité Fabio Di Celmo, read a message sent to the gathering by Gerardo Hernández. In his own name and in the names of Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González, Gerardo wrote:

"Brothers and sisters,

Words cannot express how deeply I appreciate the effort of the Conseil central du Montréal métropolitain de la Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN-Québec), the Comité Fabio Di Celmo pour les 5 de la Table de concertation de solidarité Québec-Cuba and all the others who worked to make this exhibition a reality in the important city of Montreal. It is my understanding that all the promotion, explanations of my work and even this letter have been translated into French for the very first time.



*Above: Author Arnold August
On Left: A crowd gathers to learn about Gerardo Hernández, one of the Cuban 5 and political cartoonist*

It has been humbling to me how many countries these cartoons have been shown in, because they were not made with the idea that someday they would be displayed all together in an art exhibit. As some of you know, I spend a great deal of my time responding to hundreds of solidarity letters and I do this work lacking the material and appropriate conditions of a real artist. I am an art aficionado who draws cartoons out of a necessity to express myself in a certain way. This necessity comes from a desire to send out a message to our people or to express my perspective before different events, such as the birthday of someone we admire or the death of a friend.

Someone once said that "humor liberates" (and if nobody did say that, I will say it now) and for me it is something that "gets us out" for at least a few moments from behind the walls where we have been unjustly imprisoned for almost 15 years. The Cuban Five have been expressing themselves through humor – in this case – or by painting and poetry in the case of Tony, and – although less known – in the paintings of Fernando and the poetry of Ramón and René.

On behalf of all of us, I want to thank you for being here today and for the solidarity that it represents in our struggle for justice. We know that the key to our inevitable freedom lives in that solidarity that continues to grow worldwide.

¡Hasta La Victoria Siempre!

*Gerardo Hernández
Victorville Penitentiary California
January 20, 2013"*

This was greeted by loud applause by the audience, visibly moved by his words. August then asked, "What more can we do to further the struggle to free the Cuban Five?" An important activity is being organized in Washington D.C. by the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five. These "Days of Action for the Cuban 5" will take place in the U.S. capital from May 30 to June 5, 2013. The highlight will be a demonstration in front of the White House on Saturday, June 1 to demand that President Obama use his constitutional right to pardon the Cuban Five and allow them to return home to Cuba and their families. August, in the name of the Comité, called on all those present to participate in building a delegation from Quebec to go to Washington. After the meeting, many people approached him and the Comité de Fabio Di Celmo literature table to indicate their interest. The success of a delegation to Washington will be, in part, a direct result of Gerardo's message that touched the soul of the participants. From their cells, the Cuban Five inspire people all over the world, demonstrating their combination of immense courage and sincere humanism.

January 5th - Another Step Forward!

Vancouver Participates in International Day of Action to Free the Cuban 5 Heroes



By Noah Fine

On Saturday January 5th, people around the world took action calling for the freedom of the Cuban 5 political prisoners imprisoned in the U.S. In Vancouver, Canada, supporters of the Cuban 5 gathered in the heart of downtown for the 86th consecutive monthly protest demanding, “Free the Cuban 5 Now!” This also marked the 7-year anniversary of the monthly protest campaign in Vancouver.

The International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 had also called for a day of social media outreach titled, “Simultaneous Tweets for the Cuban 5”. Thousands of people around the world used the social media site Twitter to send and receive messages demanding freedom for Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González, the Cuban 5. Many were addressed directly to U.S. President Barack Obama.

In Vancouver, the Free the Cuban 5 Committee set up a computer at the information table where passers-by and supporters could take part in the “Simultaneous Tweets for the Cuban 5” directly from the streets of Vancouver and the protest itself.

Participants held signs and energetically



Tweeting to Free the Cuban 5!



Local TV media covering the Vancouver event

chanted slogans in support of the Cuban 5 Heroes. For more than three hours they distributed information about the case of Cuban 5 Heroes and asking those passing by to sign postcards addressed to Obama demanding, “Free the Cuban 5 Now!”

People also gathered to listen to speakers such as David Whittlesey, a veteran U.S. civil rights activist and now an organizer with the Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver. Sarah Alwell, also an organizer with the Committee, read New Year’s greetings written by René González, one of the Cuban 5.

Alicia Jrapko, Coordinator of the International Committee to Free the Cuban 5, spoke via telephone from San Francisco. She gave an update on the huge international response to the “Simultaneous Tweets for the Cuban 5” campaign and thanked the Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver for organizing the first protest around the world for the Cuban 5 of 2013.

Next up, Vancouver hip hop artist and Cuban 5 supporter, Joose Justis, performed and worked the chant, “Free the 5!” into every one of his songs.

Thomas Davies, Executive Committee member of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, and recent delegate to the 8th Annual International Colloquium to Free the Cuban 5 in Holguín, Cuba, spoke next. Thomas emphasized, “Support for the Cuban 5 has grown in Vancouver as it has in all corners of the world. Let’s work together to make 2013 a year to

re-double our efforts to Free the Cuban 5!”

Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver Coordinator, Noah Fine, wrapped up the protest program by reaffirming that the Committee will continue protesting every month until all 5 Cuban Heroes are free and at home with their loved ones in Cuba.

January 5th was another step forward in the growing international campaign to Free the Cuban 5. The Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver invites everyone to join to be part of this great struggle for the human rights of the 5 Cuban Heroes!



Who are the 5 Cuban Heroes?

Cuba has been the target of terrorist attacks organized by groups operating out of Miami, Florida for over 50 years. Those organizations are responsible for criminal acts against the Cuban people such as the bombing of Cuban tourist hotels and the mid-air bombing of a Cuban airliner in 1976, which killed all 73 innocent passengers. Over 3,400 people including one resident of Canada, Fabio di Celmo, have been killed in terrorist attacks against Cuba.

Five Cuban men were sent to Miami to collect evidence on those committing the terrorist attacks. In 1998, after giving the information they had gathered to the FBI, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González were arrested and kept illegally in solitary confinement for 17 months. In 2001, they were falsely accused and convicted in a U.S. Federal Court of “conspiracy to commit espionage” and other fabricated charges. They are currently serving outrageously long sentences including, in the case of Gerardo, a double-life sentence plus fifteen years. Four of the Five unjustifiably remain behind U.S. bars today, while René González, who was released from prison last year for having completed his sentence, is being forced against his will to remain on parole in Florida for three years.

The Cuban people and millions around the world are demanding the U.S. government immediately free the 5 Cuban Heroes and allow them to return to their loved ones in Cuba.

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba Celebrates New Year's Eve & 54 Years of the Cuban Revolution!

By Thomas Davies

*"I have, let's see,
I have the pleasure of going about my country,
owner of all there is in it,
looking closely at what
I did not or could not have before.
I can say cane,
I can say mountain,
I can say city,
say army,
now forever mine and yours, ours,
and the vast splendor of
the sunbeam, star, flower."*

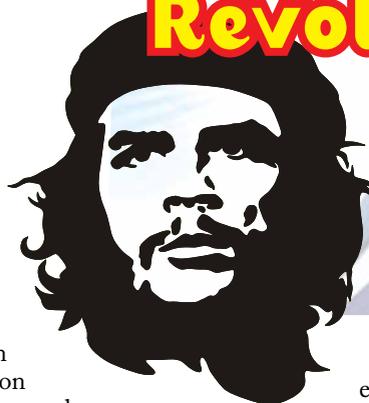
- from "I Have" by Nicolás Guillén
(National Poet of Cuba)

There's a special feeling in knowing that
when the clock strikes 12 and

you are celebrating with 250 others in Vancouver, Canada, you are also celebrating with over 11 million Cubans, and millions more around the world. Celebrating not only a new year, but the anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. The Revolution which brought to an abrupt end centuries of imperialist domination and gave space and substance to the power and potential of the Cuban people. The Revolution which lit a star of hope in the sky for the rest of the world to follow and which continues to burn brightly, especially in the evening on December 31st.

Donation to Hurricane Sandy Relief

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) once again organized its annual New Year's Celebration of the Cuban Revolution, this year marking the Revolution's 54th Anniversary. The event also had another important



objective: giving back to Cuba which has given so much to the world. All money raised was donated to Cuba for Hurricane Sandy Relief. The amount totaled \$3000, which will help rebuild housing and infrastructure on the Eastern part of the island as part of the Canadian Network on Cuba's "Sandy Relief Fund".

The Evening of Revolutionary Politics, Dance and Fun

The evening opened with MC and VCSC Coordinator Tamara Hansen summarizing the events which led up to the hasty departure of US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista and his associates on January 1st, 1959. They had realized their defeat by the revolutionary Rebel Army led by Fidel Castro was imminent, and this became the first New Year's Eve where the masses of Cuban people were able to celebrate the triumph of Cuba's Socialist Revolution.

Co-MC and VCSC Executive Committee member Colleen Glynn also gave a report on the huge damage Cuba suffered this year when Hurricane Sandy tore through the Eastern part of the island. Videos were shown both of damage, but also of Cuban President Raul Castro who arrived in the hurricane damaged area to personally coordinate reconstruction efforts.



The evening also reflected on the struggle to free the Cuban 5 Heroes imprisoned in the United States. This was the 15th consecutive year they have spent their New Year separated from their families for defending their country from U.S. backed terrorists. However, this was also the 15th consecutive year where the Cuban Five have once again demonstrated their unwavering spirit and commitment to defending the Cuban Revolution and to social justice.

Javier Domokos Ruiz, Consul General of Cuba in Toronto, gave special greetings via telephone, reaffirming Cuba's commitment to defend and extend the gains of the Cuban Socialist Revolution. Gisela Lara, First Consul of the Venezuelan Consulate in Vancouver, also gave warm greetings to the event. She emphasized both the long friendship between the Cuban and Venezuelan Revolutions, but also the Venezuelan people's continued support of President Hugo Chavez and their Revolution.

Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba

VCSC Executive Committee member Thomas Davies invited everyone to join this year's annual Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba. Using slides from last year's voyage, he showed people how this amazing 3 week trip is a life changing experience of adventure, volunteering, politics, and fun! Everyone received a Brigade informational brochure, and there was a lot of interest in the room to join in.

By the time Vancouver hip-hop artist Joose Justis hit the stage every chair in the hall was full, and more people kept arriving as his high energy set unfolded. This continued as Joose handed the mic to Pablo and Angelo, who got the growing crowd moving with their unique fusion of Latin and rock rhythms.

DJ 100Fuegos had no trouble filling the dance floor as chairs were cleared and feet began to move together with the beats and harmonies. The atmosphere resembled a Cuban block party – people from seven to seventy and everywhere in between danced, laughed, and talked together. They also ate together as the kitchen was busy the entire evening serving special Venezuelan dishes from Magda's Restaurant.

New Year of More Struggle

As the New Year approached the crowd came close for the countdown... "3, 2, 1... Happy New Year! Viva la Revolucion!" Old and new friends hugged as they were



showered in balloons from the ceiling and the screen at the front of the room showed historical footage of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution and its continuing gains.

The dancing continued much longer, and was capped by an exciting raffle with many happy winners. Even as the late hour became late, nobody seemed to be in a hurry to get home as many lingered to check out the information tables, sign petitions, or simply to talk about the excitement of a new year and new possibilities.

2013 will be another year in the fight for the better world we all know is possible, and Cuba will once again be leading the way forward. Don't miss your chance to participate in many more events organized by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) on our way to celebrating the 55th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution!

VIVA CUBA!

VIVA FIDEL!

VIVA RAUL!

VIVA LA REVOLUCION CUBANA!

A BETTER WORLD IS POSSIBLE!



DONATIONS TO CUBA FOR HURRICANE RELIEF ARE STILL BEING ACCEPTED!

To donate to the Canadian Network on Cuba's "Sandy Relief Fund" make a cheque out to "Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba" and write "CNC Sandy Relief Fund" on your cheque's memo line. Your donation is tax deductible. We will forward the donation and your information to the



Mackenzie-Papineau Memorial Fund to receive tax receipts. Please also include your name, address, and phone numbers so we can forward your tax return to you. Call 778-882-5223 for more information!



Huge March Defends Venezuela's Democracy & Revolution

By Tamara Pearson*

The vice-president and ministers marched with up to a million people today to defend the Bolivarian revolution on Democracy Day, while the opposition march turned out to be a small rally. Further, sectors of the far right have called on the armed forces to resist what they referred to as the "invasion" of "Castro-communism" in Venezuela.

Today's marches commemorate 23 January 1958, when a civic-military movement overthrew the Marcos Jimenez dictatorship. However, this year the opposition first called a march for the date, to reject what it has called the "unconstitutional" measures taken by the national government, as President Chavez wasn't able to be present at his swearing-in ceremony on 10 January while he was recovering from an operation for cancer.

In response, the PSUV also convoked a large march, together with other movements and organisations, with the slogan "The people will never be betrayed again".

Marches for the Bolivarian Revolution in Caracas and around the country

Hundreds of thousands of people marched in Caracas today, leaving from three main points, and marching to the barrio 23 de Enero.

Vice-president of the Socialist Bolivarian Workers' Central (CBST), Francisco Torrealba, said his organisation mobilised 35,000 people for today's march, to express their "commitment to the Bolivarian revolution". That contingent left from Libertador Avenue, while Venezuelan Communist Party (PCV) and Grand Patriotic Pole (GPP) contingents left from La Bandera

station.

Meanwhile the Bolivarian militia left from Propatria, with social missions and other movements and political organisations also leaving from all three points.

Vice-president Nicolas Maduro marched among the giant crowd from Propatria, waving to people around him and to people watching on from buildings. Other ministers and well known PSUV leaders also took part in the march.

Hundreds of community radios and other movements also participated in a "chain-marathon", reporting on the march from all the main plazas of the different states of the country.

At around 1pm, when some of the marches had arrived at 23 de Enero, a short concert was held there, before historian Chela Vargas, journalist Jose Vincent Rangel, and Maduro addressed the crowd. The people chanted continuously, "We're all Chavez!" (Todos somos Chavez). Many carried placards saying the same thing, and some men even painted the slogan on their chest.

Journalist Jose Vincent Rangel in his speech declared, "We have to be clear that 23 January is a symbol of a people who don't give up".

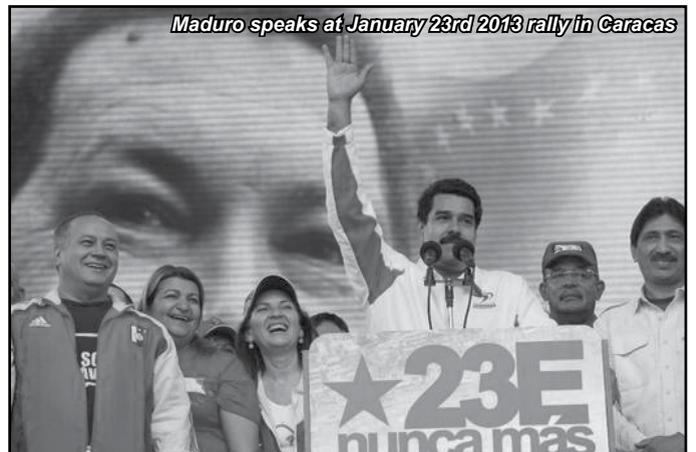
"With Chavez and Muduro the people are secure," people chanted when it was Maduro's turn to speak.

Maduro emphasised the significance of a people who "woke-up" after being tired of the "torture, disappearances, misery, lack of education, unemployment, and a state that was called 'democratic' but only had that name because the Venezuelan bourgeoisie called it that", during the period following the overthrow of the dictatorship.

People who participated in the over-throwing of Jimenez were on the Caracas stage today, and 3000 police were set up around Caracas to ensure the march was peaceful and safe. Aerial footage of the Caracas march is available here.

Revolutionary collectives also rallied yesterday in the 23 de Enero barrio to help build today's march. One placard read, "23 January 1958: The people brought down a dictator. 40 years later: buried the 4th Republic. 55 years later: no pacts, no backing down". In this case, the 4th republic refers to the Punto Fijo Pact, where major right wing parties agreed to share power, until Chavez was elected in 1998.

"This date [23 January] has two readings;



Maduro speaks at January 23rd 2013 rally in Caracas

the end of a dictatorship, and also the betrayal of the right wing and the Pact of Punto Fijo,” said William Gudino, of the National Network of Communes, to newspaper Ciudad CCS.

“The people shouldn’t forget ...this vision of combat which represents us, and is also



our reality,” Gudino said.

Other marches took place around the country as well. For the Andean city of Merida, with a population of just 300,000, it was the second large march in under a week. Around 4000 people marched on Friday to defend Cuba after opposition students burned a Cuban flag and an effigy of Fidel Castro, and a similar number also marched today.

For Hector Alejo Rodriguez, general secretary of the PCV youth, the aim of today’s marches was to “remember the important role the youth played in that battle 55 years ago to bring down the dictatorship”.

Opposition rally and far-right destabilisation attempts

Despite initially calling for a march on 23 January, last weekend the opposition backtracked on those plans, and instead held a small rally today of around 6,000 people in the sports courts of Miranda Park, Caracas.

Speaking at the rally, the general secretary of the MUD opposition coalition, Ramon Avelledo read a 12 point manifesto to “defend Venezuela in a time of uncertainty” and said that should there be new presidential elections, the opposition would choose its candidate by “consensus”.

Legislator Alfonso Marquina also announced the re-launching of the MUD, which he said would consist in “re-planning and rationalising” the organisation.

Public media agency AVN denounced that one public television journalist, Carlos Cachon, was removed from the rally and beaten up. Media activists reported that he was taken to hospital with multiple injuries. Just before

the violence, Avelledo, who was still giving his speech, said “these people were sent by the government”, indicating the public sector journalists and film crew who had just entered the rally area.

PSUV leader Dario Vivas speculated that the opposition “don’t dare to march, they have realised the people don’t follow them”.

Vivas also denounced yesterday that opposition legislators are spreading a document around, addressed to the armed forces, calling on them to not support the government.

The document, called “Manifiesto to democratic Venezuelan society and the National Armed Forces [sic- they are the Bolivarian Armed Forces]” opens with a preamble saying the Venezuelan government has “violated the constitution” on “repeated occasions” and that it is “subordinate” to the “Castro-communist regime of Cuba”.

The document makes claims that “the Cubans have slowly and progressively taken control of our...registers, system of identification, our foreign policy, and important sectors of the national economy”. It also claims that “Castro-communism” is responsible for manipulation of the electoral system and that national finances, rather than resolving the country’s problems, are being used to “finance the expansion of Castro-communism”.

It talks about Venezuela as a “colony of Cuba” and suggests that the armed forces, “supported by all sectors of civil society” take steps forward and impede the “dissolution of the fatherland”.

The letter is signed by around 120 people so far, including a range of far right opposition legislators and leaders such as Maria Corina Machado. Machado walked out of the recent annual review in the national assembly on 15 of January, and a few times has been proven to have set up violent attacks against herself, in order to blame Chavez supporters.

Further today, the minister for justice and internal affairs, Nestor Reverol, advised that ultra-right sectors of the opposition were planning attacks on Maduro and on national assembly president Diosdado Cabello. Reverol said state security organisations were alert and active in the case of “terrorist actions against these comrades”.

** This article appeared in
Venezuela Analysis
www.venezuelanalysis.com
January 23rd 2013*



Maduro at January 23rd 2013 rally in Caracas



Supporters of Chavez on January 10th, 2013



January 23rd 2013 celebration in Caracas

Legal and political situation in Venezuela today: Understanding the decision of the Venezuelan Supreme Court of Justice

By Merli Vanegas*

Since June 30th, 2011, when President Chávez announced to the country and the world that cancer had been detected, international media, has practiced systematic and repeated attack to discredit the Bolivarian Revolution. They have been responsible for disseminating a series of rumors and lies about the health of a man that has become the most important Latin American leader of the XXI century.

This campaign intensified exponentially when in December 2012, having been re-elected for a new constitutional term, Chávez announced that the cancer had returned and he would have to undergo surgery again. Recently, the mainstream media have focused their manipulation to trying to make the public believe that the fact that the President will be sworn in by the Supreme Court of Justice, and not done on January 10 at the National Assembly, delegitimizes the entire executive branch. But with reading the Supreme Court decision, and statements such as the one from the Secretary of the Organization of American States (OAS) Jose Miguel Insulza, we realize that these allegations are without merit.

Following is a chronological compilation of the facts:

On October 7, 2012, President Hugo Chavez was re-elected by a majority vote of Venezuelans. Note that our electoral system, with cutting-edge technology, has been recognized as one of the most transparent, reliable, secure and publicly auditable systems worldwide.

On October 10, 2012 Ceremony in which President Hugo Chavez received his certificate of proclamation by the highest authority of the Electoral Power in accordance with article 153 and article 155 of the Organic Law of the Electoral Power. Consequently, he is a re-elected President and he is now operational, there is a continuity in the command.

On December 11, 2012 the President underwent surgery in Havana, Cuba because of the recurrence of a cancerous lesion. He was allowed to leave the country accord-

ing to the provisions of the Venezuelan Constitution, by the unanimous vote of the deputies of the National Assembly, both the opposition and members of the Bolivarian revolution.

On January 8, 2013 at a meeting of the National Assembly of Venezuela, Vice President of the Republic Nicolas Maduro announced that President Hugo Chavez thanked the National Assembly for the granted permission to leave the country for the surgery and subsequent medical leave. He reported that the President requested to take his oath before the Supreme Court of Justice in accordance with the second part of Article 231 of the Constitution.



On January 9, 2013 the Supreme Court of Justice of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, made a request for interpretation of Article 231 of the Venezuelan Constitution, regarding whether President Hugo Chávez had to be sworn in on January 10, 2013, or if he could do it before the Supreme Court as established in the second part of the article itself. The decision said, taking into account, that the principle of sovereignty is above all, and taking into account that the principle of continuity of public power must be respected, President Hugo Chávez will take office when the situation of his medical leave has ended, and that the oath shall be made to the Supreme Court, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Let's see what the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela says:

Article 5. "Sovereignty resides **un-transferable** in the people, who exercise it directly in the manner provided in this Constitution and the law, and indirectly, by suffrage, through the organs exercising Public Power."

Article 230: "The presidential term is six years. The President of the Republic may be re-elected."

It is clear and undisputed that the legal situation is the one shown on article 230 of the Constitution. Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías is a re-elected President, as he won the elections of October 7, 2012.

The Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela states in Article 231:

"Article 231. The candidate elected will take office as President of the Republic on 10th January of the first year of his constitutional term by an oath before the National Assembly. If for any reason befallen the President could not take possession before the National Assembly, he will do so before the Supreme Court of Justice. "

On January 16, 2013, the Secretary of the Organization of American States (OAS) José Miguel Insulza, spoke regarding the request made by Venezuelan opposition in relation to debate within the OAS Venezuelan situation. In this regard he stated:

"The issue has been resolved by the three branches of government of Venezuela: it was raised by the Executive, the Legislature considered it, and the Judiciary solved it. Instances have been regarded and therefore the process that will take place in this country is the one that the three powers have decided," said Secretary General Insulza.

**Merli Vanegas, is the Venezuelan Consul General in Vancouver and is also a Bolivarian and socialist lawyer. She initially worked for the Bolivarian Government in the National Assembly, and has served as a Legal Advisor in different governmental institutions. She then joined the Foreign Ministry, where she began as Government Representative to the International Labour Organization. Before coming to Vancouver she was a diplomat in the Embassy of Venezuela in Libya.*

Situación política y jurídica en Venezuela actualmente

Por Merli Vanegas*

Desde el 30 de junio de 2011, cuando el Presidente Chávez anunció al país y al mundo que le había sido detectado un cáncer, los medios internacionales, en su sistemática y reiterada práctica de atacar y desprestigiar a la Revolución Bolivariana, se han encargado de difundir una serie de rumores y mentiras sobre la salud de quien se ha convertido en el líder Latinoamericano más trascendente del siglo XXI.

Esta campaña se intensificó exponencialmente cuando en diciembre de 2012, después de haber sido reelecto para un nuevo periodo constitucional, Chávez anunció que el cáncer había reaparecido y que tendría que ser sometido a una cuarta intervención quirúrgica. Recientemente los grandes medios han orientado su manipulación a tratar de hacer creer al público que el hecho de que el Presidente de la República vaya a juramentarse ante El Tribunal Supremo de Justicia, y no lo haya hecho el 10 de enero ante la Asamblea Nacional, implica una deslegitimación de todo el poder Ejecutivo. Pero no hace falta más que leer el fallo del Tribunal Supremo, aunado a declaraciones como la del el Secretario de la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA) José Miguel Insulza, para darse cuenta de que estos alegatos no tienen fundamentos.

A continuación una recopilación en orden cronológico de los hechos:

El 07 de octubre pasado el **Presidente Hugo Chávez fue reelecto por el voto mayoritario de venezolanas y venezolanos**. Cabe destacar que nuestro sistema electoral con una tecnología de vanguardia, ha sido reconocido en el mundo entero como uno de los más transparentes, confiables, seguros y auditables públicamente.

El 10 de octubre de 2012 se llevó a cabo el acto en el cual el Presidente Hugo Chávez recibió su acta de proclamación por parte de la máxima autoridad del Poder Electoral de conformidad con el artículo 153 y el artículo 155 de la **Ley Orgánica del Poder Electoral**. En consecuencia es un Presidente reelecto y ya en funciones, es decir hay una continuidad en el mandato.

El 11 de diciembre pasado el Presidente fue intervenido quirúrgicamente en la Habana Cuba con motivo de la reparación de una

lesión cancerígena. Había sido autorizado días antes para salir del país de acuerdo a lo que establece la Constitución venezolana, por la unanimidad de los diputados de la Asamblea Nacional, es decir los de la oposición y los diputados de la Revolución Bolivariana.

El 08 de enero de 2013 en sesión de la Asamblea Nacional de Venezuela, el Vicepresidente de la República Nicolás Maduro anunció que el Presidente Hugo Chávez agradecía a la Asamblea Nacional el permiso otorgado para su intervención y posterior reposo médico. Además, informó que el Presidente solicitaba tomar su juramento ante el Tribunal Supremo de Justicia de acuerdo con lo establecido en la segunda parte del artículo 231 de la Constitución.



El 09 de enero de 2013 el Tribunal Supremo de Justicia de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, emitió un recurso de interpretación sobre el Artículo 231 de la Constitución venezolana, en relación a si el Presidente Hugo Chávez debía juramentarse el 10 de enero de 2013 o si podía hacerlo en una fecha posterior ante el Tribunal Supremo de Justicia tal como lo establece la segunda parte del propio artículo. La decisión señaló que, tomando en cuenta que el principio de que la soberanía reside en el pueblo está por encima de todo, y que debe respetarse el principio de continuidad del Poder Público, el Presidente Hugo Chávez se juramentará cuando la situación sobrevenga, es decir, su reposo médico, cese, y que la juramentación se hará ante el Tribunal Supremo de Justicia, de acuerdo a lo establecido en la Constitución Bolivariana.

Veamos lo que señala la Constitución de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela:

Artículo 5. *“La soberanía reside intransferiblemente en el pueblo, quien la ejerce directamente en la forma prevista en esta Constitución y en la ley, e indirectamente, mediante el sufragio, por los órganos que ejercen el Poder Público.”*

Artículo 230: *“El período presidencial es de seis años. El Presidente o Presidenta de la República puede ser reelegido o reelegida.”*

Es indiscutible que esta es la situación jurídica regulada en el 230 de la constitución. **Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías es un Presidente reelecto**, el 07 de octubre de 2012.

Artículo 231: *“El candidato elegido o candidata elegida tomará posesión del cargo de Presidente o Presidenta de la República el diez de enero del primer año de su período constitucional, mediante juramento ante la Asamblea Nacional. Si por cualquier motivo sobrevenido el Presidente o Presidenta no pudiese tomar posesión ante la Asamblea Nacional, lo hará ante el Tribunal Supremo de Justicia.”*

El 16 de enero de 2013 el Secretario de la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA) José Miguel Insulza, se pronunció con respecto a la solicitud que le hiciera la dirigencia de la oposición venezolana para que se tratara en el seno de la OEA la situación actual venezolana, en este sentido señaló lo siguiente:

“El tema ha sido ya resuelto por los tres poderes del Estado de Venezuela: lo planteó el Ejecutivo, lo consideró el Legislativo, y lo resolvió el Judicial. Las instancias están agotadas y por lo tanto el proceso que se llevaría a cabo en ese país es el que han decidido los tres poderes”.

**Merli Vanegas es Cónsul general de Venezuela en Vancouver Merli Vanegas es una abogada Bolivariana y socialista. Inicialmente trabajó en la Asamblea Nacional del Gobierno Bolivariano y ha servido como asesora legal en diferentes instituciones gubernamentales. Se unió entonces al Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, donde comenzó como representante del gobierno ante la Organización Mundial del Trabajo. Antes de venir a Vancouver, fue diplomática de la embajada venezolana en Libia.*

activist marketplace

Fire This Time does not accept commercial ads. Ads in this page are political ads and Fire This Time makes no profit off of these ads. The presence of ads on this page are solely for political purposes.

BUTTONS & T-SHIRTS

WEAR YOUR OPPOSITION TO WAR & OCCUPATION!

available from:
mobilization against war & occupation - mawo

Buttons \$0.50 each
T-Shirts \$20 each



to order:
604-322-1764

info@mawovancouver.org
www.mawovancouver.org

NEW ITEMS!



Buttons
& Poster from:
Fire This Time
infoftt@mail.com



¡VIVA GUBA!

T-shirts \$20



available from:
Vancouver
Communities
in Solidarity
with Cuba
(VCSC)

www.vancubasolidarity.com
vancubasolidarity@gmail.com
778-882-5223

PHONE

EMAIL

ADDRESS

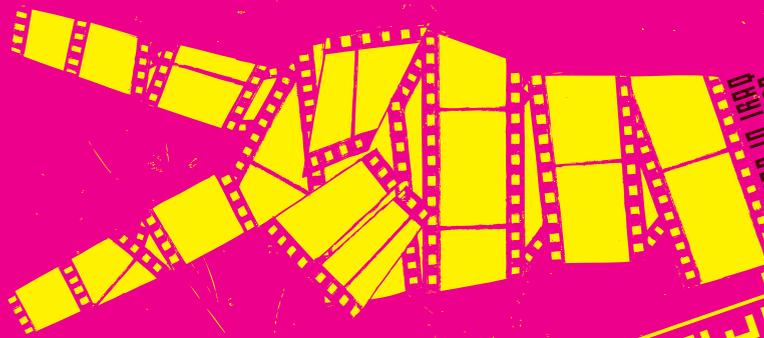
NAME

Subscribe to Fire This Time!

Four vertical input fields for phone, email, address, and name.

For a one year subscription, make cheques payable to "Nita Palmer"
Send along with form to:
PO Box 21607
Vancouver BC
V5L 5G3

Canada	\$15
USA	\$20
International	\$30
Cuba/Venezuela	FREE!



10th Annual Vancouver International

FILM
FESTIVAL

4 PEACE

MARCH 16-18

MARCH 16-17

MARCH 16-17

MARCH 16



87TH MONTHLY PROTEST ACTION
FREE THE CUBAN 5 NOW!



RELEASE ANTONIO, FERNANDO, RAMÓN & GERARDO FROM U.S. PRISONS NOW!
LET RENÉ GONZÁLEZ RETURN TO CUBA NOW!
GRANT VISAS TO OLGA SALANUEVA & ADRIANA PEREZ NOW!

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 5TH - 4PM
U.S. CONSULATE - 1075 WEST PENDER
DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER

2013
FREE THE CUBAN 5 COMMITTEE VANCOUVER
WWW.FREETHE5VANCOUVER.CA



**International Week of Actions
 In Solidarity With Venezuela**
 January 22-31, 2013

We are all Chávez!

~ Solidarity in the Street ~
 A day of street campaigning and event in solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela and President Hugo Chávez

Saturday January 26
 12-3pm
 Vancouver Art Gallery
 Robson & Howe St
 Downtown Vancouver, Canada

~ Free Public Forum ~
 Multimedia-Speakers-Discussion
 Revolution and Counter Revolution in Venezuela: Victorious Re-election of President Hugo Chávez and the Response of the Right-Wing Opposition!

Featured Speaker:
MERLI VANEGAS - Venezuelan Consul General in Vancouver

Tuesday January 29 7pm
 Britannia Community Centre
 1661 Napier at Commercial Dr
 Vancouver, Canada

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba - VCSC
www.vancubasolidarity.com