

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



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NEW SWEEPING ANTI-TERRORISM MEASURES



Bill C-51:

Why You Should Be Concerned

and Why You Should Fight Against It...

By Thomas Davies

Bill C-51 continues to cast a long shadow over political life in Canada. The Conservative government's vaguely worded new "Anti-Terrorism" law has blown the door wide open to the possibility of widespread democratic and human rights abuses, and is already fuelling speculation that it will soon be used to enable arrests of those critical of government actions. Both the history of this country and the current actions of other imperialist governments make something very clear. As the Canadian government continues to drive forward with policies of war, occupation and cutbacks – it is also laying the foundation to clamp down on dissent and attack the rights of poor and working people to resist. Bill C-51 is the not-so-thin edge of this wedge, and we must use every opportunity to continue to build unity and momentum in the fight to repeal this unjust law. It has been done before, and now is the time to do it again!

Bill C-51, Coming Soon to a Protest Near You

A recent August 27 news release on the Union of BC Indian Chiefs website warns that, "The Indigenous Unist'ot'en Clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation in northwestern BC are on high alert about a likely impending large scale RCMP mass arrest operation on their territory. The RCMP have made a number of visits to the Unist'ot'en as well as other First Nations leadership regarding the Unist'ot'en community's active exercise of

their Aboriginal Title and Rights to protect their lands from oil and gas development."

As pipeline clearing work moves closer and closer to the camp, both the press release and many news articles have speculated that Bill C-51 could be used to legalize the dismantling of the camp which the Unist'ot'en have maintained since 2009, and which is blocking seven pipelines that do not have Unist'ot'en consent to use their land. Under Bill C-51, actions interfering with "the economic or financial stability of Canada" fall under the vague definition of "terrorism." The Unist'ot'en camp could easily be interpreted as such.

The RCMP have issued their own press release stating that the police force, "has no intention of 'taking down the camp' set up." Whether this is true is another issue, but what is obvious is that Bill C-51 has already become a major concern to those engaged in peaceful protest, or simply asserting their simple and inherent right to decide what resource extraction projects occur on their lands.

More Power, More Secrecy, More Rights Violations

Josh Paterson, Executive Director of the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA), recently emerged from testifying at a hearing of the Security Intelligence Review Committee under a gag order. He is prohibited from saying anything about either his testimony, or anything else related to the hearing. The BCCLA had lodged a complaint

against CSIS agents unlawfully gathering information on community groups opposed to the controversial Northern Gateway pipeline. As a leading lawyer in the case, Mr. Patterson was no longer even able to provide full counsel to others participating in the tribunal!

While unable to refer directly to his testimony in court, Mr. Paterson made clear that Bill C-51 is connected to the BCCLA's, and many other major human rights and legal organizations', growing concerns about the power and conduct of CSIS, which under Bill C-51 are now granted the undefined powers of "disruption." "The only thing they're not allowed to do is violate someone's sexual integrity, to kill someone or to subvert justice. Short of that, they're being given the power to break the law and violate the constitution," he emphasized.

Under Bill C-51, CSIS and the RCMP are given more power, and more power to act in total secrecy.

Despite the Chill

While progressive organizations are definitely aware of the new risks associated with social justice organizing under Bill C-51, they continue to organize either directly against the bill or the many other ills of the Canadian government. In Vancouver, the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 organized its 26th successful consecutive weekly picket action against Bill C-51 on Monday, August 31. While we sometimes encounter people who are

fearful of government repercussions from signing a petition, it is much more often that we continue to meet people who are angry that the government is trying to demolish their civil rights and feel compelled to put their name on a petition regardless of the growing implied threat against dissenting voices.

The movement against Bill C-51 continues across Canada as well. The Canadian Journalists for Free Expression and the Canadian Civil Liberties Union are continuing their Charter Challenge of Bill C-51, and have raised 137% of their fundraising goal from grassroots donations. A 4th National Day of Action Against Bill C-51 has also been called for September 12.

On August 28, the Federal New Democratic Party announced “51 Days to Repeal Bill C-51” promising that if elected they would repeal Bill C-51. Meanwhile, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party continue to try and avoid the issue entirely. In an obviously deliberate move, the Department of Justice has decided not to release any information related to its mandatory examination of Bill C-51 to see whether the new law violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms...until after the Federal Election. It claims that meeting its required legal deadline, which is before the election, would somehow “interfere” with the Department’s operations.

History of Rights Violations in Canada

It is important to constantly reiterate that this scenario is nothing new for the Canadian government. Its participation in wars abroad has always been accompanied by attacks on democratic and human rights at home. A useful article on the subject is titled, “War Measures Act Eroded Civil Liberties”, written by Mark Humphries, the Dunkley Chair in War and the Canadian Experience at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Humphries reveals that almost immediately upon entering World War I, the Canadian government imposed the War Measures Act:

“Censorship was imposed on the press and telegraph system while the free transportation of people and goods ceased. The act allowed Canadians to be searched, arrested and detained and their property seized without warrants,

trials or compensation. It also gave the prime minister near dictatorial powers, allowing him to govern by a type of decree called an order in council, which was not subject to normal parliamentary oversight.”

He continues:

“Over the next four years, roughly 80,000 were arrested, paroled, and forced to register with the government on suspicion of enemy activity,

many denounced by their neighbours for trivial acts such as making unpatriotic statements or keeping a shotgun on their farms against the regulations.

By war’s end, more than 8,000 had been interned in remote prison work camps where more than one hundred actually died.”

“Both ethnic and labour

more than 150. All this was done in the name of freedom and honour.”

During World War II, the Canadian government immediately declared the War Measures Act, and also created the Defense of Canada Regulations (DOCR). Chris Frazer, Associate Professor of History at St. Francis Xavier University wrote about how the DOCR were applied:

“The DOCR were intended to suppress obstacles to mobilizing Canadians in support of the war. They were applied to individuals and organizations who supported fascist Germany and Italy, as well as to so-called enemy aliens: citizens and immigrants of German, Italian, and Japanese descent. The regulations were also used to suppress those who opposed the war without actually sympathizing with the enemy, or who might otherwise subvert the war effort. This included communists and left-wing ethnic organizations, Technocracy Incorporated, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, and individuals, including union leaders, sailors, and well-known public figures like the mayor of Montreal, Camillien Houde, who opposed conscription.”

Racist imprisonments and internments were widespread once again. As we reported in Fire This Time Volume 9, Issue 6, during WWII, “Between 30,000 to 35,000 ‘enemy nationals’ and



newspapers were shut-down and suspect book publishers closed. Aboriginal reserve lands were seized and turned into military training areas. Strikes were first restricted and then banned. The government even tried to deport British-born labour leaders in 1919 as enemy aliens, a category that had now grown to include all those who might harbour ‘alien’ values, whatever those were.

Tragically, the act also gave the government the power to deploy soldiers to quell civil disobedience, and on Easter Monday 1918, Canadian soldiers opened fire with machine guns on anti-conscription protesters in Quebec City, killing at least five people and wounding

Canadian citizens were interned, including people of German and Japanese background. 20,000 Japanese Canadians were removed from the West Coast of Canada in 1942 alone.”

The War Measures Act was once again called by the Canadian government in 1970 in response to growing independence movement in Quebec. When members of the Front de Liberation de Quebec (FLQ) kidnapped a British diplomat named James Cross and Quebec Minister of Labour,

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WHO IS TO BLAME FOR REFUGEE CRISIS IN EUROPE?

By Alison Bodine

It is only September and already the year 2015 has been marked by severe humanitarian crisis and devastation. This time embodied in the waves of refugees fleeing to Europe from countries destroyed by imperialist wars, occupations and foreign intervention. Tens of thousands of people are moving from the poverty, violence and danger of bombed and ruined countries, through the Mediterranean crossing to Europe putting their lives at risk in search of a life and a somewhere to be safe.

The numbers of women, men and children forced from their homes and livelihoods in Africa and the Middle East are staggering. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) 350,000 refugees have crossed into Europe in 2015, increased dramatically from 280,000 estimated to have crossed in 2014.

However, even these numbers are far from the total number of refugees from Africa and the Middle East. On top of this unbelievable forced movement of people, in fact, only a fraction of refugees make the perilous journey to Europe. A far greater number of people remain in refugee camps in the region. Take for example the nearly 8 million internally

displaced people in Syria, 2.5 million people displaced in Darfur, Sudan or the 1.5 million people that fled Afghanistan and now live in Pakistan. There are now 60 million refugees in the world, people fleeing wars and persecution (United Nations).

In no calculation can the exodus of this many people be considered a normal or regular process, or one that represents the search of migrants for a better life when faced with poverty and the lack of a future. This is a refugee crisis resulting from the new era of war and occupation, the over 14 years of escalating imperialist wars, occupation, sanctions and foreign intervention in the Middle East and Africa.

Life destroyed by Western intervention, war and occupation

“You have to understand that no one puts their children in a boat unless water is safer than land”

– Somali poet Warsan Shire

This quote sums up the situation facing tens of thousands of desperate refugees. Simply put, they have no other option for life then to move no matter the perils that they face on the way. The new era of war and occupation that began with the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 has created millions of displaced people with no option but to look for somewhere safe to be.

According to an article in the BBC, 27% of refugees entering Europe through the Mediterranean crossings come from two countries, Syria and Afghanistan. It is no coincidence that these countries are also two of the countries completely destroyed by imperialist powers over the last 14 years. However, this is not the end of this horrific

story. The new era of war and occupation has also left Iraq and Libya in ruins, and through more bombings, sanctions and covert and overt intervention has also especially targeted the people of Yemen, Mali, Somalia, Sudan, threatening to tear open the entire social fabric of Africa and the Middle East.

The crisis for refugees does not begin in Europe

Long before we see the frightened yet determined faces of refugees rescued at sea off the coast of Italy or walking along railroad tracks in Macedonia, their journey has begun face to face with chaos, death and destruction at their front door. In order to better understand the reasons why people are forced to flee, we have to go beyond the shores of Italy, Spain or Greece, even thousands of kilometres away, to the countries from which the refugees are leaving.

It would be impossible to include a list of all the devastating effects of continued imperialist interventions in Africa and the Middle East in this short article, but in order to better understand the conditions that have led to the refugee crisis in Europe, it is important to better understand just how the new era of war and occupation has formed its deadly web.

Afghanistan

In the words of an Afghan refugee and mother, “All of my children grew up with this war. They are somehow used to the fighting and the bombing. Of course they are afraid, but they know that they need to stay inside and never go out of their room in case a bullet or a rocket hits them. They know what to do when the fighting is here.”

Afghanistan is a country torn open by 14 years of imperialist war and occupation. The 2001 US-led invasion of Afghanistan was promoted as an invasion and occupation meant to liberate Afghanistan from the evil



A Refugee boy onboard a train near southern Macedonian town of Gevgelija

clutches of the Taliban, and invasion to bring the people of Afghanistan to a new age of democracy and women's rights. Instead the war and the US/NATO/Canada occupation has brought nothing but destruction to the people of Afghanistan.

Now the unemployment rate in Afghanistan is 35-40% and 36% percent of the population do not have access to food, shelter, clothing or clean water. Reconstruction projects billed as the good results of an imperialist occupation are quickly falling apart, as most were built with a photo-op, not a human life, in mind.

Today, one out of every 42 women of child-bearing age dies from complications related to pregnancy or child birth. In urban areas, only 20% of the women in Afghanistan age 15-24 are literate; the literacy rate for women living in rural Afghanistan is three times lower. In 2014 the aid organization Doctors Without Borders painted a picture of the complete lack of infrastructure and access to health care that the people of Afghanistan face. They reported that 66% of people in Afghanistan said that they lived on around \$1 US dollar a day.

Syria

According to UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) 40% of the population of Syria has been displaced over the last four year. Nearly 8 million people are internally displaced and four million have crossed the Syrian border mainly to live in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey (New York Times). Syria now has the largest number of displaced people of any country in the world.

And what has caused this humanitarian crisis for the people of Syria?—imperialist intervention in the form of devastating civil war. This war, which has killed from 210,000 – 300,000 people by varying estimations, started in 2011 as a movement of so-called rebels against the Syrian government of Bashar Al-Assad. The US and other imperialist countries quickly intervened and began funding and supporting these “rebel” groups, like the Free Syrian Army, adopting a policy of facilitating regime change in Syria. Imperialist intervention has continued to fuel the fire in the civil war, which has now left the country fragmented and



Refugee camp outside of Suruc - near Syria / Turkey border

destroyed. In January, 2015 the World Health Organization reported that 1 million people have been injured in this devastation.

The crisis in Syria escalated to another level in 2014 when the extremist organization ISIS/ISIL emerged from the rubble of the civil war. The so-called “moderate” rebels supported by



Ras Ajdir refugee camp near the border of Libya and Tunisia

the US and other imperialist governments were no longer so moderate. ISIS/ISIL now violently controls a part of Syria and the US has begun a bombing campaign in Syria which they say is in the name of stopping the spread of ISIS/ISIL, but in reality it has been



Refugees at the border of Greece and Macedonia

widely reported that US bombs have been killing Syrian civilians instead.

Iraq

Travel to the East of Syria and there is yet another country destroyed by imperialist wars and occupation, Iraq. Iraq was invaded by the US in March of 2003. On May 1, 2003 US President George W. Bush stood in front of a banner stating “Mission Accomplished” and declared the war on Iraq over.

What ensued was over 12 years of a brutal US occupation that perpetrated some of the most horrific injustices and war crimes upon the people of Iraq. With all basic infrastructure destroyed, today, the United Nations estimates that 8 million people in Iraq are in need of basic necessities like food and water.

Depleted uranium is the legacy of US and imperialist war and occupation in Iraq. In Fallujah, a town targeted by the US military during the occupation, Iraqi babies are miscarried or born with birth defects at a rate many times higher than those seen in Hiroshima and Nagasaki following the US nuclear bombing, a rate 33 times higher than in Europe.

In Iraq, 3.6 million people are internally displaced. In fact, in the past year Iraq has experienced the highest growth in the number of internally displaced people of any country. This increase in refugees coincided with the new US war on Iraq that began with the first Western bombings of ISIS/ISIL.

Yemen

The most recent savage wing of imperialist intervention in the Middle East has come in the form of the brutal US-backed Saudi-Arabian bombing of Yemen. After over five months of bombing the UN World Food Program has warned that a famine in Yemen is developing, not a surprise given that Saudi Arabia has also imposed an air, land and sea blockade. Now, 80% of the people of Yemen are in need of some form of humanitarian assistance.

Refugees fleeing Yemen travel by boat to the Horn of Africa, where they continue their dangerous travel north to the Mediterranean crossings into Europe.

Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia

“Yes, it’s dangerous. I know I can die. If I get a chance to live, OK, better. But if I die, that’s also OK. I cannot go anywhere else to change my life. I can’t change it in my country and that is why I want to leave.” - Judie, an Eritrean refugee and widow, smuggled into Libya

On top of the recent influx of refugees into the Horn of Africa from Yemen, this region of Africa is already reeling under the effects of colonization and imperialist intervention. The U.S. and imperialist forces escalated their intervention in the Horn of Africa starting in 2007. In this year, the US backed an Ethiopian invasion of Somalia through training, arms and logistical support given to the Ethiopian army. This invasion resulted in the overthrow of the government of Somalia. From that time on the entire region has faced extreme destabilization.

Today, the UNHCR estimates that 5,000 people leave Eritrea every month, many ending up on the Libyan coast. Additionally, Ethiopia is the African country with the most refugees, many of which are running from continued violence in South Sudan.

Mali

Going towards Western Africa, there is once again another country bombed by imperialist governments in the last 14 years. The people of Mali were bombed in 2013, in a campaign led by France that included the support of the US and Canada. This bombing was in the name of fighting terrorism in Mali, but like a tragic number of similar stories, the result was devastation and instability for the people of Mali that continues to this day.

Libya

The tragic story of the refugee crisis would not be complete without a closer look at the country where many of the refugees reaching the shores of Europe risk their lives to cross the “Sea of Death” (Mediterranean Sea).

The Western bombing of Libya began in March of 2011. For the next seven months a US/UK/France/Canada/NATO

coalition continuously bombed Libya, flying over 26,000 bombing sorties and eventually assassinating the President of Libya, Muammar Ghaddafi. The Western intervention was justified in the name of supporting a movement of so-called Libyan rebels fighting in Libya for human rights and democracy. However, over four years after the bombing, Libya, once the wealthiest country in Africa, is a fractured and devastated land.

The World Health Organization reported this year that Libya has just 1,500 medical clinics and hospitals to serve 6.5million people. The UNHCR estimates that there are 2.5million people in Libya in need of humanitarian assistance, among them, the 400,000 internally displaced people that fled their homes in search of safety just in the last



Soccer players and fans in Germany showing support for refugees

year alone.

In the sheer destruction and chaos that Western intervention brought to Libya, a space opened up for smugglers to operate without fear or consequence. From the shores of Libya, people depart for Europe on overcrowded boats and rafts, frequently without life jackets and almost always with not enough fuel to make it to the European shores. It is also in Libya that they are held at the mercy of human smugglers for months at a time, kept in cruel and inhuman conditions inside of Libyan detention centers, awaiting a boat or raft to take them to the Greece or Italy.

Depths of the refugee crisis

From the grim figures above, it is clear that the result of the last 14 years of the new era of war and occupation has been death and destruction. An entire region, from Africa to the Middle East has been destabilized to the point of being unliveable. The basic social and economic fabric in these countries has become unbound, and through the rips and threads, people have been forced to leave

behind what is left of their lives. It is clear that life for millions of people in Africa and the Middle East has become simply unliveable. It is either die in the country they are from, or take a risk for life and a future for your family.

And so the refugee crisis in Europe has now become the most visible wound of the imperialist wars and occupation devastating Africa and the Middle East. Since January of 2015, more than 300,000 refugees have sought to cross the Mediterranean Sea and at least 2,636 people have drowned in its waters.

The depths of this human tragedy once again became the focus on international media on August 27, 2015. On this day as many as 550 people were killed when two boats capsized on route from Libya to Italy. Then the world turned in horror with the news that 71 people,

including four children had been found dead in the back of a semi-truck in Austria.

Refugees take this risk because they see no other option and no end of the war, occupation and devastation in sight.

Europe must open its borders

So far the response of the government of Europe to the human crisis of refugees has been disgraceful; people and families moved and pushed along, shot with rubber bullets and tear gas, turned back and told to pass through newly built fences. At a time when the border should be opened to facilitate the mass movement of people to places where they can live as humans and be safe, instead the borders of Europe are tightening. In fact, the Hungarian government has just completed a barbed-wire fence to restrict the movement of refugees through its 109 mile long border with Serbia.

Face-saving manoeuvres meant to cover-up the minimal and callous response of European governments to the refugee crisis have also continued in the last few months of escalating humanitarian crisis. What has been the latest move? A camp in Calais, France where refugees go in order to attempt a dangerous crossing from France into the UK, has just received funding in order to be turned into a proper refugee camp with conditions fit for humans. What’s the problem with this? - the



camp has only been given enough funding to house 1,500 refugees, when it is currently holding at least 4,000.

On September 14 the European Union is having an emergency meeting which will bring together the interior ministers of 28 different countries to discuss the refugee crisis. In the two weeks that will pass until that time around 15,000 more refugees will arrive in Europe. Whatever solution is developed, it will certainly be a case of too little, too late for tens of thousands of refugees.

The only short term solution to the crisis is for Europe to open the borders to all refugees and grant them legal status.

Canada's hands are not clean

Although this article has mostly focused on the responsibility of European governments to solve the refugee crisis, in no way are other imperialist governments like the US and Canada clean of their own responsibilities. From here in Canada it may be easy to look at the photos of refugees risking their lives in over-crowded boats, passing newborns beneath barbed wire fences, or jumping onto the sides of moving buses and trains headed into Europe, but Canada's role cannot be ignored. Canada is one of the imperialist countries responsible for creating the disastrous situation in the Middle East and Africa.

Since 2001, Canada has provided directly military support or logistical and intelligence support for every major imperialist intervention in Africa and the Middle East from Iraq and Afghanistan to Libya and Mali.

Most recently, Canada has committed itself to the US-led coalition fight against ISIS/ISIL in Iraq and Syria. So far Canada has provided over 600 armed forces personnel, six CF-188 aircraft, one mid-air refuelling plane and two surveillance aircrafts. Let's not forget that Canada was also part of the coalition that

participated in bombing Libya for seven months resulting in hundreds of civilian death.

It is time that the government of Canada take responsibility for its acts against the people of the Middle East and Africa. In light of the severe human crisis

for refugees in Europe, Canada should immediately offer to accept in 50,000 refugees and legalize them immediately with full legal and human rights.

Capitalism and imperialism is the cause of the refugee crisis

Whittled down to its very core the new era of war and occupation is about the global war for resources and hegemony. As the US and their imperialist allies continue to face economic crisis, they will also continue their drive for more and more resources and more and more profit to keep their system afloat.

The refugee crisis that is so visible today is a devastating symptom of the imperialist and capitalist disease, a disease that has forced millions of people to flee their home. People would not risk their lives if they didn't have to, if imperialist countries had not destroyed their lives in the name of expanding profits and exploitation of resources. No matter how many fences are erected, or how dangerous the crossing becomes, humanity will always find a way to take a risk for life in the face of a certain death.

Europe and imperialist governments around the world like the US and Canada must take responsibility for the human tragedy they have created, whether it is walking through the Sahara desert or yelling out in the night hoping to be rescued by a passing fishing boat.

The only immediate solution to the refugee crisis is to open the borders, the long term solution is to end imperialist wars and occupation.

Imperialist Hands Off the Middle East and Africa!

Open the doors to all refugees now!

Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter:
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The Newspaper Of FIRE THIS TIME MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

www.firethistime.net

Volume 9 Issue 9

September 2015.

Published Monthly

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Subscriptions

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

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-ISSN-1712-1817-



U.S. Media Celebrity Lies About Cuba

Why Rush Limbaugh Fears Socialist CUBA



By Tamara Hansen

On August 14, 2015 Rush Limbaugh, famed ultraconservative radio host of *The Rush Limbaugh Show* had a special segment about the reestablishment of US-Cuba diplomatic relations. On *The Rush Limbaugh Show* website, the transcript of the Cuba segment is titled, “The American Left Celebrates: Viva Fidel!”

He opened the radio piece explaining, “The American flag was raised today over the American embassy in Havana, Cuba. Such a great day for the Drive-Bys, such a great day for the American left, and such a great day for Fidel Castro. Victory for Fidel Castro is considered victory for the American media.”

During his usual rant-style commentary Limbaugh mentioned many different issues seemingly off the top of his head: Elite Americans and their desire to smoke Cuban Cigars for photo-ops. He explained how, “Traditionally, America has liberated people from oppression all over the world.” He also stated, “Dissidents are celebrated here [in the U.S.]; in Cuba they’re put in jail.” He ended his rant proclaiming that, “We fought a war to liberate Cuba, which was under the jackbooted thug Spanish dictatorship! Have you ever heard of the Spanish-American War? It was also called The War for Cuban Independence.” All these exaggerated comments and lies just to emphasize his discontent with the reestablishment of US-Cuba diplomatic relations.

Who is Rush Limbaugh?

Rush Limbaugh is one of the most popular voices of the right-wing in the United States. His show, *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, claims to enjoy 20 million listeners weekly, although these numbers have been criticized by many mainstream news publications, including the *Washington Post* and *Business Insider* who believe Limbaugh’s actual number of listeners is probably closer to 14 million, or possibly only 1.4 million a week. However, what we do know is that his opinions are taken seriously by political pundits and many right-leaning people across the U.S. and his show is popular enough to have stayed on-air for over 25 years, it launched in 1988.

This of course, does not mean he is universally liked. In fact, his views on many issues are so unpopular that there are several websites dedicated to boycotting his sponsors, #StopRush is a popular hashtag on twitter and there are several online petitions with various demands against Rush Limbaugh.

Here are some of the gems spouted by Limbaugh on his show that have stirred up controversy:

Example 1, when Limbaugh was discussing consent versus rape he opined, “No means yes, if you know how to spot it”.

Example 2, in 2007 Limbaugh repeatedly played a song, which was written and re-

corded specifically for the *Rush Limbaugh Show* called, “Barack the Magic Negro”.

Example 3, in 2011 when the tsunami hit Japan and thousands were killed or left homeless, Limbaugh laughed as he said, “The Japanese have done so much to save the planet. [...] Even now, refugees are still recycling their garbage, and yet Gaia levels them [laughs], just wipes them out. Wipes out their nuclear plants, all kinds of radiation. What kind of payback is this?”

Example 4, when discussing Michelle Obama’s weight and programs for healthy eating Limbaugh said, “if you are going to tell everyone to eat twigs and berries and gravel and all this other stuff, you had better look like an Ethiopian.”

Okay and a final example, about Indigenous people in the U.S., Limbaugh said, “How many Native Americans, how many Indians were killed by the arrival of the white man through disease and war, and how many people have died since the white man arrived here due to lung cancer thanks to the Indian-invented custom of smoking tobacco? Who are the real killers here?”

So for those not familiar with Limbaugh’s name, now you have a better idea of where he is coming from.

Limbaugh on Cuban Healthcare

Limbaugh says that the new diplomatic ties mean, “in due course we’ll have access to

that wonderful, superior Cuban health care system that has only been available to the elite and the precious few, such as Michael Moore and Sean Penn and, well, maybe some others.”

First, while Limbaugh is trying to be sarcastic in calling Cuba’s healthcare system “wonderful” and “superior” some people have made the case that in many ways it is true. Two of those people are Michael Moore, who created and directed the film *Sicko* in 2007 where he took a group of ill 9/11 rescue workers to Cuba for health treatment because many could not afford proper treatment in the United States. Sean Penn is a left-wing actor well known for supporting the social gains of the Cuban revolution.

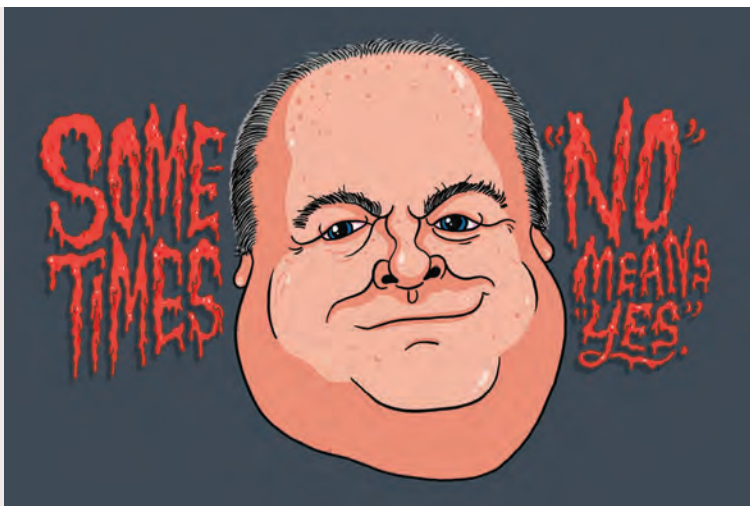
Important to add to this is that Michael Moore did not take the “elite” to Cuba, he took people that he considered American heroes who could not afford healthcare in their own country. While making fun of Michael Moore, Limbaugh completely ignored the very real health crisis facing these American workers. According to the *New York Post* article from August 9, 2015, “The rising toll of Ground Zero responders and others afflicted with 9/11-linked cancers has hit 3,700.” According to another article, “9/11 death toll rises as cancer cases soar among emergency workers” from the *UK Telegraph* from July 2014, “The compensation bill for treating those who became ill after helping

see the gains of Cuba’s health-care system under the Cuban revolution. For example, in the U.S. infant mortality means that 6 babies will die before their first birthday for every 1,000 babies born. In Cuba the infant mortality is lower with only 4 deaths/1,000 live births, in fact Cuba’s is the lowest infant mortality rate in the Americas. In 2012, life expectancy at birth for a baby was 78.8 years in the United States, in the same year in Cuba babies were born with a life expectancy of 79.1 years. These are important factors showing that it is not only “elite” Cubans who benefit from their healthcare system, but the general population. Not only that, but on some important indicators, such as life expectancy and infant mortality, Cubans are actually healthier and better off than Americans.

Limbaugh on Cuban “dissidents”

Rush Limbaugh’s greatest criticism of the reestablishment of US-Cuba relations, has to do with the so-called “dissidents,” the Cubans who are calling for the overthrow of the Cuban government and socialist system. Limbaugh’s perspective is, “any dissidents in Havana, any dissidents in Cuba who seek to speak out against the regime are put in jail, and now the American flag is essentially flying proudly over that real-life circumstance. People that want to show up at Castro’s -- doesn’t give speeches anymore, but -- public events in Cuba and protest or just be dissidents for freedom? Dissidents are celebrated here; in Cuba they’re put in jail. And we are proud as we can be to be normalizing relations with such a forward, revolutionary thinking as Fidel Castro. Damn right. This is the kind of ally we’ve always needed. This is the kind of support we’ve needed internationally, and it’s about time we got it, right?”

First we have to ask, who are the “dissidents”



One of Limbaugh’s many controversial remarks. Artwork from <http://chrispiascik.com>

in Cuba? In a fairly straightforward explanation of the situation in Cuba, *Business Insider* published an article on July 23, 2015 titled, “US politicians are now ignoring the Cuban dissidents they once courted.” They write, “Cuban officials are highly sensitive to the issue of domestic dissidents, whom they call mercenaries and tools of a U.S.-backed policy aimed at overturning the half-century-old socialist revolution. Many dissidents receive support from anti-Castro Cuban-Americans in Florida. They have been unable to generate widespread support on the island because of intense government pressure aimed at stifling popular organizing and because many ordinary Cubans believe dissidents only want to earn money, renown and visas to live in the U.S. Advocates for the Obama administration’s policy say recent congressional visits have aimed to take the pulse of a broader swath of society: small-time entrepreneurs who have set up shop under the economic reforms of recent years; foreign diplomats and businesspeople operating in Havana; and regular Cubans who have complaints about Internet access and other issues without calling outright for a 180-degree change of the political system.”

What can Limbaugh learn from this article? To begin with, there is no automatic ‘go to jail’ card for Cuban dissidents. But yes, if they are being paid by a foreign government to attempt to over-throw the government in Cuba they can be put on trial and found guilty – it is called acting as an agent of a foreign government or treason. It is also a crime in the US and Canada! It is also true that “regular” Cubans want to see changes and improvements in their society, but that sentiment exists in every country in the world! As *Business Insider* explains these are, “regular Cubans who have complaints about Internet access and other issues without calling out-



Cuban youth preside over the ballot box during popular elections in Cuba

in the long-running recovery operation at Ground Zero has already run into millions of dollars.” These workers are having to apply for compensation from The September 11 Victims Compensation Fund and the WTC Health Program – because the healthcare system in the United States is exactly what Limbaugh accuses Cuba of being “available to the elite and the precious few.”

At the same time, when we compare U.N.I.C.E.F. health statistics we can also

continued on page 20



How to Dope a Nation:

Opium – the Imperialist Legacy in Afghanistan

By Nita Palmer

In the darkest corners of Kabul, one can find the true story of the West's decade-long war in Afghanistan. In these corners huddle men, although they appear frail and ghost-like. They are casualties of war, although most do not appear wounded. Instead, they have been swept up

in the drug-use epidemic which has swept across Afghanistan since the 2001 US, Canada and NATO invasion. Many started smoking opium before moving on to heroin and other drugs.

Opium production and use swiftly marched into Afghanistan on the heels of US and NATO troops. The problem of Afghanistan's skyrocketing opium production has not been limited to that country, however. The West still consumes the lion's share of Afghanistan's opium production, and heroin has become increasingly cheap and more readily available in the US in recent years.

Afghanistan Before the War

Although there is no exact history of when opium production began in Afghanistan, it was brought into the region by the British in the 1800s and its cultivation encouraged for trade in India. However, opium production in Afghanistan remained relatively low until the country came under the control of the warlords of the US-supported Northern Alliance following the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. Between 1994 and 2000, opium production reached an average rate of 68,000 hectares of poppy year.

In 2000, then-Taliban leader Mullah Omar ordered an end to opium production in Afghanistan, declaring it un-Islamic. By 2001, opium production had dropped by 90%. A New York Times article from May 2001 acknowledges that "American

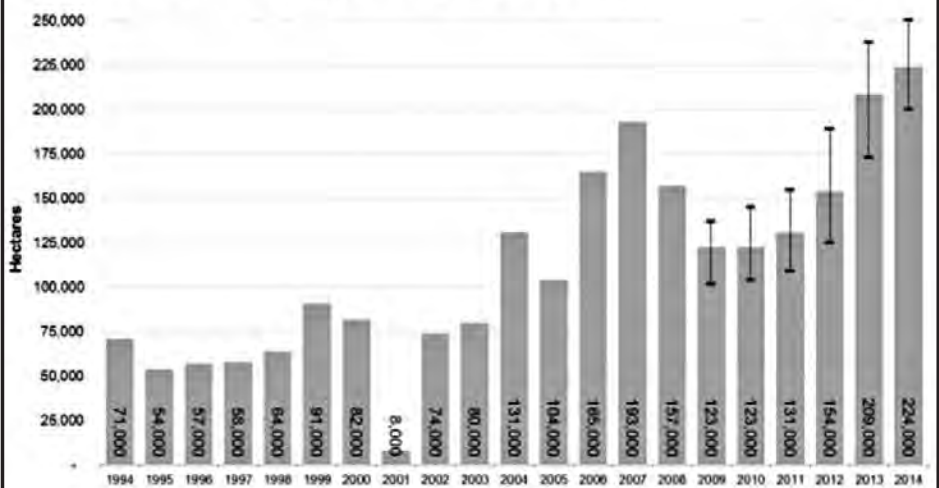
narcotics officials who visited the country confirmed earlier United Nations reports that the Taliban had, in one growing season, managed a rare triumph in the long and losing war on drugs. And they did it without the usual multimillion-dollar aid packages that finance police raids, aerial surveillance and crop subsidies for farmers." But this success was short-lived. In October 2001, the US invaded Afghanistan.

Who is Promoting Opium in Afghanistan?

By the spring of 2002 – just months after the US invasion – opium production had risen from 8,000 hectares of plants to 74,000 hectares, according to the UN

billion on counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan. They have declared they are fighting a 'war on drugs.' Yet with all these resources, they have failed to do in over a decade what the Taliban managed to do in a year: put a halt to opium production. The latest UNODC report shows that they have utterly failed to even slow the production of the drug. In 2009, Richard Holbrooke, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, called the US counternarcotics effort in Afghanistan "the most wasteful and ineffective program I have seen in 40 years in and out of government." Last year, US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan John Sopko said that Afghanistan was in danger of becoming a "narco-criminal state." These are damning indictments from top

Figure 1: Opium cultivation in Afghanistan, 1994-2014 (Hectares)



Sources: UNODC and UNODC/MCN opium surveys 1994-2014. The high-low lines represent the upper and lower bounds of the 95% confidence interval.

Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It has continued to rise nearly every year since then, with record-high production levels of 224,000 hectares of opium fields in 2014. Today, Afghanistan supplies 90% of the world's opium – much of it being refined into heroin.

The United States alone has spent over \$7

diplomats in the area.

Why has the 'war on drugs' in Afghanistan failed so miserably?

The focus of the US counternarcotics program in Afghanistan has largely been on eradication of the opium crop, through burning or plowing farmers' fields.

But despite eliminating thousands of hectares of crop – and destroying the sole livelihoods of farmers and communities in the process – hardly a dent has been put in overall production.

Hundreds of millions of dollars have also been spent on ineffectual programs ostensibly aimed at ending Afghan farmers' reliance on opium. However, attempts to convince farmers to grow wheat, soy or other crops have largely failed – in part because the programs have been imposed with little or no study of local growing conditions or markets, but largely because opium poppy remains a far more lucrative crop. Farmers who want to be able to feed and house their families have little choice but to grow opium poppy.

However, the major problem with the 'war on drugs' in Afghanistan is that the US and their allies are in fact doing far more to support the drug economy than they are to eliminate it. Since 2001, they have worked against the Taliban in close association with nefarious warlords and drug traffickers of the Northern Alliance. A 2010 report by US Congressional investigators titled "Warlord, Inc." found that the US Department of Defense had spent more than \$2 billion on security and transportation contracts which lined the pockets of notorious warlords. The weapons and financial support provided to these men served to consolidate their power as well as their drug empires.

Today, many of these warlords serve in the highest levels of the US- and NATO- backed Afghan government. Wali Karzai, former chairman of the Kandahar Provincial Council and brother to then-Afghan President Hamid Karzai was well-known to US officials as a drug trafficker. Yet he was not only supported by US forces, but also spent eight years on the payroll of the CIA!

US officials would have us believe that the problem of corruption and involvement in the drug trade is just a matter of a few 'bad apples' in the government or police forces that can be eliminated through better governance. However, this is simply not the case. A former CIA officer interviewed by the New York Times in 2009 asserted that "virtually every significant Afghan figure has had brushes with the drug trade." A 2007 report by the US military's Strategic Studies Institute found that "Afghan government officials are now believed to be involved in at least 70 percent of opium trafficking, and experts estimate that at least 13 former or present provincial governors are directly involved in the drug trade." The same report also found that "Although Afghanistan's



overall economy is being boosted by opium profits, less than 20 percent of the \$3 billion in opium profits actually goes to impoverished farmers, while more than 80 percent goes into the pockets of Afghan's opium traffickers and kingpins and their political connections."

Corruption is not merely a "problem" in the Afghan government – it is the fundamental way in which it operates. This is the drug-fueled "democracy" which the US, Canada and NATO support in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's Addiction Crisis

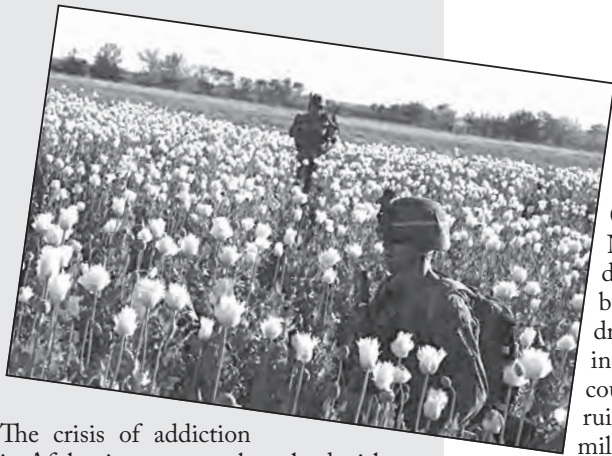
According to 2010 Afghan government statistics, there are about 1.6 million

Afghans addicted to drugs, primarily opium and heroin. Other estimates put the number closer to 3 million – or at about 10% of the population. In the cities, men with severe addiction huddle under bridges, desperate for a fix. But the problem extends to women and children as well – especially in the countryside, whole families struggle with opium addiction.

Historically, Afghans have produced opium, but few consumed the drug, which was largely exported. The increase in availability of opium and heroin in the country since 2001 has undoubtedly contributed to the addiction crisis – but it is only one factor. Poverty, unemployment, lack of health care, and the perpetual desperation and uncertainty of life under foreign occupation have fuelled the country's skyrocketing drug use as well.

In parts of rural Afghanistan, whole villages have become addicted to opium. Many are first exposed to the drug when they become sick or injured. In remote areas where there are no doctors or medicine is not available or affordable, people self-medicate with opium, and the downward spiral of addiction begins. Children often become addicts before their first birthday, with parents giving them opium to quieten them in their sickness or hungry stomachs. Soon, whole families and villages – grandchildren through grandparents – are addicted.

Afghanistan's high unemployment rate – estimated at around 40% - is another contributing factor. "If I had a job, I wouldn't be here," an addict named Farooq told the BBC. He has a degree in medicine and once worked as a hospital manager. Many are also internally displaced persons – refugees in their own country who have been forced out of their homes – and their jobs – due to fighting and instability.



which remain in the country). Over the last decade, the US, Canada and NATO have done nothing but legitimize the drug trafficking industry in the country and ruin the lives of millions of Afghans. Nothing can be done to end the drug trade or build a better country for Afghans while they remain there, supporting a government of tyrannical drug lords.

The crisis of addiction in Afghanistan cannot be solved with more police or military, or even more efforts put into eradication of the opium crop. Afghans need hospitals and clinics to treat those suffering from addiction. They need access to health care and basic necessities such as clean drinking water and sanitation to prevent people from becoming ill in the first place. They need jobs – and ones that pay more than \$2 a day. Despite more than a decade of foreign military intervention, there has been no meaningful improvement in these areas.

Out Now!

The first step in eliminating the drug problem in Afghanistan is for all troops and foreign contractors to leave. For Afghans, the road to rebuilding their country and government will not be easy after so many

years of war and occupation – but it is the only way forward. We must support them in their struggle for self-determination.

Although the plight of the Afghan people has faded from media reports, the struggle to free the country from foreign occupation and interference is not over. Peace-loving people in Canada, the United States and around the world have a responsibility to continue the fight to end the occupation of Afghanistan and demand self-determination for the Afghan people.

Which Way Out of the Crisis?

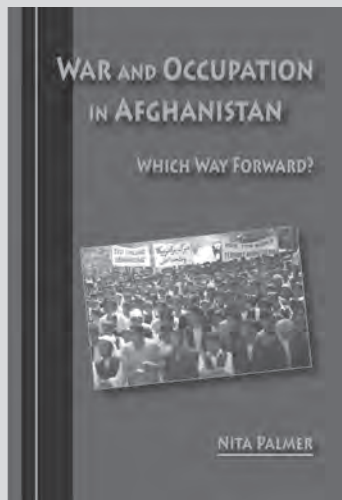
The legacy of the United States, Canada and NATO in Afghanistan has not been the promised security, democracy, and human rights for all. Instead Afghans have been left with a country ruled by powerful drug lords, an economy dependent on opium, and an epidemic of drug addiction.

If the US and NATO truly wanted to end opium production in Afghanistan, they could have done so. After all, the Taliban managed to do this in a matter of months! Clearly it is possible to do so. However, the evidence of the past 14 years shows that the US and their allies are more interested in supporting and building alliances with those in Afghanistan who are willing to serve their strategic, political and economic interests in the region than helping Afghans build a stable and democratic country. Serving US and NATO interests in Afghanistan has meant working with a government of warlords and drug lords – not working to eliminate it.

What Afghans need to end the drug crisis in their country is not soldiers or foreign military contractors (100,000 of

Battle of Ideas Press

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



“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 one bit after eight years of occupation. Under the watchful eye of the occupation forces, corruption has become rampant in Afghanistan, from the local level all the way up to the highest levels of government. Afghanistan has gone from producing less than 10% of the world’s opium in 2001 to producing a staggering 93% of the world’s opium in 2008, according to the UN World Health Organization.”

BY NITA PALMER

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

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Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba

Attracts More People to Support Cuba!



By *Azza Rojbi*

August 13, 2015 marked the 89th birthday of Fidel Castro Ruz, leader of the Cuban revolution. Millions of people around the world respect and admire Fidel for his decisive and revolutionary role before, during and after the Cuban Revolution up until today. In Cuba, millions of people participated in block parties and cultural events to celebrate his birthday.

In Vancouver, over a hundred people joined Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) on Saturday August 15th to Celebrate the life of Fidel Castro with an evening of live music, film, trivia and refreshments!

The Vancouver event to celebrate Fidel's birthday was one of VCSC's monthly 'Cuba Cultural and Film Nights'. The program began with the showing of "Looking for Fidel" a documentary by Oliver Stone interviewing Comandante Fidel Castro. Next, MC Tamara Hansen, coordinator of VCSC, introduced the first musical performance of the night, Maria Melendez, Beto Fuentes & Alfonso Marroquin who performed beautiful Latin-American classics. The audience then enjoyed another musical performance by the multi-talented musician MX Katracho.

Following the moving music, Tamara Hansen, coordinator of VCSC spoke about the importance of Fidel's legacy. Fidel has provided a model of the kind of revolutionary

leadership that could make it possible for humanity to advance and to achieve their highest moral integrity.

Next, participants were treated to another musical performance by Sangre Morena, a beautiful musical duo bringing Spanish-Flamenco songs to life!

Tamara Hansen then welcomed up Rejean, singer and guitar player from Vancouver Island. Rejean soon had everyone in the audience singing along to his cover of Bob Marley's song "Get up, Stand up".

The feeling of inspiration and celebration were warm in the air. Many took some time to pick up VCSC's educational materials on Cuba, buy some raffle tickets or get to know the people sitting next to them. Soon the room broke out into the "Happy Birthday" song and participants were invited to blow out the candles on the cake to celebrate Fidel's 89th birthday as they shouted ¡Viva Fidel!.

Proceeds from the event were donated to the "Iniciativa Rumbo a Cuba" campaign to bring a freezer truck and tractor to the 'Julio Antonio Mella' Volunteer Work Camp (CIJAM) in Caimito, Cuba and towards the Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) campaign to end the US blockade on Cuba.

The following day, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba participated in the 2015 Vancouver Latin Summer Fest held at Trout Lake park. Latin Summer Fest is an annual public community event organized by Latinos in Action.

Supporters of Cuba handed out hundreds of materials about Cuba and directed people to the VCSC booth. The booth was busy throughout the day with people stopping by to learn about the Cuban revolution and its amazing achievements and to sign a petition demanding the U.S. government to lift the blockade on Cuba.

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity

with Cuba (VCSC) organizes monthly events and outreach activities in Solidarity with Cuba. Through those activities VCSC has reached people in Vancouver and British Columbia who are finding out more about Cuba and learning about the gains of the Cuban revolution.

Join us in September as we participate in the International Days of Action Against the U.S. Blockade on Cuba!

- 1) Sept 17 - Picket Action to End the U.S. Blockade on Cuba!
- 2) Sept 17 - Forum & Discussion - Reestablishing U.S./Cuba Relations & the Necessity of Lifting the U.S. Blockade on Cuba
- 3) Sept 18 - Dance & Fundraiser Night - ¡Fiesta Cubana!

For more information visit:

www.vancubasolidarity.com

International Days of Action Against the Blockade

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- ✎ FORUM & DISCUSSION - US/CUBA RELATIONS THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17 7^{PM} JOE'S CAFE 1150 COMMERCIAL DRIVE
- ✎ DANCE & FUNDRAISER NIGHT FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18 8^{PM} VICTORIA DRIVE COMMUNITY HALL 2026 EAST 43RD AVE. (AT VICTORIA DR.)

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FRIDAY 9/18 PROGRAM - 8:30 AM to 5 PM

ALL DAY CONFERENCE
 The U.S. Blockade Against Cuba: Why It's Wrong and What We Need To Do to End It.

LOCATION: Calvary Baptist Church, 735 Eighth Street, NW, Washington, DC

WORKSHOPS

- How the Blockade Impacts Health Care in Cuba and the US
- U.S. Policy towards Cuba: What needs to change and why
- Progressive People of Faith against the Blockade of Cuba
- The Struggle to Free Oscar López Rivera
- Where does the movement in solidarity with Cuba go from here?

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- Catherine Murphy
- Johi Kirk
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- Jan Suster
- Stephan Kimbar
- Jose Portorras
- Carl Winkler
- ELAM Graduate
- Arnold August
- Miguel Anderson
- Rev. Edgar Patricia
- Rep. Luis Barrera
- Rep. of the Cuban Energy

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DAYS OF ACTION

LIFTING THE U.S. BLOCKADE WILL BENEFIT BOTH PEOPLES



*By Manuel Yepe**

“Want to Improve the Health of Millions of Americans? Lift the Embargo on Cuba” is the title of an article written by Peter Bourne and published in the Observer Chronicle on August 8. Forty years ago, under President Jimmy Carter –when he partially lifted the travel to Cuba ban imposed on US citizens– Peter Bourne was appointed Special Assistant to the President for Health Issues.

“By reopening embassies, removing Cuba from the “terror list” and making it a bit easier for Americans to travel there, President Barack Obama’s White House has taken initial steps to put an end to a policy that has adversely affected the health of the American people for over half a century. The Senate Appropriations Committee’s action last week to even further ease restrictions on travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens and relax some provisions of the economic embargo, is welcome for a variety of reasons, but perhaps most urgently for the health of citizens in both countries.”

Bourne says it became very clear to him that no element of the two societies would benefit more from the free exchange of ideas than the health of the two peoples.

He adds that the announcement earlier this month that Cuba has become the first country in the world to end mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis is but one example of developments on the island of potential benefit to Americans. “With the door cracked open through diplomatic relations, we now glimpse the possibilities for joint learning, research and development leading to effective health strategies and new treatments.”

“As a result of our long isolation from Cuba, most Americans are unaware that researchers in Cuba have developed many effective treatments at the country’s Molecular Immunology Institute. These are innovations that not only prolong life, but also improve the quality of life for patients with lung and other types of cancer. And

they have proven effective with pediatric patients in clinical trials. One

such treatment –CimaVax, the potential lung cancer vaccine– has recently received extensive media attention for its innovation, but less so for the enormous obstacles that continue to stand in the way of the benefits it offers for US lung cancer patients.”

Bourne explains that Cuba already has considerable experience in prevention and treatment of dengue, a brutally painful and sometimes fatal mosquito-borne disease which is endemic in most of the Caribbean basin, including Puerto Rico, and which has now moved into the Florida Keys,



Hundreds of Cuban doctors ready to travel to the U.S. to help victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans - President George W. Bush refused the assistance

Texas and as far north as San Francisco, California. Cuba is home to the world’s only World Health Organization [WHO] Collaborating Center in Dengue and is also managing the world’s most advanced phase clinical trials for a vaccine against this disease.

The US scientist believes that Cuba’s most dramatic breakthrough, however, may be a medication called Heberprot-P, which has already treated more than 165,000 diabetic-foot ulcer patients in 26 countries, reducing the risk of amputation by 75 percent.

Bourne regrets that, unfortunately Heberprot-P, is not available in the United States, where diabetes affects more than 29

million people, almost ten percent of the population. American diabetics, who suffer 85,000 limb amputations annually, don’t benefit from this limb –and life– saving treatment developed by Cubans.

“We are now in a moment when decisive action in Washington could move from the symbolic to the practical – and improve the health of millions of Americans in the process,” says Bourne.

“The ball is now in Congress’ court. The House should follow the Senate Appropriations Committee’s lead and beyond that, vote to lift the economic embargo on Cuba. Our peoples will be healthier for it,”

stresses Bourne.

Under certain modifications introduced by the US executive branch on the provisions of the “embargo” after the agreements between the Presidents of the United States and Cuba, US citizens may be allowed

to travel to Cuba more liberally by Washington if they have a scientific, religious or sporting purpose, among others. However, they are prohibited by the US blockade –in place for more than half a century– to practice tourism activities in the island (excursions, visits to beaches, entertainment) and all forms of investment or trade with Cuban entities.

www.englishmanuelyepe.wordpress.com

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

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

Por Manuel Yepe*

“¿Queremos mejorar la salud de millones de estadounidenses? Levantemos el bloqueo a Cuba”, tal es el título de un artículo publicado el 8 de agosto en la revista estadounidense Observer Chronicle por Peter Bourne, quien hace 40 años fuera asesor especial en temas de salud del Presidente Jimmy Carter, cuando éste levantó parcialmente la hasta entonces total prohibición de viajar a Cuba impuesta por Washington a los ciudadanos estadounidenses.



“Con la reapertura de las embajadas, la eliminación de Cuba de la “lista del terror” y las medidas que han hecho un poco más fácil para los estadounidenses viajar allí, el gobierno del Presidente Barack Obama ha dado pasos iniciales para poner fin a una política que ha afectado la salud de los estadounidenses por más de medio siglo. Las acciones para aligerar las restricciones sobre viajes a Cuba por ciudadanos estadounidenses y la relajación de algunas disposiciones del bloqueo económico, son positivas por varias razones, pero quizás la más urgente sea por lo que representa para la salud de los ciudadanos de ambos países”.

Bourne asegura que entonces le quedó muy claro a él que ningún elemento de las dos sociedades se beneficiaría más con el libre intercambio de ideas que la salud de ambos pueblos.

Apunta que el reciente anuncio de que Cuba se ha convertido en el primer país del mundo en acabar con la transmisión de madre a hijo del VIH y la sífilis es sólo un ejemplo de la evolución en la isla de beneficios potenciales para los norteamericanos. “Con la puerta abierta por las relaciones diplomáticas, ahora vislumbramos las posibilidades del aprendizaje conjunto, investigación y desarrollo de estrategias eficaces de salud y nuevos tratamientos”.

“Como consecuencia de nuestro largo aislamiento de Cuba, la mayoría de los

LEVANTAR EL BLOQUEO SIRVE A AMBOS PUEBLOS

estadounidenses desconocen que los investigadores cubanos han desarrollado muchos tratamientos eficaces en el Instituto de Inmunología Molecular del país. Son innovaciones que no sólo prolongan la vida, sino también mejoran la calidad de vida de los pacientes con afectaciones de pulmón y otros tipos de cáncer. Y han demostrado ser eficaces con los pacientes pediátricos en ensayos clínicos. Un tratamiento denominado CimaVax – potencial vacuna del cáncer de pulmón – ha recibido atención de los medios por su innovación, pero no está accesible a los pacientes de cáncer de pulmón de Estados Unidos por

los enormes obstáculos que obstaculizan el conocimiento de sus beneficios mediante la información científica”.

Precisa Bourne que Cuba tiene una experiencia considerable en la prevención y tratamiento del dengue, una enfermedad dolorosa, y a veces fatal, transmitida por mosquitos que es endémica en la mayoría de la cuenca del Caribe, incluyendo Puerto Rico, y que ahora se ha trasladado a los Cayos de Florida, Texas y, más al norte, a San Francisco. Cuba es la sede del único centro de colaboración de que

dispone la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) sobre Dengue y administra los más avanzados ensayos de fase clínica para el logro de una vacuna contra esta enfermedad.

Considera el científico estadounidense que el avance más espectacular de Cuba, sin embargo, puede ser un medicamento llamado Heberprot-P, con el que ya se ha tratado a más de 165.000 pacientes de pie diabético en 26 países, reduciendo el riesgo de amputación en un 75 por ciento.

Lamenta Bourne que el Heberprot-P no está disponible en los Estados Unidos, donde

la diabetes afecta a más de 29 millones de personas –casi el diez por ciento de la población– y los diabéticos sufren

anualmente 85.000 amputaciones de miembros, sin beneficiarse de este tratamiento salvador creado por los cubanos.

Ahora estamos en un momento cuando una acción decidida en Washington podría pasar de lo simbólico a la práctica y mejorar la salud de millones de estadounidenses en el proceso, concreta Bourne.

La pelota está ahora en la Cámara del Congreso, que debía seguir el ejemplo del Comité de Apropiaciones del Senado y, más allá de eso, votar por el levantamiento del bloqueo económico contra Cuba. Nuestros pueblos serán por ello más saludables, enfatiza Bourne.

En virtud de ciertas modificaciones introducidas por el ejecutivo de Estados Unidos en las disposiciones del “embargo” tras los acuerdos entre los Presidentes de Estados Unidos y Cuba, los estadounidenses pueden ser autorizados más liberalmente por Washington a viajar a Cuba si es con un objetivo científico, religioso o deportivo, entre otros, aunque todavía les está prohibido por el bloqueo norteamericano de más de medio siglo practicar en la isla actividades propias del turismo (paseos, playas, diversiones) y toda forma de comercio o inversión con entidades cubanas.

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Socialism & Man in Cuba

★ Ernesto Che Guevara ★

Dear compañero,

Though belatedly, I am completing these notes in the course of my trip through Africa, hoping in this way to keep my promise. I would like to do so by dealing with the theme set forth in the title above. I think it may be of interest to Uruguayan readers.

A common argument from the mouths of capitalist spokespeople, in the ideological struggle against socialism, is that socialism, or the period of building socialism into which we have entered, is characterized by the abolition of the individual for the sake of the state. I will not try to refute this argument solely on theoretical grounds but rather to establish the facts as they exist in Cuba and then add comments of a general nature. Let me begin by broadly sketching the history of our revolutionary struggle before and after the taking of power.

As is well known, the exact date of the beginning of the revolutionary struggle — which would culminate in January 1959 — was July 26, 1953. A group led by Fidel Castro attacked the Moncada barracks in Oriente Province on the morning of that day. The attack was a failure; the failure became a disaster, and the survivors ended up in prison, beginning the revolutionary struggle again after they were freed by an amnesty. In this process, in which there was only the germ of socialism, the individual was a fundamental factor. We put our trust in him — individual, specific, with a first and last name — and the triumph or failure of the mission entrusted to him depended on that individual's capacity for action. Then came the stage of guerrilla struggle. It developed in two distinct environments: the people, the still sleeping mass that had to be mobilized, and its vanguard, the guerrillas, the motor force of the mobilization, the generator of revolutionary consciousness and militant enthusiasm. This vanguard was the catalyzing agent that created the subjective conditions necessary for victory.

Here again, in the framework of the proletarianization of our thinking, of this revolution that took place in our habits and our minds, the individual was the basic factor. Every one of the combatants of the Sierra Maestra who reached an upper rank in the revolutionary forces has a record of outstanding deeds to his or her credit. They attained their rank on this basis.

First heroic stage

This was the first heroic period, and in which combatants competed for the heaviest responsibilities, for the greatest dangers, with no other satisfaction than fulfilling a duty. In our work of revolutionary education we frequently return to this instructive theme. In the attitude of our fighters could be glimpsed the man and woman of the future.

On other occasions in our history the act of total dedication to the revolutionary cause was repeated. During the October 1962 missile crisis and in the days of Hurricane Flora (in October 1963) we saw exceptional deeds of valor and sacrifice performed by an entire people. Finding the method to perpetuate this heroic attitude in daily life is, from the ideological standpoint, one of our fundamental tasks.

In January 1959, the revolutionary government was established with the participation of various members of the treacherous bourgeoisie. The presence of the Rebel Army was the basic element constituting the guarantee of power. Serious contradictions developed right away. In the first instance, in February 1959, these were resolved when Fidel Castro assumed leadership of the government, taking the post of prime minister. This process culminated in July of the same year with the resignation under mass pressure of President Urrutia.

In the history of the Cuban Revolution there now appeared a character, well defined in its features, which would systematically reappear: the mass. This multifaceted being is not, as is claimed, the sum of elements of the same type (reduced, moreover, to that same type by the ruling system), which acts like a flock of sheep. It is true that it follows its leaders, basically Fidel Castro, without hesitation. But the degree to which he won this trust results precisely from having interpreted the full meaning of the people's desires and aspirations, and from the sincere struggle to fulfill the promises he made.

Participation of the masses

The mass participated in the agrarian reform and in the difficult task of administering state enterprises; it went through the heroic experience of the Bay of Pigs; it was hardened in the battles against various groups of bandits armed by the CIA; it lived through one of the most important decisions of modern times during the October [missile] crisis; and today it continues to work for the building of socialism.

Viewed superficially, it might appear that those who speak of the subordination of the individual to the state are right. The mass carries out with matchless enthusiasm and discipline the tasks set by the government, whether in the field of the economy, culture, defense, sports, etc. The initiative generally comes from Fidel, or from the revolutionary leadership, and is explained to the people, who make it their own. In some cases the party and government take a local experience and generalize it, following the same procedure.

Nevertheless, the state sometimes makes mistakes. When one of these mistakes occurs, one notes a decline in collective enthusiasm due to the effect of a quantitative diminution in each of the elements that make up the mass. Work is paralyzed until it is reduced to an insignificant level. It is time to make a correction. That is what happened in March 1962, as a result of the sectarian policy imposed on the party by Anibal Escalante. Clearly this mechanism is not enough to ensure a succession of sensible measures. A more structured connection with the mass is needed, and we must improve it in the course of the coming years. But as far as initiatives originating in the upper strata of the government are concerned, we are currently utilizing the almost intuitive method of sounding out general reactions to the great problems we confront.

In this Fidel is a master. His own special way of fusing himself with the people can be appreciated only by seeing him in action. At the great public mass meetings one can observe something like the dialogue of two tuning forks whose vibrations interact, producing new sounds. Fidel and the mass begin to vibrate together in a dialogue of growing intensity until they reach the climax in an abrupt conclusion crowned by our cry of struggle and victory. The difficult thing to understand for someone not living through the experience of the revolution is this close dialectical unity between the individual and the mass, in which both are interrelated and, at the same time, in which the mass, as an aggregate of individuals, interacts with its leaders.

Some phenomena of this kind can be seen under capitalism, when politicians appear capable of mobilizing popular opinion. But when these are not genuine social movements — if they were, it would not be entirely correct to call them capitalist — they live only so long as the individual who inspires them, or until the harshness of capitalist society puts an end to the people's illusions.

Invisible laws of capitalism

In capitalist society individuals are controlled by a pitiless law usually beyond their comprehension. The alienated human specimen is tied to society as a whole by an invisible umbilical cord: the law of value. This law acts upon all aspects of one's life, shaping its course and destiny. The laws of capitalism, which are blind and are invisible to ordinary people, act upon the individual without he or she being aware of it. One sees only the vastness of a seemingly infinite horizon ahead. That is how it is painted by capitalist propagandists who purport to draw a lesson from the example of Rockefeller — whether or not it is true — about the possibilities of individual success. The amount of poverty and suffering required for a Rockefeller to emerge, and the amount of depravity entailed in the accumulation of a fortune of such magnitude, are left out of the picture, and it is not always possible for the popular forces to expose this

clearly. (A discussion of how the workers in the imperialist countries gradually lose the spirit of working-class internationalism due to a certain degree of complicity in the exploitation of the dependent countries, and how this at the same time weakens the combativity of the masses in the imperialist countries, would be appropriate here, but that is a theme that goes beyond the scope of these notes.)

In any case, the road to success is portrayed as beset with perils — perils that, it would seem, an individual with the proper qualities can overcome to attain the goal. The reward is seen in the distance; the way is lonely. Furthermore, it is a contest among wolves. One can win only at the cost of the failure of others.

The individual and socialism

I would now like to try to define the individual, the actor in this strange and moving drama of the building of socialism, in a dual existence as a unique being and as a member of society.

I think the place to start is to recognize the individual's quality of incompleteness, of being an unfinished product. The vestiges of the past are brought into the present in one's consciousness, and a continual labor is necessary to eradicate them. The process is two-sided. On the one hand, society acts through direct and indirect education; on the other, the individual submits to a conscious process of self-education. The new society in formation has to compete fiercely with the past. This past makes itself felt not only in one's consciousness — in which the residue of an education systematically oriented toward isolating the individual still weighs heavily — but also through the very character of this transition period in which commodity relations still persist. The commodity is the economic cell of capitalist society. So long as it exists its effects will make themselves felt in the organization of production and, consequently, in consciousness.

Marx outlined the transition period as resulting from the explosive transformation of the capitalist system destroyed by its own contradictions. In historical reality, however, we have seen that some countries that were weak limbs on the tree of imperialism were torn off first — a phenomenon foreseen by Lenin.

In these countries, capitalism had developed sufficiently to make its effects felt by the people in one way or another. But it was not capitalism's internal contradictions that, having exhausted all possibilities, caused the system to explode. The struggle for liberation from a foreign oppressor; the misery caused by external events such as war, whose consequences privileged classes place on the backs of the exploited; liberation movements aimed at overthrowing neo-colonial regimes — these are the usual factors in unleashing this kind of explosion. Conscious action does the rest. A complete education for social labor has not yet taken place in these countries, and wealth is far from being within the reach of the masses through the simple process of appropriation. Underdevelopment, on the one hand, and the usual fight of capital, on the other, make a rapid transition without sacrifices impossible. There remains a long way to go in constructing the economic base, and the temptation is very great to follow the beaten track of material interest as the lever with which to accelerate development.

There is the danger that the forest will not be seen for the trees. The pipe dream that socialism can be achieved with the help of the dull instruments left to us by capitalism (the commodity as the economic cell, profitability, individual material interest as a lever, etc.) can lead into a blind alley. When you wind up there after having traveled a long distance with many crossroads, it is hard to figure out just where you took the wrong turn. Meanwhile, the economic foundation that has been laid has done its work of undermining the development of consciousness. To build communism it is necessary, simultaneous with the new material foundations, to build the new man and woman.

New consciousness

That is why it is very important to choose the right instrument for mobilizing the masses. Basically, this instrument must be moral in character, without neglecting, however, a correct use of the material incentive — especially of a social character.

As I have already said, in moments of great peril it is easy to develop a powerful response with moral incentives. Retaining their effectiveness, however, requires the development of a consciousness in which there is a new scale of values. Society as a whole must be converted into a gigantic school.

In rough outline this phenomenon is similar to the process by which capitalist consciousness was formed in its initial period. Capitalism uses force, but it also educates people in the system. Direct propaganda is carried out by those entrusted with explaining the inevitability of class society, either through some theory of divine origin or a mechanical theory of natural law. This lulls the masses, since they see themselves as being oppressed by an evil against which it is impossible to struggle.

Next comes hope of improvement — and in this, capitalism differed from the earlier caste systems, which offered no way out. For some people, the principle of the caste system will remain in effect: The reward for the obedient is to be transported after death to some fabulous other world where, according to the old beliefs, good people are rewarded. For other people there is this innovation: class divisions are determined by fate, but individuals can rise out of their class through work, initiative, etc. This process, and the myth of the self-made man, has to be profoundly hypocritical: it is the self-serving demonstration that a lie is the truth.

In our case, direct education acquires a much greater importance. The explanation is convincing because it is true; no subterfuge is needed. It is carried on by the state's educational apparatus as a function of general, technical and ideological education through such agencies as the Ministry of Education and the party's informational apparatus. Education takes hold among the masses and the foreseen new attitude tends to become a habit. The masses continue to make it their own and to influence those who have not yet educated themselves. This is the indirect form of educating the masses, as powerful as the other, structured, one.

Conscious process of self-education

But the process is a conscious one. Individuals continually feel the impact of the new social power and perceive that they do not entirely measure up to its standards. Under the pressure of indirect education, they try to adjust themselves to a situation that they feel is right and that their own lack of development had prevented them from reaching previously. They educate themselves.

In this period of the building of socialism we can see the new man and woman being born. The image is not yet completely finished — it never will be, since the process goes forward hand in hand with the development of new economic forms. Aside from those whose lack of education makes them take the solitary road toward satisfying their own personal ambitions, there are those — even within this new panorama of a unified march forward — who have a tendency to walk separately from the masses accompanying them. What is important, however, is that each day individuals are acquiring ever more consciousness of the need for their incorporation into society and, at the same time, of their importance as the motor of that society.

They no longer travel completely alone over lost

roads toward distant aspirations. They follow their vanguard, consisting of the party, the advanced workers, the advanced individuals who walk in unity with the masses and in close communion with them. The vanguard has its eyes fixed on the future and its reward, but this is not a vision of reward for the individual. The prize is the new society in which individuals will have different characteristics: the society of communist human beings.

The road is long and full of difficulties. At times we lose our way and must turn back. At other times we go too fast and separate ourselves from the masses. Sometimes we go too slow and feel the hot breath of those treading at our heels. In our zeal as revolutionaries we try to move ahead as fast as possible, clearing the way. But we know we must draw our nourishment from the mass and that it can advance more rapidly only if we inspire it by our example.

Despite the importance given to moral incentives, the fact that there remains a division into two main groups (excluding, of course, the minority that for one reason or another does not participate in the building of socialism) indicates the relative lack of development of social consciousness. The vanguard group is ideologically more advanced than the mass; the latter understands the new values, but not sufficiently. While among the former there has been a qualitative change that enables them to make sacrifices in their capacity as an advance guard, the latter see only part of the picture and must be subject to incentives and pressures of a certain intensity. This is the dictatorship of the proletariat operating not only on the defeated class but also on individuals of the victorious class.

All of this means that for total success a series of mechanisms, of revolutionary institutions, is needed. Along with the image of the multitudes marching toward the future comes the concept of institutionalization as a harmonious set of channels, steps, restraints and well-oiled mechanisms which facilitate the advance, which facilitate the natural selection of those destined to march in the vanguard, and which bestow rewards on those who fulfill their duties and punishments on those who commit a crime against the society that is being built.

Institutionalization of the revolution

This institutionalization of the revolution has not yet been achieved. We are looking for something new that will permit a complete identification between the government and the community in its entirety, something appropriate to the special conditions of the building of socialism, while avoiding at all costs transplanting the commonplaces of bourgeois democracy — such as legislative chambers, for example — into the society in formation.

Some experiments aimed at the gradual institutionalization of the revolution have been made, but without undue haste. The greatest brake has been our fear lest any appearance of formality might separate us from the masses and from the individual, which might make us lose sight of the ultimate and most important revolutionary aspiration: to see human beings liberated from their alienation.

Despite the lack of institutions, which must be overcome gradually, the masses are now making history as a conscious collective of individuals fighting for the same cause. The individual under socialism, despite apparent standardization, is more complete. Despite the lack of a perfect mechanism for it, the opportunities for self expression and making oneself felt in the social organism are infinitely greater.

It is still necessary to deepen conscious participation, individual and collective, in all the structures of management and production, and to link this to the idea of the need for technical and ideological education, so that the individual will realize that these processes are closely interdependent and their advancement is parallel. In this way the individual will reach total consciousness as a social being, which is equivalent to the full realization as a human creature, once the chains of alienation are broken. This will be translated concretely into the reconquering of one's true nature through liberated labor, and the expression of one's own human condition through culture and art.

New status of work

In order to develop a new culture, work must acquire a new status. Human beings-as-commodities cease to exist, and a system is installed that establishes a quota for the fulfillment of one's social duty. The means of production belong to society, and the machine is merely the trench where duty is performed. A person begins to become free from thinking of the annoying fact that one needs to work to satisfy one's animal needs. Individuals start to see themselves reflected in their work and to understand their full stature as human beings through the object created, through the work accomplished. Work no longer entails surrendering a part of one's being in the form of labor power sold, which no longer belongs to the individual, but becomes an expression of oneself, a contribution to the common life in which one is reflected, the fulfillment of one's social duty.

We are doing everything possible to give work this new status as a social duty and to link it on the one hand with the development of technology, which will create the conditions for greater freedom, and on the other hand with voluntary work based on the Marxist appreciation that one truly reaches a full human condition when no longer compelled to produce by the physical necessity to sell oneself as a commodity. Of course, there are still coercive aspects to work, even when it is voluntary. We have not transformed all the coercion that surrounds us into conditioned reflexes of a social character and, in many cases, is still produced under the pressures of one's environment. (Fidel calls this moral compulsion.) There is still a need to undergo a complete spiritual rebirth in one's attitude toward one's own work, freed from the direct pressure of the social environment, though linked to it by new habits. That will be communism. The change in consciousness does not take place automatically, just as change in the economy does not take place automatically. The alterations are slow and not rhythmic; there are periods of acceleration, periods that are slower, and even retrogressions.

Furthermore, we must take into account, as I pointed out before, that we are not dealing with a period of pure transition, as Marx envisaged in his Critique of the Gotha Program, but rather with a new phase unforeseen by him: an initial period of the transition to communism, or of the construction of socialism. This transition is taking place in the midst of violent class struggles, and with elements of capitalism within it that obscure a complete understanding of its essence.

If we add to this the scholasticism that has held back the development of Marxist philosophy and impeded a systematic treatment of the transition period, whose political economy has not yet been developed, we must agree that we are still in diapers and that it is necessary to devote ourselves to investigating all the principal characteristics of this period before elaborating an economic and political theory of greater scope.

The resulting theory will, no doubt, put great stress on the two pillars of the construction of socialism: the education of the new man and woman and the development of technology. Much remains to be done in regard to both, but delay is least excusable in regard to the concept of technology as a basic foundation, since this is not a question of going forward blindly but of following a long stretch of road already opened up by the world's more advanced countries. This is why Fidel pounds

away with such insistence on the need for the technological and scientific training of our people and especially of its vanguard.

Individualism

In the field of ideas that do not lead to activities involving production, it is easier to see the division between material and spiritual necessity. For a long time individuals have been trying to free themselves from alienation through culture and art. While a person dies every day during the eight or more hours in which he or she functions as a commodity, individuals come to life afterward in their spiritual creations. But this remedy bears the germs of the same sickness: that of a solitary being seeking harmony with the world. One defends one's individuality, which is oppressed by the environment, and reacts to aesthetic ideas as a unique being whose aspiration is to remain immaculate. It is nothing more than an attempt to escape. The law of value is no longer simply a reflection of the relations of production; the monopoly capitalists — even while employing purely empirical methods — surround that law with a complicated scaffolding that turns it into a docile servant. The superstructure imposes a kind of art in which the artist must be educated. Rebels are subdued by the machine, and only exceptional talents may create their own work. The rest become shamefaced hirelings or are crushed.

A school of artistic experimentation is invented, which is said to be the definition of freedom; but this "experimentation" has its limits, imperceptible until there is a clash, that is, until the real problems of individual alienation arise. Meaningless anguish or vulgar amusement thus become convenient safety valves for human anxiety. The idea of using art as a weapon of protest is combated.

Those who play by the rules of the game are showered with honors — such honors as a monkey might get for performing pirouettes. The condition is that one does not try to escape from the invisible cage.

New impulse for artistic experimentation

When the revolution took power there was an exodus of those who had been completely housebroken. The rest — whether they were revolutionaries or not — saw a new road.

Artistic inquiry experienced a new impulse. The paths, however, had already been more or less laid out, and the escapist concept hid itself behind the word "freedom." This attitude was often found even among the revolutionaries themselves, a reflection in their consciousness of bourgeois idealism.

In countries that have gone through a similar process, attempts have been made to combat such tendencies with an exaggerated dogmatism. General culture became virtually taboo, and the acme of cultural aspiration was declared to be the formally exact representation of nature. This was later transformed into a mechanical representation of the social reality they wanted to show: the ideal society, almost without conflicts or contradictions, that they sought to create.

Socialism is young and has its mistakes. We revolutionaries often lack the knowledge and intellectual audacity needed to meet the task of developing the new man and woman with methods different from the conventional ones; conventional methods suffer from the influences of the society that created them. (Once again the theme of the relationship between form and content is posed.) Disorientation is widespread, and the problems of material construction absorb us. There are no artists of great authority who also have great revolutionary authority. The members of the party must take this task in hand and seek the achievement of the main goal: to educate the people.

What is sought then is simplification, something everyone can understand, something functionaries understand. True artistic experimentation ends, and the problem of general culture is reduced to assimilating the socialist present and the dead (therefore, not dangerous) past. Thus socialist realism arises upon the foundations of the art of the last century. The realistic art of the 19th century, however, also has a class character, more purely capitalist perhaps than the decadent art of the 20th century that reveals the anguish of the alienated individual. In the field of culture, capitalism has given all that it had to give, and nothing remains but the stench of a corpse, today's decadence in art.

But why try to find the only valid prescription in the frozen forms of socialist realism? We cannot counterpose "freedom" to socialist realism, because the former does not yet exist and will not exist until the complete development of the new society. We must not, from the pontifical throne of realism-at-all-costs, condemn all art forms since the first half of the 19th century, for we would then fall into the Proudhonian mistake of going back to the past, of putting a strait-jacket on the artistic expression of the people who are being born and are in the process of making themselves. What is needed is the development of an ideological-cultural mechanism that permits both free inquiry and the uprooting of the weeds that multiply so easily in the fertilized soil of state subsidies.

In our country the error of mechanical realism has not appeared, but rather its opposite. This is because the need for the creation of a new individual has not been understood, a new human being who would represent neither the ideas of the 19th century nor those of our own decadent and morbid century.

What we must create is the human being of the 21st century, although this is still a subjective aspiration, not yet systematized. This is precisely one of the fundamental objectives of our study and our work. To the extent that we achieve concrete success on a theoretical plane — or, vice versa, to the extent that we draw theoretical conclusions of a broad character on the basis of our concrete research — we will have made a valuable contribution to Marxism-Leninism, to the cause of humanity.

By reacting against the human being of the 19th century we have relapsed into the decadence of the 20th century. It is not a very grave error, but we must overcome it lest we leave open the door for revisionism. The great multitudes continue to develop. The new ideas are gaining a good momentum within society. The material possibilities for the integrated development of absolutely all members of society make the task much more fruitful. The present is a time of struggle; the future is ours.

New revolutionary generation

To sum up, the fault of many of our artists and intellectuals lies in their original sin: they are not true revolutionaries. We can try to graft the elm tree so that it will bear pears, but at the same time we must plant pear trees. New generations will come that will be free of original sin. The probability that great artists will appear will be greater to the degree that the field of culture and the possibilities for expression are broadened.

Our task is to prevent the current generation, torn asunder by its conflicts, from becoming perverted and from perverting new generations. We must not create either docile servants of official thought, or "scholarship students" who live at the expense of the state — practicing freedom in quotation marks. Revolutionaries will come who will sing the song of the new man and woman in the true voice of the people. This is a process that takes time. In our society the youth and the party play a big part. The former is especially important because it is the malleable clay from which the new person can be built with none of the old defects. The youth are treated in accordance with our aspirations. Their education is every day more complete, and we do not neglect their incorporation into work from the outset. Our scholarship students do physical

work during their vacations or along with their studies. Work is a reward in some cases, a means of education in others, but it is never a punishment. A new generation is being born. The party is a vanguard organization. It is made up of the best workers, who are proposed for membership by their fellow workers. It is a minority, but it has great authority because of the quality of its cadres. Our aspiration is for the party to become a mass party, but only when the masses have reached the level of the vanguard, that is, when they are educated for communism. Our work constantly strives toward this education. The party is the living example; its cadres must teach hard work and sacrifice. By their action, they must lead the masses to the completion of the revolutionary task, which involves years of hard struggle against the difficulties of construction, class enemies, the maladies of the past, imperialism.

Role of the individual

Now, I would like to explain the role played by the personality, by men and women as individuals leading the masses that make history. This is our experience; it is not a prescription.

Fidel gave the revolution its impulse in the first years, and also its leadership. He always set its tone; but there is a good group of revolutionaries who are developing along the same road as the central leader. And there is a great mass that follows its leaders because it has faith in them. It has faith in those leaders because they have known how to interpret its aspirations.

It is not a matter of how many kilograms of meat one has to eat, or of how many times a year someone can go to the beach, or how many pretty things from abroad you might be able to buy with present-day wages. It is a matter of making the individual feel more complete, with much more inner wealth and much more responsibility.

People in our country know that the glorious period in which they happen to live is one of sacrifice; they are familiar with sacrifice. The first ones came to know it in the Sierra Maestra and wherever they fought; later, everyone in Cuba came to know it. Cuba is the vanguard of America and must make sacrifices because it occupies the post of advance guard, because it shows the masses of Latin America the road to full freedom. Within the country the leadership has to carry out its vanguard role. It must be said with all sincerity that in a real revolution, to which one gives his or her all and from which one expects no material reward, the task of the vanguard revolutionary is both magnificent and agonizing.

Love of living humanity

At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality. Perhaps it is one of the great dramas of the leader that he or she must combine a passionate spirit with a cold intelligence and make painful decisions without flinching. Our vanguard revolutionaries must idealize this love of the people, of the most sacred causes, and make it one and indivisible. They cannot descend, with small doses of daily affection, to the level where ordinary people put their love into practice.

The leaders of the revolution have children just beginning to talk, who are not learning to say "daddy"; their wives, too, must be part of the general sacrifice of their lives in order to take the revolution to its destiny. The circle of their friends is limited strictly to the circle of comrades in the revolution. There is no life outside of it.

In these circumstances one must have a large dose of humanity, a large dose of a sense of justice and truth in order to avoid dogmatic extremes, cold scholasticism, or an isolation from the masses. We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity is transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force.

The revolutionary, the ideological motor force of the revolution within the party, is consumed by this uninterrupted activity that comes to an end only with death, unless the construction of socialism is accomplished on a world scale. If one's revolutionary zeal is blunted when the most urgent tasks have been accomplished on a local scale and one forgets about proletarian internationalism, the revolution one leads will cease to be a driving force and sink into a comfortable drowsiness that imperialism, our irreconcilable enemy, will utilize to gain ground. Proletarian internationalism is a duty, but it is also a revolutionary necessity. This is the way we educate our people.

Danger of dogmatism

Of course there are dangers in the present situation, and not only that of dogmatism, not only that of freezing the ties with the masses midway in the great task. There is also the danger of the weaknesses we can fall into. The way is open to infection by the germs of future corruption if a person thinks that dedicating his or her entire life to the revolution means that, in return, one should not be distracted by such worries as that one's child lacks certain things, that one's children's shoes are worn out, that one's family lacks some necessity.

In our case we have maintained that our children must have, or lack, those things that the children of the ordinary citizen have or lack; our families should understand this and struggle for it to be that way. The revolution is made through human beings, but individuals must forge their revolutionary spirit day by day.

Thus we march on. At the head of the immense column — we are neither ashamed nor afraid to say it — is Fidel. After him come the best cadres of the party, and immediately behind them, so close that we feel its tremendous force, comes the people in its entirety, a solid structure of individual beings moving toward a common goal, men and women who have attained consciousness of what must be done, people who fight to escape from the realm of necessity and to enter that of freedom.

This great throng organizes itself; its organization results from its consciousness of the necessity of this organization. It is no longer a dispersed force, divisible into thousands of fragments thrown into the air like splinters from a hand grenade, trying by any means to achieve some protection from an uncertain future, in desperate struggle with their fellows.

We know that sacrifices lie ahead and that we must pay a price for the heroic fact that we are, as a nation, a vanguard. We, as leaders, know that we must pay a price for the right to say that we are at the head of a people that is at the head of America. Each and every one of us readily pays his or her quota of sacrifice, conscious of being rewarded with the satisfaction of fulfilling a duty, conscious of advancing with everyone toward the new man and woman glimpsed on the horizon.

Allow me to draw some conclusions:

We socialists are freer because we are more fulfilled; we are more fulfilled because we are freer. The skeleton of our complete freedom is already formed. The flesh and the clothing are lacking; we will create them.

Our freedom and its daily sustenance are paid for in blood and sacrifice. Our sacrifice is a conscious one: an installment paid on the freedom that we are building.

The road is long and, in part, unknown. We recognize our limitations. We will make the human being of the 21st century — we, ourselves. We will forge ourselves in daily action, creating a new man and woman with a new technology.

Individuals play a role in mobilizing and leading the masses inspired as they embody the highest virtues and aspirations of the people and do not wander from the path.

Clearing the way is the vanguard group, the best among the good, the party.

The basic clay of our work is the youth; we place our hope in it and prepare it to take the banner from our hands. If this inarticulate letter clarifies anything, it has accomplished the objective that motivated it. Accept our ritual greeting — which is like a handshake or an "Ave Maria Purissima":

Patria o muerte! [Homeland or death!]

AYOTZINAPA: the struggle for justice continues

1 year after the atrocity against 43 innocent students.

By Noah Fine

One year after the disappearance of 43 Mexican students, disclosure seems as far away as it ever has. Questions pile up while answers are buried and hidden ever deeper in one of the worst state cover-ups and worst state/criminal gang massacres in Mexican history.



On September 26th, 2014 a group of about 100 students from a small rural community in the state of Guerrero, Mexico called, Ayotzinapa, were traveling to participate in a protest. Upon arriving in the city of Iguala where the protest was to take place, police alongside unmarked armed men dressed in black laid siege on the students. The siege, which all together lasted more than 3 hours, left an impact on Mexico that will endure ages. At the end of the siege, 6 people were left dead including a 15-year-old boy, a bus driver and a woman in a taxi.

Many of the students who filled three buses were able to escape, scattering throughout the neighbourhood. However 43 of the students from that fateful day are still missing today. 43 students whose disappearance has sparked mass mobilizations throughout Mexico supported by activities around the world demanding, "They were taken alive, we want them back alive!"

In the year that has passed since the atrocity, blame for the crimes of September 26th have been spread far and wide. More than 20 Iguala police officers were arrested with evidence that they, alongside a local drug cartel *Guerreros Unidos*, were responsible for the killings and disappearances.

A federal investigation has claimed that Iguala mayor, José Luis Abarca alongside his wife María de los Ángeles Pineda were the ones to blame for giving the orders. A police officer admitted to the investigators he had heard the mayor give orders to the police to "teach them a lesson." This story drags deeper into the dirt when we learn that the couple is also facing charges for affiliation with drug cartels.

While reading the story, one thing becomes apparent: nothing is apparent. No one is taking the blame and the Federal Government led by President Enrique Peña Nieto has offered

nothing but vague plans of bringing justice to the situation and pointing fingers of blame at the easiest of targets. A poll taken during this year by *Parametría* (Mexican opinion and market analysis poll) concluded that 54% of the population in Mexico believes that the federal government is responsible for resolving the situation and only 26% believe that the federal government will actually be able to resolve it.

As the government attempts to sweep the crisis under the rug, families still have questions. No matter where the blame finally falls, if it ever does happen to fall, the people of Mexico and especially the families and friends of the missing are left wondering, "where are our 43 young students?"

The stark reality that the Mexican government has done nothing to resolve the situation becomes clear. It is for this reason that people in Mexico are united in their slogan "Fue el estado!" or "It was the state!"

The Mexican reality, in history as it is in the case of the missing 43 students is a reality of crimes perpetrated by the state against its people. These 43 Ayotzinapa students were preceded by hundreds of thousands of missing and murdered at the hands of the drug cartels

and government of Mexico. All of which have families and communities that are still searching for answers.

Protest and dissatisfaction in Mexico have led to multiple high-level resignations, plummeting opinions of the government and President Peña Nieto and widespread unrest.

The government of Mexico backed by the United States with all of its economic interests and "free-trade" agreements expanding in Mexico want to make it clear that they will not tolerate dissent. That they are preparing for a future of unrest in Mexico as the living conditions continue to deteriorate.

With this in mind the case of the 43 missing students becomes such a significant international issue. The 43 of Ayotzinapa represent the future of Mexico; youth who are struggling for a better future. For this reason the people of Mexico and the families and friends of the 43 need support internationally.

Around the world, including here in Canada, solidarity campaigns with the 43 missing Ayotzinapa students have continued. Global tours with family members as well as monthly actions have been ongoing. The job of the international community is to keep up

pressure on the government of Mexico and spread the news of the case of the 43 Ayotzinapa students far and wide.

Today, one year after the atrocity, we have not forgotten them. The struggle for the 43 Ayotzinapa students represents the future of all of us. We say today as we said one year ago: "They were taken alive, we want them back alive!"



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@noahfine



* EN ESPAÑOL *

Por Noah Fine

Traducido por Reynaldo Cruz

Un año luego de la desaparición de 43 estudiantes mexicanos, las revelaciones parecen más lejos de lo que han estado. Las preguntas se acumulan y las respuestas están enterradas y ocultas mucho más profundamente en uno de los peores encubrimientos estatales y en una de las peores masacres de bandas criminales/estado en la historia mexicana. El 26 de septiembre de 2014, un grupo de alrededor de 100 estudiantes de una pequeña comunidad rural en el estado de Guerrero, México, llamada Ayotzinapa, estaban viajando para participar en una protesta. A su llegada a la ciudad de Iguala, donde la protesta tendría lugar, la policía, junto con hombres armados no identificados vestidos de negro, comenzaron a asediar a los estudiantes. El asedio, que duró en total más de tres horas, dejó un impacto en México que perdurará por años. Al finalizar el asedio, seis personas habían muerto, incluyendo un choco de 15 años, un chofer de ómnibus y una mujer en un taxi.

Muchos de los estudiantes que llenaron los tres ómnibus lograron escapar, dispersándose por el vecindario. Sin embargo, 43 de ellos aún están desaparecidos hoy. 43 estudiantes cuya desaparición ha desatado movilizaciones masivas por todo México, apoyadas por actividades por todo el mundo exigiendo: "¡Se los llevaron vivos, los queremos de vuelta vivos!" En el año que ha pasado desde la atrocidad, la culpa de los crímenes del 26 de septiembre ha sido repartida ampliamente. Más de 20 oficiales de policía de Iguala fueron arrestados con evidencias de que ellos, junto al cártel de droga local Guerreros Unidos, fueron responsables de los asesinatos y las desapariciones.

AYOTZINAPA: 43 la lucha continúa

Un año luego de la atrocidad contra 43 estudiantes inocentes.

Una investigación federal ha revelado que el alcalde de Iguala, José Luis Abarca, junto con su esposa María de los Ángeles Pinedas fueron los que dieron las órdenes. Un oficial de policía admitió a los investigadores que había escuchado al alcalde dar órdenes a la policía de "darles una lección". La historia llega aún más profundo cuando escuchamos que la pareja también enfrenta cargos por vínculos con los cárteles de droga.

Cuando leemos la historia a profundidad, una cosa se torna aparente: nada es aparente. Nadie ha sido culpado y el Gobierno Federal comandado por el presidente Enrique Peña Nieto no ha ofrecido otra cosa que planes vagos para traer justicia a la situación y apuntar con el dedo para culpar a los blancos más fáciles. Una encuesta realizada este año por Parametría (el grupo de análisis de encuestas de opinión y mercado en México) concluyó que el 54% de la población de México considera que el gobierno federal es responsable de resolver la situación y solamente el 26% considera que el gobierno federal realmente hará algo para resolverla.

Mientras el gobierno intenta barrer la crisis bajo el tapete, las familias aún tienen preguntas. Sin importar quién cargue con la culpa al final, si es que alguien lo hace, el pueblo de México y especialmente los familiares y amigos de los desaparecidos aún se preguntan, "¿dónde están nuestros 43 jóvenes estudiantes?"

La dura realidad de que el gobierno mexicano no ha hecho nada para resolver la situación de hace evidente es por eso que la gente en México se ha unido en su slogan: "¡Fue el estado!" o "It was the state!"

La realidad mexicana, en la historia como en el caso de los 43 estudiantes desaparecidos, es una realidad de crímenes del estado, perpetrados contra su pueblo. Estos 43 estudiantes

de Ayotzinapa están precedidos por cientos de miles de desaparecidos y asesinados a manos de los cárteles de la droga y el gobierno mexicano. Todos tenían familiares y comunidades que aún buscan respuestas.

Las protestas y la insatisfacción en México han llevado a múltiples renuncias de alto nivel, caída en cuanto a las opiniones sobre el gobierno y el presidente Peña Nieto e intranquilidad generalizada.

El gobierno de México, apoyado por los Estados Unidos con todos sus intereses económicos y los Acuerdos de Libre Comercio expandiéndose en México quiere dejar claro que no van a tolerar disidencia. Que se están preparando para un futuro descontento en México a medida que las condiciones de vida sigan deteriorándose.

Con esto en mente, el caso de los 43 estudiantes desaparecidos se convierte en un asunto de significación internacional. Los 43 de Ayotzinapa representan el futuro de México: jóvenes que están luchando por un futuro mejor. Por esta razón, el pueblo de México y los familiares y amigos de los 43 necesitan apoyo internacionalmente.

Por todo el mundo, incluso acá en Canadá, las campañas de solidaridad con los 43 estudiantes desaparecidos de Ayotzinapa han continuado. Las giras globales con los miembros de la familia, igual que acciones mensuales han sido continuas. El trabajo de la comunidad internacional es continuar presionando al gobierno de México y correr a voz sobre el caso de los 43 estudiantes de Ayotzinapa tanto y tan lejos como se pueda.

Hoy, un año después de la atrocidad, no los olvidamos. Los 43 estudiantes de Ayotzinapa representan el futuro de todos nosotros. Decimos hoy, como dijimos hace un año: "¡Se los llevaron vivos, los queremos de vuelta vivos!"



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right for a 180-degree change of the political system.” Furthermore, it is not just Cubans and their government that believe these dissidents are motivated by personal gain and not altruistic desires to “be dissidents for freedom” as Limbaugh put it. The USAID openly admits on its website to helping dissidents in Cuba. They explain, “USAID supports independent civic, social, and development activities by providing technical and material assistance to organize, train, and energize small groups of people within their communities.” The website also explains that USAID programs have received several million dollars a year to operate in Cuba from the Congress of the United States.

Next we need to look at Limbaugh’s claim that, “Dissidents are celebrated here; in Cuba they’re put in jail.” I am pretty sure Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning, two whistleblowers who have exposed U.S. crimes would whole-heartedly disagree. Snowden had to flee to Russia and seek asylum there because the U.S. government wants to put him in jail for exposing that it was spying on its own citizens and people around the world through the National Security Agency (N.S.A.) and Manning is currently serving a 35 year sentence in an American military prison for leaking documents and videos showing U.S. war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. We can also name many other political prisoners in the U.S. who have been framed with trumped up charges based on their status as independent journalists, social justice activists and dissidents: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Oscar Lopez Rivera and hundreds of others. Maybe the right-wing dissenters that Limbaugh supports are better treated? But saying that these people are celebrated in the U.S. media or by the government as dissidents is ludicrous.

Finally, we need to ask why Limbaugh is so unhappy about having Cuba as an international ally for the United States. Cuba is widely respected internationally. Cuba has diplomatic or consular relations with 187 countries and States. It is also a member of many important international organizations: the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and many United Nations agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO. We can also compare the fact that Cuba is sending doctors and educators around the world to provide free healthcare and literacy to rural and remote communities. While the United States is basically known internationally for corporate pollution and exploitation, spying and monitoring, setting up military bases on foreign soil, extra-judicial



Sittings of the Cuban Parliament in 2013 and 2015

killings by drone strikes and war.

Limbaugh on Cuban democracy

Rush Limbaugh then tries to explain his understanding of Cuban parliament, “Hardly anybody knows this because nobody cares, but the fact is that more than 60% of the Cuban population is descended from slaves. Not that you would ever know it, particularly if you looked at photos of the Cuban parliament. Do you know the Cuban parliament, for whatever purpose it serves... I mean, it’s a rubber stamp. But do you know that it’s practically lily white? And when’s the last time you saw a lily white Cuban citizen? But nobody says it.”

First, we have to ask, is the Cuban Parliament really “a rubber stamp”? The last election for the Cuban parliament was held in 2013. According to *Juventud Rebelde*, over 7.8 million Cubans voted in the election, which means their election boasted 90.8% voter turnout. Of the ballots cast, 94% were valid, 1% were spoiled ballots and 5% were blank, this is an amazing voter participation rate, especially because Canada is fighting to get over 60% turnout and the U.S. voter turnout was about 58% for the 2012 presidential election. Why would Cubans be so interested in participating and voting in these elections if they felt the parliament was just “a rubber stamp”?

Second, we have to investigate this “lily white” status of Cuban parliament members. Of the delegates elected in 2013, 67% were re-elected to their seat, the average age of delegates is 48. Most important to respond to Rush Limbaugh’s “lily white” accusation, is that 37% of the over 612 delegates are black or “mestizo” (multiracial). Despite

what Limbaugh believes, according to the C.I.A.’s own *WorldFactBook*, Cuba’s general population is 64.1% white, 26.6% mestizo and 9.3% black, which means people of colour are well represented in the Cuban parliament.

On the other hand, we have the U.S. Congress, which is definitely “lily white” when compared to the American population. Despite the title of the *PewResearch Center’s* January 2015 article, “114th Congress is most diverse ever”. They explain, “Overall, non-whites make up 17% of the new Congress, but that is below these groups’ 38% share of the nation’s population. This difference also exists among the newly elected members of Congress, as minorities account for 11 of 71 new members of the House and Senate.” So even though the current congress is the most diverse in American history – it is still nowhere near representative of the American populace.

I would also like to take the opportunity to

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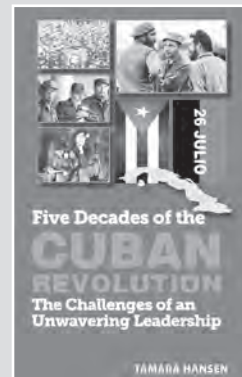
Battle of Ideas Press

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.’”

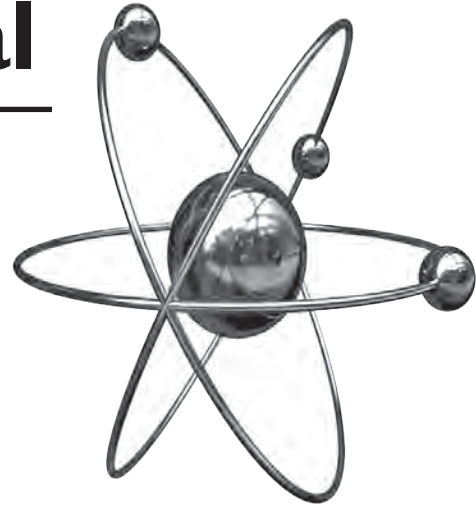
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April 2010, paperback, 312 pages, illustrated, \$10.00
ISBN 978-0-9864716-1-2 | Copyright © 2010 by Battle of Ideas Press
PO Box 21607, Vancouver, BC, V5L 5G3, Canada

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Behind Israel's Hysterical Opposition to the Iran Nuclear Deal



*By Ismael Hossein-Zadeh**

In light of the fact that Israel is in possession of at least 200 (surreptitiously-built) nuclear warheads, and considering the reality that, according to both US and Israeli intelligence sources, Iran neither possesses nor pursues nuclear weapons, the relentless hysterical campaign by Israel and its lobby against the Iran nuclear deal can safely be characterized as the mother of all ironies—a clear case of chutzpah.

As I pointed out in a recent essay on the nuclear agreement, the deal effectively establishes US control (through IAEA) over the entire production chain of Iran's nuclear and related industries. Or, as President Obama put it (on the day of the conclusion of the agreement), "Inspectors will have access to Iran's entire nuclear supply chain—its uranium mines and mills, its conversion facility and its centrifuge manufacturing and storage facilities. . . . Some of these transparency measures will be in place for 25 years. Because of this deal inspectors will also be able to access any suspicious location."

Even a cursory reading of the text of the agreement shows that, if ratified by the US congress, the deal would essentially freeze Iran's nuclear program at a negligible, ineffectual level of value—at only 3.67% uranium enrichment. Israel and its lobby must certainly be aware of this, of the fact that Iran poses no "existential threat to Israel," as frequently claimed by Benjamin Netanyahu and his co-thinkers.

So, the question is: why all the screaming and breast beating?

There is a widespread perception that because the nuclear agreement was reached despite the lobby's vehement opposition, it must therefore signify a win for Iran, or a loss for Israel and its allies. This is a sheer misjudgment of what the deal represents: it signifies a win not for Iran but for Israel and its allies. And here is why: under the deal Iran is obligated to (a) downgrade its uranium enrichment capabilities from 20% of purity to 3.67%, (b) freeze this minimal level of 3.67% enrichment for 15 years, (c) reduce its current capacity of 19000 centrifuges to 6104 (a reduction of 68%), (d) reduce its stockpile of low grade enriched uranium from the current level of 7500 kg to 300kg (a reduction of 96%), and (e) accept strict limits on its research and development activities. While some restrictions on research and development are promised to be relaxed after 10 years, others will remain for up to 25 years.

In addition, Iran would have to accept an extensive monitoring and inspection regime not only of declared nuclear sites but also of military and other non-declared sites where the monitors may presume or imagine incidences of "suspicious" activity. The elaborate system of monitoring and inspection was succinctly described by President Obama on the day of the conclusion of the agreement in Vienna (July 14, 2015): "Put simply, the organization responsible for the inspections, the IAEA, will have access where necessary, when necessary. That arrangement is permanent."

These are obviously major concessions that not only render Iran's hard-one (but peaceful) nuclear technology ineffectual, but also weaken its defense capabilities and undermine its national sovereignty.

So, the lobby's frantic objection to the nuclear agreement cannot be because the deal represents a win for Iran, or a loss for Israel. Quite to the contrary the agreement signifies a historic success for Israel as it tends to remove, or drastically undermine, a major challenge to its expansionist schemes in the Middle East—the challenge of independent, revolutionary Iran that consistently opposed such colonial schemes of expansion and occupation.

Thus, the reasons for the lobby's panicky, or more likely feigned, protestations must be sought elsewhere. Two major reasons can be identified for the lobby's vehement opposition to the nuclear deal.

The first is to keep pressure on negotiators in pursuit further concessions from Iran. Indeed, the lobby has been very successful in quest of this objective. A look back at the process of negotiations indicates that, under pressure, Iran's negotiators have continuously made additional concessions over the course of the 20-month long negotiations. For example, when negotiations began in Geneva in November 2013, discussion of Iran's defense industries or inspection of its military sites were considered off the limits of negotiations. Whereas in the final agreement, reached 20 months later in Vienna, Iran's negotiators have

regrettably agreed to such highly intrusive, once-taboo measures of national sovereignty.

The lobby is of course aware of the fact that the 159-page long nuclear deal is fraught with ambiguities and loopholes, which leaves plenty of room for haggling and maneuvering over the many contestable aspects of the deal during its 25-year long implementation period. This means that, even if ratified by the US congress, the deal does not mean the end of negotiations but their continuation for a long time to come.

The shrill, obstructionist voices of the lobby's operatives are, therefore, designed to continue the pressure on Iran during the long period of implementation in order to extract additional concessions beyond the agreement.

The second reason for the lobby's relentless campaign to sabotage the nuclear agreement is that, while the agreement obviously represents

foundling fathers to build a Jewish state in Palestine. David Ben Gurien, one of the Key founders of the state of Israel, for example, stated unabashedly that land grabbing, expulsion of non-Jewish natives from their land/homes and territorial expansion is best achieved through launching wars of choice and creating social chaos, which he called "revolutionary" times or circumstances. "What is inconceivable in normal times is possible in revolutionary times; and if at this time the opportunity is missed and what is possible in such great hours is not carried out—a whole world is lost".

While the plans to foment war and create social convulsion in pursuit of "greater Israel" thus began with the very creation of the state of Israel, systematic implementation of such plans, and the concomitant agenda of changing "unfriendly" regimes in the region, began in earnest in the early 1990s—that is, in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of

between Israel and the militaristic faction of the US ruling elites—elites whose interests are vested largely in the military-industrial-security-intelligence complex, that is, in military capital, or war dividends.

Since the rationale for the large and growing military apparatus during the Cold War years was the "threat of communism," US citizens celebrated the collapse of the Berlin Wall as the end of militarism and the dawn of "peace dividends."

But while the majority of the US citizens celebrated the prospects of what appeared to be imminent "peace dividends," the powerful interests vested in the expansion of military-industrial-security-intelligence spending felt threatened. Not surprisingly, these influential forces moved swiftly to safeguard their interests in the face of the "threat of peace."

To stifle the voices that demanded peace dividends, beneficiaries of war and militarism began to methodically redefine the post-Cold War "sources of threat" in the broader framework of the new multi-polar world, which purportedly goes way beyond the traditional "Soviet threat" of the bipolar world of the Cold War era. Instead of the "communist threat" of the Soviet era, the "menace" of "rogue states," of radical Islam and of "global terrorism" would have to do as new enemies.

Just as the beneficiaries of war dividends view international peace and stability inimical to their interests, so too the militant Zionist proponents of "greater Israel" perceive peace between Israel and its Palestinian/Arab neighbors perilous to their goal of gaining control over the "promised land." The reason for this fear of peace is that, according to a number of the United Nations' resolutions, peace would mean Israel's return to its pre-1967 borders. But because proponents of "greater Israel" are unwilling to withdraw from the occupied territories, they are therefore afraid of peace—hence, their continued attempts at sabotaging peace efforts and/or negotiations.

Because the interests of the beneficiaries of war dividends and those of radical Zionism tend to converge over fomenting war and political convulsion in the Middle East, an ominously potent alliance has been forged between them—ominous, because the mighty US war machine is now supplemented by the almost unrivaled public relations capabilities of the hardline pro-Israel lobby in the United States.

The alliance between these two militaristic forces is largely unofficial and de facto; it is subtly forged through an elaborate network of powerful neoconservative think tanks such as The American Enterprise Institute, Project



a fantastic victory for Israel, it nonetheless falls short of what the lobby projected and fought for, that is, devastating regime change by military means, similar to what was done to Iraq and Libya.

This is no conspiracy theory or idle speculation. There is well-documented, undeniable evidence that the lobby, as a major pillar of the neoconservative forces in the US and elsewhere, set out as early as the late 1980s and early as 1990s to "deconstruct" and reshape the Middle East in the image of radical Zionist champions of building "greater Israel" in the region, extending from Jordan River to Mediterranean coasts.

Indeed, radical Zionists' plans to balkanize and re-mold the Middle East are as old as the state of Israel itself. Those plans were actually among the essential designs of Israel's

the Soviet Union.

As long as the Soviet Union existed as a balancing superpower vis-à-vis the United States, US policy makers in the Middle East were somewhat constrained in their accommodations of territorial ambitions of hardline Zionism. That restraint was largely due to the fact that at the time the regimes that ruled Iraq, Syria and Libya were allies of the Soviet Union. That alliance, and indeed the broader counter-balancing power of Soviet bloc countries, served as a leash on the expansionist designs of Israel and the US accommodations of those designs. The demise of the Soviet Union removed that countervailing force.

The demise of the Soviet Union also served as a boon for Israel for yet another reason: it created an opportunity for a closer alliance

for the New American Century, America Israel Public Affairs Committee, Middle East Media Research Institute, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Middle East Forum, National Institute for Public Policy, Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, and Center for Security Policy.

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, these militaristic think tanks and their hawkish neoconservative operatives published a number of policy papers that clearly and forcefully advocated plans for border change, demographic change and regime change in the Middle East. Although the plan to change “unfriendly” regimes and balkanize the region was to begin with the removal of Saddam Hussein’s regime, as the “weakest link,” the ultimate goal was (and still is) regime change in Iran.

For example, in 1996 an influential Israeli think tank, the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, sponsored and published a policy document, titled “A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm,” which argued that the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should “make a clean break” with the Oslo peace process and reassert Israel’s claim to the West Bank and Gaza. It presented a plan whereby Israel would “shape its strategic environment,” beginning with the removal of Saddam Hussein and the installation of a Hashemite monarchy in Baghdad, to serve as a first step toward eliminating the anti-Israeli governments of Syria and Iran.

The influential Jewish Institute for the National Security Affairs (JINSA) also occasionally issued statements and

policy papers that strongly advocated “regime changes” in the Middle East. One of its hardline advisors Michael Ladeen, who also unofficially advised the George W. Bush administration on Middle Eastern issues, openly talked about the coming era of “total war,” indicating that the United States should expand its policy of “regime change” in Iraq to other countries in the region such as Iran and Syria. “In its fervent support for the hardline, pro-settlement, anti-Palestinian Likud-style policies in Israel, JINSA has essentially recommended that ‘regime change’ in Iraq should be just the beginning of a cascade of toppling dominoes in the Middle East.



The Arak Nuclear Complex in Iran

called “green revolution” and now through nuclear deal—because various US-Israeli led attempts at regime change from without failed. Indeed, such futile attempts at regime change prompted Iran to methodically build robust defense capabilities and geopolitical alliances, thereby establishing a military and geopolitical counterweight to US-Israeli plans in the region.

Furthermore, The Obama administration’s plan of “peaceful” regime change seems to be more like an experimental or tactical change of approach to Iran than a genuine commitment to peace, as it does not rule out the military option in the future. If Iran carries out all its 25-year long obligations under the deal, regime change from within would be complete and military option unnecessary—in essence, it would be a gradual, systematic retrogression to the days of the Shah. But if at any time in the long course of the implementation of the deal Iran resists or fails to carry out some of the highly draconian of those obligations, the US and its allies would again resort to military muscle, and more confidently too because success chances of military operations at that time would be much higher, since Iran would have by then greatly downgraded its military/defense capabilities.



Rally to support U.S. - Iran deal in Vancouver, Canada

It follows from this brief sketch of the lobby’s long-standing plans of regime change in Iran that, as mentioned earlier, its opposition to the nuclear deal is not because the deal does not represent a win for Israel, or a loss for Iran, but because Iran’s loss is not as big as the lobby would have liked it to be, that is, a devastating regime change through bombing and military aggression, as was done in Iraq or Libya.



Left to right: President Rouhani, President Obama, PM Netanyahu & PM Harper

What the lobby seems to overlook, or more likely, unwilling to acknowledge or accept, is that regime change in Iran is currently taking place from within, and the nuclear deal is playing a major role in that change. The lobby also seems to overlook or deny the fact that the Obama administration opted for regime change from within—first through the so-



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OUR STRUGGLE

AROUND THE WORLD



Venezuela Poll Shows Socialists on Track to Win Elections

Huge protest in Tokyo rails against PM Abe's security bills

August 17, 2015 (TeleSUR English)

August 30, 2015 (Reuters)

Over 60 percent of Venezuelans intend to vote in the country's parliamentary elections in Dec. 6, which are expected to be yet another victory for the government of President Nicolas Maduro, according to survey results released Sunday.

Tens of thousands of protesters gathered near Japan's parliament building on Sunday to oppose legislation allowing the military to fight overseas, the latest sign of public mistrust in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's security policy. In one of Japan's biggest protests in years - organizers put the crowd at 120,000 - people of all ages braved occasional rain to join the rally, chanting and holding up placards with slogans such as "No War" and "Abe, quit".

"Current projections indicate that 67 percent of Venezuelans would vote in the upcoming parliamentary elections, a record in this type of (vote)," said prominent Venezuelan journalist Jose Vicente Rangel, while announcing the survey results via private broadcaster Televen. The prediction that the majority of Venezuelans plan to vote is likely good news for the government of President Nicolas Maduro, as high turnout traditionally benefits his socialist party, the PSUV.

Demonstrators swarmed into the street before parliament's main gate after the crowd size made it impossible for police, out in heavy numbers, to keep them to the sidewalks. A second nearby park area also filled with protesters. The rally was one of more than 300 this weekend in Japan protesting Abe's move to loosen the post-war, pacifist constitution's constraints on the military.

Only 4 percent of survey respondents said they don't plan on voting, while 9 percent stating they were undecided, but leaning toward casting a vote. The survey was conducted by private pollster Hinterlaces. Thirty four percent of potential voters surveyed by Hinterlaces stated they favored the PSUV-led coalition, the Great Patriotic Pole (GPP), which was formed in 2011. Only 19 percent of survey respondents said they preferred the GPP's main rival, the right-wing opposition coalition, the MUD.

"Sitting in front of TV and just complaining wouldn't do," said Naoko Hiramatsu, a 44-year-old associate professor in French and one of the Tokyo protesters.

"If I don't take action and try to put a stop on this, I will not be able to explain myself to my child in the future," said Hiramatsu, holding a four-year-old son in her arms in the thick of the protest.

Rangel said the results indicated the majority of voters firmly support Maduro's government, and believe the president is capable of defeating the economic war waged by sectors of the country's opposition. "After 15 years of the Bolivarian Revolution, the opposition fails to still be perceived as an alternative," Rangel said.

Abe in July pushed through parliament's lower house a group of bills that let Japan's armed forces defend an ally under attack, a drastic shift in Japan's post-war security policy. The bills are now before the upper chamber, which is also controlled by Abe's ruling bloc and aims to pass the legislation before parliament's session ends on Sept. 27.

Venezuelans will vote on Dec. 6 in widely anticipated legislative elections. The GPP currently holds a majority in the legislature, the National Assembly.

Abe's ratings have taken a hit from opposition to the security bills. Media surveys showing those who oppose his government outnumber backers, and more than half are against the security bills.

More Venezuelan Seniors Join Latin America's Most Generous Pension Program

Cuban medical brigade departs for Dominica

August 18, 2015 (TeleSUR English)

"We need to make the Abe government realize the public is having a sense of crisis and angry. Let's work together to have the bills scrapped," Katsuya Okada, head of Japan's largest opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan, told the Tokyo rally.

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro announced via Twitter on Monday the incorporation of 22,600 new pensioners into the Venezuelan Institute of Social Security (IVSS).

The demonstration was the biggest in Tokyo since the mass protests against nuclear power in the summer of 2012, after the March 2011 Fukushima atomic disaster.

Venezuela's social pension program, known as the "Greater Love" mission, was introduced in 2012 and has dramatically increased pension coverage. "With the love of Hugo Chavez for the grandparents of this country, I will be granting 22,600 pensions," Maduro wrote via twitter.

August 31, 2015 (Cuban News Agency)

A 16-strong Cuban medical brigade departed this morning for Dominica, a small Caribbean island hit by Tropical Storm Erika last week.

The Venezuelan pension program guarantees an old-age pension from the age of 55 for women and age 60 for men, even to those who never contributed to social security, as well as to families with incomes below the minimum wage.

Erika left in its wake in Dominica over 20 people dead and over 50 missing with intense rains that caused mudslides and widespread devastation.

Previously, only senior citizens who had made social security contributions were eligible to receive a full pension from the IVSS. Under the governments of current President Maduro and his predecessor, former Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez, nearly 3 million elderly people have received pensions. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Venezuela has by far the most generous social pension program in Latin America.

The brigade, led by Doctor Norberto Ramos, includes doctors, nurses, and epidemiologists. Three civil and two electrical engineers are also travelling to the small island. The plane also carries 1.2 tons of medicines.

Doctor Ramos said that among these health professionals are some of those that went to Africa to fight Ebola and to Nepal and Chile after the earthquakes that ravaged those countries.

According to several news outlets, rescue teams are trying to get to communities that got isolated by the floods and mudslides.

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"Rumbo a Cuba" Initiative

Iniciativa "Rumbo a Cuba"



RUMBO A CUBA is fundraising for a much needed tractor & freezer truck for the Julio Antonio Mella International Solidarity (CIJAM) Camp in Caimito, Cuba. CIJAM is where thousands of international guests stay while volunteering in Cuba every year! It has been a real challenge for the camp to provide the necessary services to its guests, especially because of the cruel US blockade. We invite you to join us for the following events to

support our campaign!

INICIATIVA RUMBO A CUBA es un proyecto para la compra de un tractor y un camión refrigerado para el campamento de solidaridad internacional Julio Antonio Mella (CIJAM), en Caimito, Cuba. El CIJAM es donde miles de brigadistas internacionales de solidaridad con Cuba se alojan mientras hacen el trabajo voluntario en Cuba. Ha sido un verdadero desafío para el campamento proporcionar los servicios necesarios a sus brigadistas, sobre todo a causa del cruel bloqueo impuesto por los Estados Unidos. ¡Por favor, colabore y participe con nosotros para hacer el trabajo en unidad y hermandad para Cuba!

The Rumbo a Cuba Initiative is a project of

VCSC Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba

www.vancubasolidarity.com



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CRISIS AND HOPE IN PUERTO RICO

*By Manuel Yepe**

These days, the “For sale” sign on houses can be seen all over the place in San Juan, Puerto Rico and other cities on the island. These signs have been put up by more than 144,000 Puerto Ricans who are leaving the island to go abroad in search of employment. Some of these ads read, as a sort of retaliation against those responsible for their misfortune:

“THIS HOUSE IS FOR SALE, BUT NOT TO AMERICANS”

The current plight of Puerto Rico, however painful, could be the harbinger of a new awakening of patriotic awareness among the Puerto Rican people. This could open the way to their deserved inclusion in the part of America where they rightfully belong.

Puerto Ricans cannot be blamed for their misfortunes in the current crisis when foreign trade, currency, communications, citizenship and nationality laws and procedures, internal and external navigation, migration, labor and wage procedures, the land, airspace, coasts, and borders, ports, forests, minerals, as well as citizen military service and defense of the country are all the responsibility of a foreign power.

Since the US invasion of the island in 1898, Puerto Rico has successively experienced: military occupation in the first two years, a civilian government with a governor and supreme judge appointed by the president of the United States

until 1948, and a native governor of annexationist orientation (Luis Muñoz Marín), also appointed by Washington, with a bicameral legislature restricted to bilingual property owners subject to imperial veto.

In 1952, it became a “Associated Free State” and, to mask its colonial status, Washington gave the island the right to a constitution and the election of a governor and parliamentarians, while maintaining and ensuring the country’s colonial subordination to the United States.

Currently on the small territory of Puerto Rico there are about 15 bases commanded by the US Atlantic Command



(LANTCOM). The current state of bankruptcy of Puerto Rico is because –as its governor, Alexander Padilla said– the country does not have money to pay its debt of \$73 billion dollars to its creditors. This amount represents 100 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The country has not even been able to honor a partial payment of \$58 million to the Public Financing Corporation (PFC) of which it has only managed to pay the amount of \$628,000. The colonial government has officially declared itself unable to pay the debt (default), and there is not a glimpse of a solution for now. Neither Washington nor the IMF have ruled on the matter, or have contributed remedial solutions that would prevent the country from becoming insolvent by the end of this summer.

Peruvian journalist Vicky Pelaez, in the Russian magazine Sputnik, expresses the view that “actually, the country’s debt began to grow in the 1970s. “Its economy, since the middle of last century was based mainly on the pharmaceutical industry; but with the appearance of maquiladoras in Mexico and Asia, this sector began

to move to those regions in search of cheaper labor and higher productivity.”

“To attract multinational corporations to the island, Washington exempted them from paying taxes and thus further weakened the local economy.” The country, with its policy of mortgage liberalization, was further affected by the mortgage crisis of the beginning of the 21st Century. In 2006, the governor of Puerto Rico, alarmed by its weak GDP growth, made the decision to suspend the tax exemption for corporations. This led to the exodus and closing of companies.

The country went into recession and the migration of Puerto Ricans, mainly to Florida and New York, grew alarmingly.

Today, 45% of the total 3.5 million inhabitants of the island live in poverty, and 83% of its children live in poor areas.

Puerto Rico suffers the consequences of classic colonialism, in which a foreign country makes decisions for it and has the military and political capacity to manage the public and collective life of another country.

But the news coming from the island reflects a deepening awareness that the elimination of the US colonial system –which has been in place over the past 117 years – is the only road to achieving independence and the full exercise of its national sovereignty. These will bring about the recognition and international support indispensable for the country’s development.

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

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

LA CRISIS Y LAS ESPERANZAS DE PUERTO RICO



* EN ESPAÑOL *

*Por Manuel Yepe**

Por estos días proliferan por doquier en San Juan de Puerto Rico y otras ciudades de la isla anuncios de la puesta en venta de viviendas fijados por más de 144.000 puertorriqueños que están abandonando la isla para marchar al exterior en busca de empleo. Algunos de estos carteles expresan, como pretendida represalia a los causantes de su desgracia:

“SE VENDE ESTA CASA, PERO NO A LOS AMERICANOS”

La grave situación actual de Puerto Rico, por dolorosa que sea, pudiera constituir el augurio de un nuevo despertar de la conciencia patriótica del pueblo borinqueño que le abra merecido paso a su plena inclusión en la parte de América a que pertenece por derecho propio.

No se puede responsabilizar por desgracias como la actual crisis a los puertorriqueños, cuando el comercio exterior, la moneda, las comunicaciones, las leyes y procedimientos de ciudadanía y nacionalidad, la navegación interna y externa, los procedimientos migratorios, laborales y salariales, la tierra, los espacios aéreos, las costas y fronteras, los puertos, los bosques, el subsuelo mineral, así como el servicio militar ciudadano y la defensa del país, son de la incumbencia de un poder extranjero.

Desde la invasión estadounidense de la Isla en 1898, Puerto Rico ha conocido, sucesivamente, la ocupación militar en los dos primeros años; un gobierno civil con gobernador y juez supremo nombrados por el presidente de Estados

Unidos hasta 1948; un gobernador nativo de orientación anexionista (Luis Muñoz Marín), igualmente designado

por Washington, con un cuerpo Legislativo bicameral restringido a propietarios bilingües sujeto a veto imperial, y un “Estado Libre Asociado”, instaurado en 1952 para enmascarar el status colonial, otorgando a la Isla derecho a una Constitución y a la elección de gobernador y parlamentarios, pero manteniendo y asegurando la subordinación colonial a Estados Unidos. Actualmente hay en el reducido territorio de Puerto Rico unas 15 bases norteamericanas bajo el mando US Atlantic Command (LANTCOM).

La actual situación de bancarrota en la que ha caído Puerto Rico obedece, ha dicho su gobernador Alejandro Padilla, a que el país no tiene dinero para pagar su deuda de 73 mil millones de dólares a sus acreedores, cifra que representa el 100 por ciento de su PIB (Producto Interno Bruto). No ha podido siquiera cancelar en fecha reciente un pago parcial de 58 millones de dólares a la CFP (Corporación para el Financiamiento Público) del que sólo logró desembolsar una fracción de 628 mil dólares. El Gobierno colonial se ha declarado oficialmente incapacitado para pagar la deuda (default) sin que se vislumbre solución por el momento. Ni Washington ni el Fondo Monetario Internacional se han pronunciado sobre el asunto ni han aportado soluciones remediales que eviten que el país se declare insolvente hacia el fin de este verano.

Según criterio de la periodista peruana Vicky Peláez en la revista rusa Sputnik, “en realidad la deuda del país empezó a crecer desde los años 1970. Su economía desde la mitad del siglo pasado estaba basada principalmente en la industria farmacéutica pero con

la aparición de las maquiladoras en México y en Asia, este sector empezó a trasladarse a aquellas regiones en búsqueda de la mano de obra más barata y de mayor productividad. Para atraer las corporaciones multinacionales a la isla, Washington las exoneró del pago de impuestos y con ello debilitó aún más a la economía local”. La crisis hipotecaria al comienzo del Siglo XXI afectó aún más al país con su política de liberalización de la hipoteca.

En 2006, el gobernador de Puerto Rico, alarmado por el débil crecimiento del PIB tomó la decisión de suspender la exención fiscal a las corporaciones lo que provocó el éxodo y el cierre de las compañías. El país entró en recesión y la emigración de boricuas, principalmente a la Florida y Nueva York creció alarmantemente. Hoy, un 45 por ciento del total de 3,5 millones de habitantes de la isla vive en la pobreza y el 83 por ciento de los niños habitan en áreas pobres.

Puerto Rico sufre las consecuencias del coloniaje clásico, aquel en el que un país extranjero decide y tiene capacidad violenta y política para administrar la vida pública y colectiva de otro país. Pero las noticias que llegan de allí reflejan una profundización de la conciencia de que la eliminación del sistema colonial a que ha estado sometido por Estados Unidos durante los últimos 117 años es el único camino hacia el logro de la independencia y el ejercicio pleno de su soberanía nacional, propiciadores del reconocimiento y apoyo internacional indispensables para el desarrollo del país.

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An internment camp in Canada for immigrants and people considered to have dissenting political views during World War I

Pierre Laporte, the government responded by imposing the War Measures Act and lining the streets with over 6000 soldiers.

Once again the War Measures Act was used to target political opposition and instill fear. As "Canada's Human Rights History" by the Department of Sociology of the University of Alberta points out, "Their [military and police] actions were guided by a clear bias against nationalists and the political left in general, including many activists...The use of the emergency powers resulted in extensive human rights abuses. Media censorship was rampant, especially for student newspapers."

Racism and Criminalization

We see time and time again how imperialist governments use racism and criminalization to further their agendas. During World War I everyone was told to be afraid of Ukrainians, Austrians and Germans – and this helped justify the war abroad and the crackdown at home. During World War II it was the Japanese, Italians and Germans who were targeted in the same way.

Now the Conservative government is constantly trying to ratchet up tensions against Muslim communities. Again, this racism helps justify their violent and expensive wars, occupations and threats against primarily Muslim countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, Libya, Syria and Iran. The Canadian government's campaign of Islamophobia also creates divisions between poor and working people, and makes it much more difficult for us to stand together to defend our common interests.

It is also important to note how exactly the same strategies and policies are being used by the other imperialist countries involved in these wars and occupations. Take a look at what the governments of the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany

and Australia are doing both domestically and internationally and it's obvious that they are all reading from the same play book!

We must also be conscious of the fact that the wartime attacks usually open with racism, but always move quickly to

target political opponents – especially those representing working class interests such as trade unions and trade union organizers. This is no accident, as the working class and their allies represent the most serious threat to imperialist governments and their war agendas. When workers refuse to fight in wars, refuse to produce war products, refuse to ship war products, refuse to participate in anything related to war – the imperialist war machine comes to a standstill. The Canadian government has known this during every one of its war campaigns, and has therefore always made a deliberate attempt to attack working class organizations.



Japanese Canadians being transported to detention camps in British Columbia during World War II

While these attacks have been able to weaken unions and their memberships – they have definitely been unable to completely crush unions or the spirit of workers demanding their right to dignified working conditions and fair payment for their work. The increasingly heavy handed approach of federal and provincial governments against strikes is a good indication of how important

it is to them to control and contain these actions.

Has there been any major strike in Canada in the last decade which has not been declared illegal? Across Canada, teachers, nurses, hospital workers, postal workers, railroad workers, pilots, flight attendants, and more have all had their strikes declared illegal through back-to-work legislation which threatens people with huge fines and jail time. According to the Canadian Foundation for Labour Rights, "In the last three decades, the federal government alone passed 19 pieces of back-to-work legislation while provincial governments across the country have enacted 71 pieces of back-to-work legislation." They also report that 216 pieces of restrictive labour laws have been passed by federal and provincial governments in the last thirty years.

Unity!

There is a justifiably often quoted verse regarding our common interests by Martin Niemöller, a Protestant pastor and outspoken critic of Adolf Hitler. Mr. Niemöller also survived seven years in Nazi concentration camps.

First they came for the Communists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me— and there was no one left to speak for me.

While we are not living in Nazi Germany, we are confronted with same political, moral and strategic questions regarding our common interests against a government which has done nothing but try to weaken, divide, discredit, impoverish and silence poor and working people

at home and abroad. Bill C-51 is an attack on all of us, but also an opportunity for poor and working people to come together to build strong organizations which represent our common interests. We need to use every opportunity to reject division, strengthen our unity, and "Repeal Bill C-51!"

Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter: @thomasdavies59

continued from page 20

discuss the role of women in Cuban parliament. On June 9, 2015 the *New York Times* published, "The Cuban woman: A rising power" an article that stated, "Cuba consistently ranks high in international surveys regarding women's status, standing at 18 among 142 nations in women's political empowerment and at number two for percentage of women in parliament, according to the 2014 World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap report. By contrast, the United States is ranked at 54 in women's political empowerment and 83 for women in parliament (U.S. Senate and U.S. House)."

Continuing, the article explains, "Today, women make up nearly half of [Cuba's] work force and more than half of university faculties, and hold top portfolios in the ministries. Among the best educated in the West, they make up the majority of high school and college graduates, the majority in technical and administrative jobs, 33.6 percent of directors and executives, and a remarkable 48.9 percent of the Cuban par-

liament, the National Assembly." Maybe this is one of the reasons Rush Limbaugh is so afraid of Cuban socialism, he has often referred to feminists and those fighting for gender equality as 'feminazis' in his rants.

Limbaugh on Guantanamo

Limbaugh also makes it very clear that he is concerned about the future of the U.S. naval base and prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. You might think, oh finally he is making some sense, but he is not concerned in the way that most of humanity is troubled by Guantanamo. He said, "So then the next question, ladies and gentlemen: How long will it be...? Seriously, how long will it be before Barack Hussein Obama gives Guantanamo Bay back to Cuba? For all the talk about here the American flag today being raised today over Cuba, the American flag has been flying proudly at Guantanamo Bay."



U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba where torture and abuse conducted by U.S. forces runs rampant at the infamous prison camp

According to Limbaugh, an American flag has been proudly flying over Guantanamo. What exactly is proud about that flag? In 2011, Amnesty International published a 64 page report with the title, "Guantánamo: A Decade of Damage to Human Rights". The report concludes with the following paragraph, "A month before the 10th anniversary of the Guantánamo detentions, two retired US Marine generals characterized the detention facility as a "morally and financially expensive symbol of detainee abuse". It is not just a symbol of past abuse, however, but of a continuing assault by the USA on human rights principles. Two and a half years ago, President Obama said that the Guantánamo detentions were a "misguided experiment", but his administration has kept the laboratory operating. Also in 2009, Attorney General Eric Holder said



Is it the Cuban healthcare or U.S. healthcare that is only for the "elite"?

that he and President Obama were in agreement that "Guantánamo has come to represent a time and an approach that we want to put behind us". How much longer does the world have to wait until the USA steps into a future without the Guantánamo detention facility, and adopts an approach to countering terrorism that incorporates full respect for its international human rights obligations?" Guantanamo has become synonymous around the world with torture, illegal detentions, violations of human rights, hunger strikes, torturous force feeding, lack of access to due legal process and the hypocrisy of the U.S. war on terror. What is Limbaugh so proud of?

It is also unclear why Limbaugh is so worried about Obama giving up Guantanamo bay. Clearly that territory is not part of the United States, clearly it is attached to the rest of the sovereign island of Cuba- why shouldn't the U.S. government give it back to its rightful owners? Why shouldn't the U.S. government stop using Guantanamo as an international torture facility and give up their military base? Would the U.S. allow the Cuban government to have a Cuban military base in California, Florida or somewhere else in the United States?

Limbaugh on US foreign policy & freedom

While not directly discussing Cuba Limbaugh makes many great claims on behalf of America. He said things like, "Traditionally, America has liberated people from oppression all over the world and seen to it that freedom and economic advancement has been the story of the day." Adding to that he explains, "What is it that enabled people to elevate themselves and escape the bonds of poverty?" It wasn't social safety net programs. It wasn't big federal government. It was freedom, liberty, and capitalism which allowed this economic march." Well Limbaugh, the world begs to differ with your track record.

Fidel Castro has a great quote, he once said,

“They talk about the failure of socialism, but where is the success of capitalism in Africa, Asia and Latin America?” While the U.S. and its imperialist allies have prospered with capitalism, we have to ask how? It is not because they work harder or are inherently smarter. It is because they have stolen the wealth of other people. Whether we are talking about natural resources in Africa, sweat shops in Asia or cutting down the rainforests of Latin America to grow food to cheaply feed people in the so-called first world. But even that division, between the so-called north and south, rich and poor, is fake, because within the imperialist countries themselves there is a growing divide between rich and poor. Limbaugh is advocating what he sees as the successes of this system. While the rest of the world is looking around at the environmental impact, the social impact and the growing divisions between human beings and saying this has to stop!

Did you know that last week according to *Yahoo! News* a young American father, Brian Randolph, held up a bank in Michigan? He was later arrested and admitted that “his motive was to pay for his child’s chemotherapy since his insurance company was no longer paying for the pricey treatments. The child suffers from an eye cancer called retinoblastoma. The 23-year-old has been charged with armed robbery and bank robbery, which could land him a maximum sentence of life in prison.”

This news story was really infuriating. This is one small example of why many refuse to believe Mr. Limbaugh and his co-thinkers, we refuse to believe that capitalism is the only way forward for humanity. Shouldn’t jobs, healthcare, education, and homes be considered basic human rights guaranteed to every human being at birth?

Of course there are many further claims that Limbaugh makes during his segment about the U.S. government being known as “a beacon for freedom”, that the U.S. has “liberated people to freedom” and that the U.S. “eliminated tyranny where we could”. These are important points that need to be confronted, but there is no space for exposing all of his hyperbolic nonsense in this article.

Why is Limbaugh so afraid of Cuba?

Limbaugh’s ideas about Cuba represent the old guard of the American ruling class. These are people who have generally been in favour of the U.S. policy of blockade and sabotage against the Cuban revolution since 1959. This group does not feel that the last 50 years of hostility between the U.S. and Cuba have been a waste. They

want to isolate Cuba and its socialist example and pretend it does not exist.

Today with the reestablishment of US-Cuba relations we see a different side of the US ruling class, a side that is hated by Mr. Limbaugh and his co-thinkers. Despite what Limbaugh claims, the Obama administration still hopes to see regime change in Cuba. Obama also hopes to defeat the gains of Cuba’s socialist revolution. However, Obama believes that the policy of the last 50 years has been a failure at reaching these goals, so he plans use his favourite ‘smart power’ strategy with Cuba.

The term “smart power” is defined by the Center for Strategic and International Studies as “an approach that underscores the necessity of a strong military, but also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions of all levels to expand American influence and establish legitimacy of American action.” This means that at this time Obama plans to re-establish US-Cuba relations while keeping the U.S. blockade against Cuba and holding on to the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo. This is a part of the devious balancing act. Make no mistake, Limbaugh claims that Obama is a friend to the Cuban revolution and Fidel Castro, this is not true. Obama’s plan is basically the carrot and the stick, rather than Limbaugh who would prefer to just use a stick.

Cuba is well aware that the United States government, whether Republican or Democrat, is no friend of the Cuban people or their great socialist revolution. However, the Cuban government has weighted its options and believes that going with the Obama administration on this path is the best at this time. However, Cuba continues to push for an end to the U.S. blockade, for the U.S. to fully return Guantanamo (Obama just wants to close the torture prison, not abandon the military base) and that the U.S. stop funding their so-called ‘democracy building projects’ in Cuba, such as those of USAID.

Despite what Limbaugh claims, the Obama administration is not at all interested in listening to those aspects of Cuba’s legitimate demands. So it is up to the peace-loving people of the world, those who believe in justice and Cuba’s right to self-determination and sovereignty, to raise our voices along with the people of Cuba and keep the pressure on the U.S. government.

End the U.S. Blockade on Cuba Now!

U.S. Out of Guantanamo Now!

Follow Tamara Hansen on Twitter:
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OUR HERITAGE



Rosa Luxemburg

Revolutionary Marxist Leader
1871-1919

Excerpt from "Social Reform or Revolution", written in 1900.

Konrad Schmidt declares that the conquest of a social-democratic majority in Parliament leads directly to the gradual “socialisation” of society. Now, the democratic forms of political life are without a question a phenomenon expressing clearly the evolution of the State in society. They constitute, to that extent, a move toward a socialist transformation. But the conflict within the capitalist State, described above, manifests itself even more emphatically in modern parliamentarism. Indeed, in accordance with its form, parliamentarism serves to express, within the organisation of the State, the interests of the whole society. But what parliamentarism expresses here is capitalist society, that is to say, a society in which capitalist interests predominate. In this society, the representative institutions, democratic in form, are in content the instruments of the interests of the ruling class. This manifests itself in a tangible fashion in the fact that as soon as democracy shows the tendency to negate its class character and become transformed into an instrument of the real interests of the population, the democratic forms are sacrificed by the bourgeoisie, and by its State representatives. That is why the idea of the conquest of a parliamentary reformist majority is a calculation which, entirely in the spirit of bourgeois liberalism, pre-occupies itself only with one side – the formal side – of democracy, but does not take into account the other side, its real content. All in all, parliamentarism is not a directly socialist element impregnating gradually the whole capitalist society. It is, on the contrary, a specific form of the bourgeois class State, helping to ripen and develop the existing antagonisms of capitalism.

A 'HUMANITARIAN CATASTROPHE' DESERVES A HUMAN RESPONSE!

**LET'S GET UNITED TO DEMAND AN END TO
WARS & OCCUPATIONS!**

-MAWO organizes against war & occupation

By Noah Fine

On Sunday August 30th, 2015, a US-backed Saudi airstrike killed 31 innocent workers when they aimed and fired upon a bottling plant in the province of Hajjah. Another testament to what the United Nations on August 19th called a 'humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen'.

Meanwhile the ongoing and ever expanding US led wars and occupations in the Middle East and North Africa are leading millions of people to flee for their lives in search of safety and basic human necessities. Syrians alone account for more than 4 million refugees who have fled to escape the US orchestrated destruction of their country.

With the ever worsening crisis of war and occupation, Vancouver based Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) has been organizing, educating and mobilizing supporters of peace in consistent monthly activities.



On Tuesday August 11th, 2015, MAWO organized a forum in the campaign to defend WikiLeaks whistle-blower, Private Chelsea Manning. People from all walks of life participated in the forum demonstrating their solidarity with this *Soldier of Humanity*. Since the forum a new campaign has begun in Vancouver called the *Free Chelsea Manning Campaign*. The campaign held a fundraiser on August 23rd complete with live music, poetry and film at an event aimed at raising much needed donations towards Chelsea's legal defence fund.

On Tuesday August 21st, 2015, MAWO organized its first in a series of discussions on the Iran nuclear deal. The forum titled "One Step Closer to Peace: Why Iran and the P5+1 nuclear deal is a turning point in the Middle East" enticed many including an encouraging participation from the Iranian community. The forum featured



writer and researcher Phil Wilayto speaking via video conference from Richmond, Virginia. Following Wilayto was Iranian social justice activist and Fire This Time Political Editor, Ali Yerevani.

The Iran deal forum was followed the next day by MAWO's monthly anti-war petition drive and rally. Peace and anti-war activists gathered in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery asking many of the thousands of people passing by to sign petitions against the wars in Yemen, Syria and for the freedom of Chelsea Manning. Thousands of anti-war fliers were distributed, hundreds of petition signatures collected and many great discussions took place while MAWO activists interrupted the normal flow of downtown Vancouver bringing anti-war and pro peace politics to the scene.

As the summer comes to a close MAWO is preparing for a busy month of anti-war activities in the Fall. With many different events to participate in, MAWO is encouraging all people who believe in peace to get involved and join the anti-war movement. On campuses, in the streets or in forums, the time to come together to protest against war and occupation has never been more important than now.



**"By Any Means
Necessary..."**



MALCOLM X SPEAKS

Well, I am one who doesn't believe in deluding myself. I'm not going to sit at your table and watch you eat, with nothing on my plate, and call myself a diner. Sitting at the table doesn't make you a diner, unless you eat some of what's on that plate. Being here in America doesn't make you an American. Being born here in America doesn't make you an American. Why, if birth made you American, you wouldn't need any legislation; you wouldn't need any amendments to the Constitution; you wouldn't be faced with civil-rights filibustering in Washington, D.C., right now. They don't have to pass civil-rights legislation to make a Polack an American.

No, I'm not an American. I'm one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million black people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. So, I'm not standing here speaking to you as an American, or a patriot, or a flag-saluter, or a flag-waver—no, not I. I'm speaking as a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare.

These 22 million victims are waking up. Their eyes are coming open. They're beginning to see what they used to only look at. They're becoming politically mature.

Excerpt from Malcolm X "The Ballot or the Bullet" (April 3, 1964)

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