

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



# Fire This Time!

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# KINDER MORGAN PIPELINE: A VITAL TEST IN DEFENCE OF MOTHER NATURE

By Thomas Davies

*“So no, the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project is not dead and will be continued stronger. There is too much at stake for the government to let it go now, and they’ve shown time and time again*



*that the evidence doesn’t matter. They have already had countless opportunities to cancel the project on solid grounds with even less political consequences than there would be now.”* - No TMX Pipeline Expansion, Not Now, Not Ever! (Fire This Time, Volume 12, Issue 9)

Last month we reported on another big development in the fight against the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion. A Federal Appeals Court had “quashed” the government approval of the controversial Tar Sands pipeline project from Edmonton to Burnaby. The decision was based on a flawed National Energy Board (NEB) process which had not considered the marine impact of increased tanker traffic, and the government’s failure to fulfil its constitutional requirement to

“meaningfully consult” with Indigenous Nations.

It was an important win in a decade-long battle, but it was just as important to emphasize that the project wasn’t dead. One month later and it’s clear the government of Canada is still committed to building the pipeline, regardless of clear environmental, political, economic and Indigenous rights concerns. It’s also clear that it’s committed to using the same travesty of a process to address the two areas of Federal Appeals Court concern. There has been no change of heart. There has been no soul-searching.

## NEB – Built to Fail

Don’t believe us? Check out the NEB marine impact review process. They will have only 22 weeks to finish their review. They also gave members of the public and intervenors less than a week to apply for comment and register for an upcoming public hearing.

Chief Lee Spahan of the Coldwater Indian Band sat through the last public hearing held by the NEB. She heard the news about the new timeline from a phone call from a National Observer reporter. “I’m frustrated. I haven’t heard from any federal representatives from Canada whatsoever,” Spahan said. “We won a court case and still can’t get them to the table. Are they giving people less than a week to comment and register? Why would they give such a short timeline?”

According to lawyers from EcoJustice who won the recent Federal Appeals Court case, “Southern Resident killer whales already face imminent threats

to their survival and recovery. After the death of J50 earlier this month, there are just 74 whales remaining — down from 82 at the time of the original NEB assessment.

We know from the uncontroverted evidence our clients presented during the NEB’s review of the Trans Mountain project that this pipeline expansion has a greater than 50 percent chance of dooming these endangered orcas to extinction.”

Unfortunately, the ones who are to consider this compelling evidence and issue an unbiased report don’t inspire any confidence. All were appointed by former Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Alison Scott oversaw the initial flawed review of the pipeline. Lyne Mercier was previously forced to recuse herself from the 2016 review of the Energy East pipeline project following an exposed private meeting with an industry representative, and according to Murray Lyttle’s NEB bio he has “held a series of senior positions in the oil, gas and mining industries” with “nearly 40 years’ experience in the energy and mining sectors spanning North America, South America and Asia.”

Does anyone want to bet what kind of decision this group is going to come up with?

The Union of BC Indian Chiefs issued a blistering response to the situation. “If the final assessment says anything less than that this project is dangerous for our waters and marine ecosystems, it will be made remarkably clear that the



Climate Convergence rally and march as part of the ‘Rise for Climate’ International Day of Action, September 8, 2018.



NEB has become the official mouthpiece of Justin Trudeau's fanatical determination to build an expensive, disastrous, unwanted pipeline. Unbiased facts born out of science and proper consultation that lasts for longer than a week will not yield the response the Trudeau government wants, and this is not a secret to them."

### No Consent, No Pipeline

All signs point to the Federal government trying to find a retired Supreme Court Justice to organize the "meaningful" consultation. However, given that they have already announced their intention to build the project (especially after buying it for 4.5 billion) how meaningful can the consultations be? Especially when the government also cannot mention the word "consultation" without quickly adding, "But they can't veto!"

Keith Stewart, the senior energy strategist with Greenpeace Canada, had a good summary: "It's not true consultation or science if you've decided on the answer before asking the question."

The other important consideration is that the true standard is not consultation, but "free, prior and informed consent" as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This was something PM Trudeau promised to uphold if elected.

### September 8 Rise for Climate

Fortunately, the 2000 people came to the "Build Our Future, Not a Pipeline" action in Vancouver on September

8 understand that they can't rely on the government for leadership when it comes to standing up for the environment and stopping the pipeline. The march and rally, which was part of the worldwide "Rise for Climate" Day of Action was

rains of the transition from summer to fall, the crowd marched through downtown, growing as people walking by joined in the chanting. The lead banner declared, "Not Trudeau Pipeline! Not Now, Not Ever!"

Every step of this process has involved lies and coverups by the government of Canada. It has also involved a continuing movement of people which has failed to be demoralized by the absolute lack of political or moral leadership by our so-called leaders. Without the real leadership of Indigenous Nations and the grassroots climate justice



Climate Convergence Rally and March as part of the 'Rise for Climate' International Day of Action, September 8, 2018.

an important demonstration of the continuing grassroots opposition to the project.

The event was organized by the grassroots Climate Convergence coalition, as well as UBC 350, UBC Common Energy, the UBC Social Justice Centre and 350 Vancouver. Speakers included Indigenous leaders and organizers, high school and university students, city councillors and those who had been arrested for blocking the Kinder Morgan Tank Farm. While everyone had a different perspective and experience, the unifying message was that the struggle to defend the planet and stop the pipeline needed to continue full force.

Even as the skies opened with the first

movement, this project would already be well away under construction. The Trudeau government is now forced to take increasingly drastic and desperate measures which further expose their lies and hypocrisy. This is an opportunity we must take advantage of. What happens with this pipeline will be truly decisive. This project will never be in the interests of the majority of poor and working people in Canada, and we need to be on streets making that case and showing the power of united action. Build Our Future, Not a Pipeline!

Follow Thomas on Twitter: @thomasdavies59

Follow Climate Convergence on Twitter: @Climate604

## Battle of Ideas Press

Upcoming Book Release

SYSTEM CHANGE  
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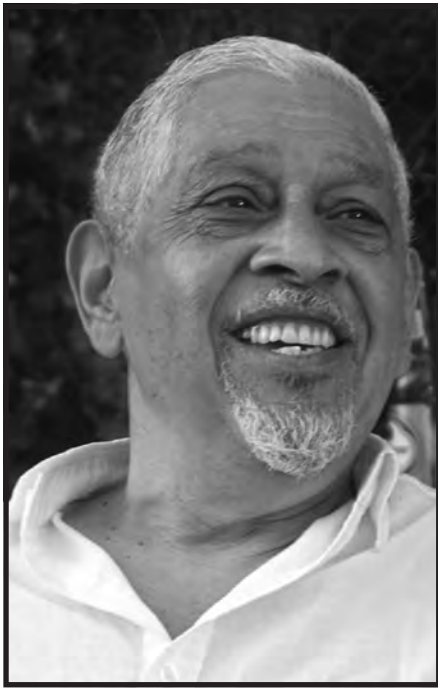
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By Thomas Davies

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*By Alison Bodine*

*In July, Fire This Time interviewed Puerto Rican revolutionary activists Jocelyn Velázquez and Rogelio Maldonado in Puerto Rico. (“We are the best example of the disaster that has been created by the capitalist system,” FTT Volume 12, Issue 7)*

*This month, we continue the important discussion about Puerto Rico with Frank Velgara, a member of the Puerto Rican diaspora living and organizing in New York City. Frank is with the Coordinating Committee of Call to Action on Puerto Rico, which formed in 2015 to confront the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA) that was being passed by the Obama administration. He is also with the New York Committee of the Socialist Front of Puerto Rico.*

**Fire This Time (FTT):** Over one year since Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, it has been exposed, even in mainstream media, that at least 3,000 people died. This is a devastating death toll that the U.S. government continues to deny. How does this, and the destruction that the hurricane brought to the island, demonstrate the complete failure of the Trump administration towards the people of Puerto Rico?

**Frank Velgara:** First, it is important to note that with the establishment of the fiscal control board to oversee all of the institutions: legislative, cultural, economic, on the island, the Trump administration, after the Obama administration passed the PROMESA bill, was ready to encourage investment in Puerto Rico, working tandem with the colonial government. They passed several laws to make it easier for U.S. corporate interests to

# Interview with Puerto Rican Revolutionary Activist Frank Velgara

## *Puerto Rico One Year After Hurricane Maria: continuation of accelerated colonial exploitation*

invest in Puerto Rico.

They were already in the process of doing that in coordination with Ricardo Rosselló, the pro-statehood governor. So, when the hurricane hit, the infrastructure of the colony, which was already weak, collapsed and the legislature convened, and the pro-statehood governor reached out to the Trump administration. Their response was to send FEMA aid supposedly. That said, containers of which are still rotting today in the Port of San Juan, never reached the people and the Trump administration saw it as another opportunity to put another feather in the cap of their administration.

Rosa Clemente, one of the activists here, went to Puerto Rico and sent back video of the FEMA people partying in the hotels, and getting drunk, meanwhile, the people didn't have food and water and had difficulty travelling because all of the roads were blocked.

This is a classic empire-colony situation, an expected response to the disaster. It happened with the British in India; it happened with the French in Algiers and other parts of Africa with the British. It underscores the colonial relationship that each administration has had with the colony of Puerto Rico.

The hurricane, the level of devastation, the response of the Trump administration of “why are these Puerto Ricans whining” or “it’s not that bad, FEMA is there.” The idea that the colonial government was trying to help it not true.

The comrades Jocelyn and Rogelio, that you interviewed previously, who live in San Juan were alerted immediately after the hurricane struck that an elderly person who needed oxygen wasn't getting it, so they took the lady to the offices of the Mayor of San Juan, Carmen Yulín, and they said, “Look there is nothing that we can do, just call us when she dies, and we will send somebody bags.” All of that was sanctioned by the Trump administration.

It was difficult for the people, even the mainstream media, to believe the level of incompetence that was going on.

**FTT:** How do you see the current political

situation in Puerto Rico? It seems there have been increasing struggles, strikes and protests over the past year.

**FV:** Several things have happened regarding the growth of resistance on the island. That resistance started with the first meeting of the financial control board under Obama at the Condado Hilton Hotel. Thousands of people, mainly young people and students, shut that down. They called the tactical police force, the local police, the Puerto Rican National Guard – what we call la fuerza de choque. There was rock throwing, and a bottle was thrown, and confrontations like those that hadn't been seen. That was before the hurricane.

Already, people like the folks who you interviewed when your comrade went to Puerto Rico, the movement la Jornada Se Acabaron Las Promesas, were forming a coalition with youth and a lot of the pro-Independence folk to stop that first meeting, while we were doing the same thing here down on Wall Street. We coordinated with them to shut-down the first meeting. People were arriving in their limousines, and they



were jumping back into their cars. We had people inside, people outside picketing.

That was the beginning of us realizing here in the diaspora that there was a new crop of activists and militants, people that saw what was happening with bringing minimum wage down to \$4.25 from \$7.30, or the raiding of the pension funds for retirees. There was already the beginning of that effervescent movement.

It was good that that was happening, because the people that joined that beginning resistance, who were from the *Comedores Sociales* initiative, who were already doing work in the communities to feed the homeless, people from the feminist movement, and the LGBT movement, they were all involved in beginning to form what was to become the *la Jornada Se Acabaron Las Promesas* movement.

When the hurricane hits, on the one hand, there were these people who were already beginning to organize themselves. The best thing that happened was that the building that housed the teacher's federation of Puerto Rico wasn't touched. It became the coordinating base for all of the progressive and community organizations. That resistance began.

The same type of movement began within the unions; the Dock Workers Union (UTM); the Independent Union of Airport Workers (UITA); the UTIER (Union of Electrical Workers) historically has been one of the most militant unions on the island, and one of the most powerful because they control the electrical infrastructure; and the Teacher's Federation (UMPR). Those historically have been linked to the independence movement.

The fact that the Teacher's Federation had the physical building to be the coordinating base helped and helped us to identify who needed funds. We set up a GoFundMe in the first three or four months that raised about \$10-12,000 to be distributed by the people we have known for years down there.

The Santos father and son, who were the leaders of the Electrical Workers, also began to call a meeting of Procol. ProSol was Pro-Solidarity, and it has been around, but it has been mainly dormant, until the resistance of the control board and then the total lack of aid coming from the Trump administration after the hurricane hit.

This has been very encouraging for us who are organizing the pro-Independence diaspora here in the United States and working with progressive and left forces here to do that.

The other thing is, is that this resistance is multi-generational. For a long time, the people leading the movement were my generation or older, so the fact that there is a whole new crop is encouraging. An interesting note is that when the first giant demonstration was called against the fiscal control board in San Juan at the Condado Hilton, the traditional



Protest for Puerto Rico in Washington, D.C.



NYC Protest Against the U.S. Hurricane Response (Lack of) in Puerto Rico and Underreporting of the Death-toll, June 11, 2018.

Independence organizations were slow to respond. The young people talked to the youth arms of the PIP (Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño), of the MINH (Movimiento Independentista Nacional Hostosiano), and the MST (Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores). The young people from these organizations just joined. They didn't wait for a big discussion, for the leadership to discuss, they just went out into the streets.

It was great because, I went to the last Congress of the MST as an observer, but of the roughly 80 or 90 full members, over 70% were young people. They were the sons and daughters of a lot of the comrades I have known. I was a founding member

of the Socialist Front; I used to go to the island six and seven times a year, I was a founding member of the MST when the MST fused with the PSR (Partido Socialista Revolucionario). My connection to Puerto Rico has been solid since my grandmother was a Nationalist activist.

**FTT: What are the immediate needs of the people of Puerto Rico today?**

**FV:** There is a need for material aid. What we have done since the hurricane hit is identified left and progressive forces and Unions and environmental groups that have been there for years because we know that because of their anticolonial stature they are not getting aid.

For example, one of the biggest non-profits, in the U.S., which is United Way, made a special call to raise millions to send water to Puerto Rico, and do you know what they did? They sent it to WalMart in Puerto Rico three months after the hurricane, and they proceeded to sell the water to the people that could get to the WalMart.

There is an issue of material aid, but what I was telling the audience at the People's Forum is that we need to identify the people that have history and that represent the new resistance because we have to come up with ways to support them.

We brought organizers from Se Acabaron Las Promesas on tour during the United Nations hearing to meet with different communities here, and we had to raise money to do that. Call to Action on Puerto Rico is more focused on raising political support. The interview by Fire This Time from Puerto Rico was excellent, that is the

kind of support, political and moral along with raising aid for the people that we know are there that are part of the progressive and left and resistance movement on the island.

Also, educating the diaspora here, which is what we are trying to do building this network. When the hurricane hit, we had people in Nashville, Tennessee, in Connecticut, in Boston, in Philly, in Newark, New Jersey, Jersey City, New York City. All of us have family and comrades in Puerto Rico, so the lack of communication created a lot of trauma for many of us. But, we knew that we had to reach out to the movement

*continued on page 14*



*By Janine Solanki*

On September 25, 2018, an airstrike in Kunduz Province, Afghanistan killed three people, a 45-year old woman and two teenage girls. “They martyred three women. My son, who is a university student in economics faculty, and my daughter, Atifa, are wounded — they are in a serious condition in the hospital currently,” said Sher Mohammed, a teacher in the village school and husband of the woman killed in the attack. “They destroyed my life.”

This is an account from just one of the increasingly frequent airstrikes carried out by American forces and more recently also by the Afghan Air Force. The weekend before, 21 civilians were killed in two airstrikes, reported by the United Nations (UN). On September 25 the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported an airstrike hit the house of a teacher in Kapisa province the week before, killing nine



members of the same family. The reports go on and on, reflecting the 52% increase of deaths from airstrikes in the first six months of 2018, compared to the same period as 2017. The UN also reported that women and children make up more than half of all aerial-attack civilian casualties.

These grim statistics are not from the “peak years” of the war on Afghanistan – they current and ongoing, after 17 years of war and occupation.

#### **Rewind to where it began**

On October 7, 2001, the U.S. government invaded Afghanistan touting the claim that their war on Afghanistan was a “war on terror” prompted by the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The fact is the U.S. had long vied for control over Afghanistan, and 9/11 just provided a convenient excuse to bang the drums of war. For centuries Afghanistan’s strategic location has been a target for foreign powers wanting to gain economic and military control of the region. The

repeated need for Afghans to defend their territory has given Afghanistan the reputation of “the graveyard of empires” – a warning that the U.S. has not heeded.

Although the governments of the U.S., Canada and other imperialist allies used nice-sounding excuses such as “liberating women” and “promoting democracy” to convince their populations to support this war, the fact is that Afghanistan has already proved it doesn’t need Western involvement to achieve these goals. The U.S. is responsible

## **THE NEW ERA OF WAR AND OCCUPATION**

### **17 YEARS OF WAR AND OCCUPATION IN AFGHANISTAN: WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?**



for the downfall of these progress previously made in Afghanistan. One might be surprised to learn how Afghan women first had the right to vote in 1919 – one year before women in the U.S. achieved this right! By the 1970’s – 80’s women in Afghanistan were experiencing new advances in their rights and their roles in society. Even former U.S. President George W. Bush noted in

December 2001, “Before the Taliban came, women played an incredibly important part of [Afghan] society. Seventy percent of the nation’s teachers were women. Half of the government workers in Afghanistan were women, and forty percent of the doctors in the capital of Kabul were women. The Taliban destroyed that progress.”

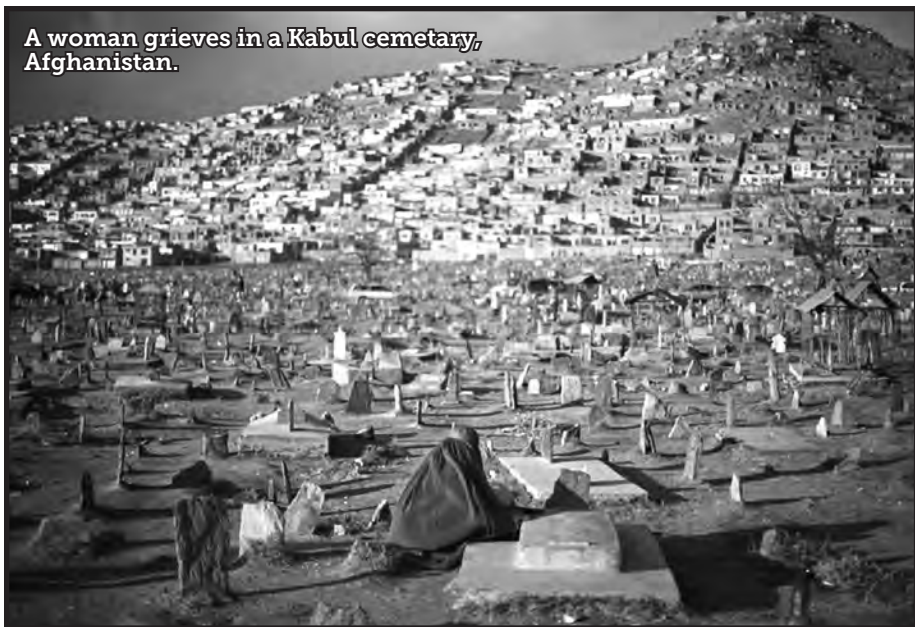
However, the Taliban didn’t appear out of anywhere – they grew out of the remnants of the Mujahadeen, a group of fighters whom the U.S. sponsored and trained to fight the Soviet Union during their occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980’s. This story is far too familiar, as today countries in the region face the threat of terrorist groups such as Daesh (also known as ISIS) after years of U.S. funding and arming of so-called “moderate rebels” in Syria. During the 1980’s, U.S. covert operations went from funding, arming and training, to even indoctrination via school books. The Washington Post reported in 2002 how “in



the twilight of the Cold War, the United States spent millions of dollars to supply Afghan schoolchildren with textbooks filled with violent images and militant Islamic teachings, part of covert attempts to spur resistance to the Soviet occupation. The primers, which were filled with talk of jihad and featured drawings of guns, bullets, soldiers and mines, have served since then as the Afghan school’s system’s core curriculum. Even the Taliban used the American-produced books...”

U.S. ambitions in Afghanistan are much bigger than one country and are part of a long-range strategy to gain hegemony of the region, opening a new era of war and occupation. In a March 2007 interview by Democracy Now with former U.S. General Wesley Clark, he recounted being shown a memo by another general at the Pentagon, shortly after the bombing of Afghanistan began. He recalled that the memo “describes how we’re going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then

**A woman grieves in a Kabul cemetery, Afghanistan.**



Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran.” During the early days of the war in Afghanistan, plans for the next targets in this new era of war and occupation were already underway. Today, we see Iraq occupied by the U.S. for 15 years, Libya in the chaos following a NATO war, Syria in the turmoil of seven years of U.S. covert and overt war, increased U.S. military involvement throughout Africa, Saudi-led, the U.S.-backed war on Yemen, and sanctions and threats against Iran. The infamous memo was far too accurate. The impetus for this war drive has been the desire of imperialist countries to save their failing capitalist economies with the band-aid fix of new markets, resources and cheap labour, and competition with the growing world powers of Russia and China. The price has been the lives of people in these oppressed nations.

### **War, war and more war**

The initial invasion of Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, by the United States was initially supported by the UK and Canada, followed by more imperialist countries allying with the U.S. In 2003, when the U.S. launched its brutal invasion of Iraq, and imperialist “division of labour” took place. The occupation of Afghanistan then came under the banner of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). This NATO occupation was the largest in its history, with more than 130,000 troops from 51 countries at its height. This included about 100,000 U.S. troops at its peak in 2011.

Throughout the years there have been numerous extensions that have made “end date” something of a cruel joke. Troop levels

have gone up and down, and are currently on the rise. On June 13, 2017, U.S. President Trump announced that 4000 additional U.S. troops would be deployed to Afghanistan, joined by 3000 additional forces promised by NATO. This brings the total troop number to nearly 20,000 in Afghanistan.

The hidden number though, is how many “private military contractors” are on the ground in Afghanistan. These private military companies are essentially mercenary soldiers for hire, facing little to no accountability. One of the largest and most infamous companies, formerly called Blackwater, made headlines when it was responsible for the massacre of 14 Iraqi civilians in 2007. Blackwater received contracts of more than \$2 billion from the U.S. for military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, reported by the Financial Times on August 7, 2017. The company has since changed its name numerous times, currently operating as Academi, which has proposed to operate in Afghanistan, which the U.S. government is considering. Already there are currently 26,922 U.S. Department of Defense contractors in Afghanistan, as per a 2018 U.S. Department of Defense report titled Contractor Support of U.S. Operations in the USCENTCOM Area Of Responsibility.

Alongside this shady, privatized method that the U.S. is using to carry out the war in Afghanistan, another way the U.S. government has kept the details of the war hidden is by the increased use of drone warfare. A weapon of choice under the Obama administration, this “hidden war” takes the eyes of the American public away from the war zone, when a U.S. soldier can drive to work in the morning, remotely fly a drone and launch airstrikes from an

office, and be home for dinner. Since the Bureau of Investigative Journalism started recording the U.S. drone war in 2015, in Afghanistan there have been at least 4130 confirmed strikes, killing a reported 3923 to 5279 people. These are Afghan people going about their day when a drone quietly appears and remotely takes away their lives.

While these drone attacks have continued under the Trump administration, he has chosen decidedly louder weapons to make sure that from Afghanistan to the U.S., everyone knows the war in Afghanistan is not over. On April 13, 2017, the U.S. military dropped the most powerful non-nuclear bomb, the GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast Bomb (MOAB), nicknamed the “mother of all bombs” for its extraordinary, 21,600-pound force. This show of force came at a \$170,000 price tag. More recently, on September 27, 2018, a new, \$115 million F-35B stealth aircraft made its combat debut in Afghanistan, dropping more than \$40,000 worth of bombs on a mined weapons cache.

While these one-day snapshots offer a glimpse into the financial cost of the war on Afghanistan, 17 years of war certainly adds up. The Cost of Wars Project at Brown University has estimated that the war in Afghanistan has cost the U.S. roughly \$2 trillion. However, this number balloons when adding spending by the Department of Veteran Affairs, and the interest incurred on money that the U.S. has borrowed to fund this war. As of 2018, the Pentagon has noted that the war in Afghanistan costs U.S. taxpayers \$45 billion per year. These numbers are just considering the cost to U.S. taxpayers. North of the border, Canada’s role in the war in Afghanistan cost taxpayers in Canada at least \$18 billion.

The amount of money spent to occupy, bomb and destroy a country is even more appalling when you consider that 32 million Americans are without health insurance, and a June 2018 UN report found that about 20 million Americans live in “extreme poverty.” The war on Afghanistan is also a war on poor and working people in the U.S., whose government justifies funding a war machine but claims do not have enough money to take care of its own people.

It is not just U.S. civilians feeling the pinch, but soldiers returning from war who may face physical wounds or mental health issues after experiencing the inhuman effects of war. After being used up as pawns in a war for the U.S. capitalist ruling class profit, U.S. veterans face rates of suicide that are 1.5 times greater than non-veteran adults, according to the Department of Veterans

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While in New York City for the United Nations General Assembly during the last week of September the Prime Minister of Canada spoke about Venezuela. As he defended the government of Canada's outrageous decision to lead the right-wing attempt to bring the President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro to the International Criminal Court Trudeau said, "The message is that the situation in Venezuela is catastrophic. There is a humanitarian crisis going on in a country that used to be one of the most successful and prosperous countries in South America."

Interestingly, with this one rhetorical and inflated lie, meant to justify Canada's intervention in the internal affairs of the sovereign and independent country of Venezuela, Trudeau has nicely summed up a recent report on Venezuela on the CBC Radio's "The Current."

Host Anna Maria Tremonti, began the Venezuela segment during the September 11, 2018 episode of The Current in so many words, stating, "An estimated 2.3 million Venezuelans and counting have packed up and left their country over the last four years. That's about 7% of the population, an exodus that could soon rival the Syrian migration crisis regarding its size and the impact that it is having on neighbouring countries, according to the UN. But Venezuelans are not fleeing civil war; they are fleeing food shortages and runaway inflation in an oil-rich nation."

Disaster. Crisis. Once oil-rich nation. This is the go-to rhetoric of the government of Canada, and now also, of the CBC and Tremonti, which is nothing but a mouthpiece of the government when it comes to their so-called reporting about

the country of Venezuela.

The problem with this is that the CBC and veteran journalist Anna Maria Tremonti isn't the government of Canada. They are, in fact, publicly-funded journalism that is supposed to operate based on its Mission and Principles; empty statements

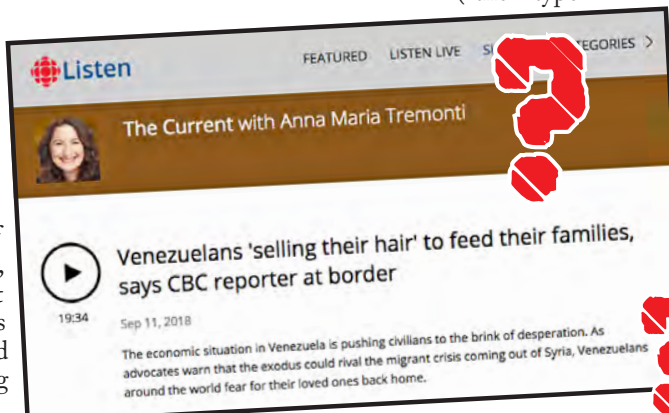
anything but.

The objective of the government of the United States and their imperialist allies, including Canada, is to overthrow the government of President Nicolas Maduro and reverse the gains of the Bolivarian Revolutionary process. It is now also, the objective of Tremonti and the CBC?

For Tremonti and The Current, these basic principles of bourgeois journalism have most certainly been thrown out the window, in favour of the far more sensationalist, bombastic, pro-intervention journalism - yellow journalism by definition ("the type of f

# WHY IS THE CBC LYING ABOUT VENEZUELA? ANNA MARIA TREMONTI MANUFACTURES DISSENT

such as, "We are independent of all lobbies and all political and economic influence" or "Balance - On issues of controversy, we ensure that divergent views are reflected respectfully, taking



Venezuelans Returning Home to Venezuela from Lima, Peru, Sept. 8, 2018.

journalism that relies on sensationalism and lurid exaggeration to attract readers"). Yellow journalism supported the U.S./Canada/NATO invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, the U.S./UK invasion and occupation of Iraq, the countless other devastating wars, occupations and invasions carried out by the United States and their allies, including Canada. Today, yellow journalism is fueling and fomenting ever-increasing sanctions and threats against Venezuela.

## The CBC is Lying About Venezuela

In merely a 20-minute report, Tremonti, together with the on-the-ground observations of another CBC senior correspondent Adrienne Arsenault, manages to spew-forth nearly every pro-intervention exaggerated claim about Venezuela there is to be found.

Rather than share the perspectives of a leader of Venezuela's government or one of the mass majority of people in Venezuela that support the democratically



ected government of President Maduro, The Current instead chose to play a quote from the war-mongering United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley.

Without a shred of critical thinking, Tremonti let Haley take over the airwaves with the threatening statement, “The world in general needs to realize that we have a dictator in Venezuela that is doing everything to protect himself and sacrificing all of the Venezuelan people to do it. At some point, Maduro is going to have to be dealt with.” This certainly sounds like Tremonti, and the CBC is drumming for war and invasion against Venezuela. When Haley says “dealt with” there is no question that she means the U.S. President Donald Trump’s “all options are on the table when it comes to Venezuela” kind of dealt with; the kind of “dealt with” that means bloodshed in Venezuela.

Anna Maria Tremonti continues her unprincipled and uncritical acceptance of every hawkish, pro-intervention statement about

Venezuela as she interviews Adrienne Arsenault, who is reporting from the town of Cúcuta, Colombia. Arsenault paints a dramatic picture of the border town, carefully crafted to scream “humanitarian crisis” – an often repeated lie about Venezuela today.

However, after listening to the entire report, there is a large elephant in the room. The most glaring omission from the September 11 broadcast was a single word – sanctions. Not once did Tremonti, nor anyone else on the program even mention that Venezuela is under a brutal sanctions regime from the United States, Canada, the European Union, Switzerland and Panama. These sanctions have been designed to have a crippling effect on the ability of the government of Venezuela to

import food, medicines and basic goods. As explained by Mike Weisbrot, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C., “The sanctions do their damage primarily by prohibiting Venezuela from borrowing or selling assets in the U.S. financial system. They also prohibit CITGO, the U.S.-based fuel industry company that is owned by the Venezuelan government, from sending dividends or profits back to Venezuela.” If the government of Venezuela doesn’t have access to cash, or the world banking and financial system, exactly how can they import the necessities that the people of Venezuela need?

If brevity was your concern, then a short

many deaths, sanctions contravene the human rights obligations of the countries imposing them.”

Also missing from the CBC’s report is any reference to the economic sabotage being carried out by Venezuela’s counter-revolutionary opposition. The majority of the production and distribution of food and basic goods in Venezuela is still in the hands of the ultra-rich. Among other acts of violence and terrorism, the reactionary capitalist class has carried out hoarding, price-gouging and even gone so far as to light food on fire to impose chaos and hunger on the people of Venezuela.

By leaving sanctions, smuggling and economic sabotage out of the equation,

The Current and Anna Maria Tremonti’s yellow journalism have left the listeners with only one conclusion, the government of Venezuela is to blame – and government of President Nicolas Maduro and the Bolivarian revolutionary process must be overthrown if the people of Venezuela are to get any relief.



Anti-imperialist Rally and March in Caracas, Venezuela, Sept. 11, 2018.

quote from the former Prime Minister of Spain, Jose Luis Zapatero would have sufficed, “I must say that the intensification of the growth in emigration these past months has much to do with the economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. and that has been supported by some governments.”

Or, as Alfred de Zayas, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order from the United Nations reported, “The effects of sanctions imposed by Presidents Obama and Trump and unilateral measures by Canada and the European Union have directly and indirectly aggravated the shortages in medicines such as insulin and anti-retroviral drugs. To the extent that economic sanctions have caused delays in distribution and thus contributed to

### Venezuela is Not Syria

Near the end of Arsenault’s reporting from Colombia, Tremonti gets to her very manipulative question – “Of course, officials [?] say this could rival the Syrian migration crisis regarding scale, how useful is this comparison?” Arsenault’s response, “You know, I think that it is useful regarding people’s consciousness and understanding. There are embedded images of people leaving Syria, and I think that that comparison is what’s useful. Number wise? The UN estimates there were 5 million refugees from Syria, so if the 2.3 is accurate, and again I think it’s conservative, then we are about half-way there, and really this crisis seems nowhere close to ending.”



**Venezuelans Returning Home to Venezuela from Bucaramanga, Columbia, Sept. 28, 2018.**

First of all, Venezuela is not Syria. Following seven years of U.S. attacks on Syria - bombing, intervention, and support for terrorist organizations, - 6.5 million people in Syria are food insecure, and 4 million are at risk of food insecurity (UN-FAO). More than half of the population of Syria, 12 million people, have been displaced, with more than 5.6 million people externally displaced.

The highest estimate for the number of people that have left Venezuela between 2013-2017 - between 1.5-2.3 million people - isn't even close to these devastating numbers. However, this statistic, from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) cannot and should not be taken at face value because it doesn't consider the nationality of the people that have left Venezuela. In a report published by the Colombian Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in July, 2017, it was found that at the end of 2016, 67% of the people crossing into the three most effected Colombian border cities: Cúcuta, Villa del Rosario and Arauca, were either Colombian or Colombian-Venezuelans.

Also, unlike Syrian refugees, who have no idea of when they will be able to return to Syria, according to the IOM report, more than 92% of people crossing intended to return to Venezuela within two months.

In this segment, Tremonti doesn't come close to recognizing that 5.6 million Colombians fled to Venezuela over the last decades (where was the "international outcry" about this?), or that today over 3,000 Venezuelans have returned to Venezuela through "Plan Patria" after discovering that life in Colombia, Peru or Brazil wasn't what they were promised.

### **Right-wing Thugs Are the Special Guests, Revolutionary Venezuelans Never Get Heard**

For her final segment, Tremonti interviews Rebecca Sarfatti, who sits on the board of the Canada Venezuela Democracy Forum, a non-profit organization in Canada. Not once has she interviewed a Venezuelan living in Venezuela, but somehow Sarfatti gets centre-stage. As the saying goes, you are the company you keep, and Sarfatti is a leader in the right-wing Venezuelan community in Canada, a community that publicly attempts to silence the voices through threats and intimidation. Most recently, the President of the Canada Venezuela Democracy Forum, Soraya Benitez, called on her right-wing mobs to give a "warm welcome" to the Vice-minister for North America of the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Venezuela when he visits Canada.

### **What kind of respected journalist would show such a disregard for even the appearance of impartiality?**

How about playing the words of Alfred de Zayas? "A disquieting media campaign seeks to force observers into a preconceived view that there is a 'humanitarian crisis' in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. An independent expert must be wary of hyperbole, bearing in mind that 'humanitarian crisis' is a terminus technicus that can be misused as a pretext for military intervention..." Or would that hit too close to home? You're much more comfortable with the words of U.S. President Trump at the United Nations General Assembly, right? "More than two million people have fled the anguish inflicted by the socialist Maduro regime and its Cuban sponsors," might just be right up your alley.

### **Building a solidarity movement**

As poor, working and oppressed people in Canada, we cannot rely on the CBC, or any mainstream, capitalist news outlet to tell the truth about Venezuela today. It is not only Ana Maria Tremonti and The Current, but many programs on CBC that continued to propagate the same lies about Venezuela. As the mouthpiece of the government of Canada, they will never put forward the voices of poor, working and oppressed people in Venezuela who support the revolutionary government of President Nicolas Maduro and are carrying forward the Bolivarian revolutionary process. It is our responsibility as people living in the United States and Canada to elevate their voices, and join with them in organizing to bring an end to the U.S.-led intervention, sanctions and threats against the sovereign country of Venezuela.

*Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter:  
@Alisoncolette*

**Battle of Ideas Press**

Revolution & Counter Revolution  
in Venezuela

**By Alison Bodine**

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

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# FIRE THIS TIME VENEZUELA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN DEMANDS: *Sovereignty & Self-Determination for Venezuela!*

By Tamara Hansen

On Friday, September 7, the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice – Venezuela Solidarity Campaign took to the streets to defend Venezuela against unjust sanctions and to defend their right to sovereignty and self-determination. Supporters and organizers came together, first at the U.S. Consulate to demand “U.S./Canada Hands Off Venezuela!” in a monthly picket action. Then everyone joined again at the Vancouver Art Gallery for a petition drive and information display to bring these critical issues to the attention of passers-by.

Throughout September, Venezuelan dignity and self-determination were continuously under attack. On September 1, right-wing U.S. Senator Marco Rubio suggested that it is time for U.S. military intervention in Venezuela. In Canada, similar threats have been bounced around by the media, as well as Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland (See article “*Why CBC Lies about Venezuela*” p.8). Of course, war-mongering rhetoric is not the only challenge

facing Venezuela. This is a part of a right-wing campaign which is also escalating sanctions, violence, and meddling in the internal affairs of Venezuela by the governments of the U.S., Canada and the European Union.

In October 2018, two important speakers will be touring Canada offering a different perspective on the issues facing Venezuela today. Vice Minister of the Venezuelan Ministry of External Affairs for North America, the honourable Mr. Carlos Ron, along with Professor Steve Ellner, of the Universidad de Oriente in Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela and author of numerous books including, “Latin America’s Radical Left: Challenges and Complexities of Political Power in the Twenty-first Century” (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014)



will be visiting cities across Canada. Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice – Venezuela Solidarity Campaign is excited to be welcoming these two important guests to Vancouver with an event on Sunday, October 21, 5-7pm titled, “What is really happening in Venezuela?” at the Vancouver Public Library (See the back of the newspaper for poster). To find out about these exciting speakers and the FTT Venezuela Solidarity Campaign’s ongoing actions, please visit [www.firethistime.net](http://www.firethistime.net) or follow on Facebook and Twitter @FTT\_np



*The campaign invites you and/or your organization to endorse this call against the illegal, unjust and cruel sanctions being inflicted on the people of Venezuela. >> Please visit: [afgj.org](http://afgj.org) <<*

## Ordinary Venezuelans are hurt by sanctions imposed by the US and Canada

The elderly grandmother who cannot get insulin for her diabetes, the child who is undernourished during an important stage of development, families who cannot afford to feed and clothe their children as a result of hyperinflation. US and Canadian sanctions are precipitating a rapid economic decline in Venezuela and ordinary Venezuelans are the primary victims.

## Unilateral sanctions are illegal

On May 21, the day after the re-election of Venezuela’s President Nicolás Maduro, the US further expanded economic sanctions against Venezuela. Both the US and Canada have sanctions targeting senior Venezuelan government officials. These sanctions severely hamper the government’s ability to engage with international financial entities. Furthermore, unilateral sanctions violate the human rights of the Venezuelan people and are illegal under the charters of the OAS and the UN. The imposed sanctions prevent the government from borrowing money from major financial institutions and from repatriating dividends earned by state subsidiaries abroad, restricting Venezuela’s ability to import vital foods and medicines. The US and Canada hypocritically claim to be concerned about the humanitarian situation in Venezuela, while their sanctions regimes are deliberately designed to asphyxiate the Venezuelan economy.

## Sanctions are a form of economic war and can be a prelude to actual war

In addition to the economic war being waged against Venezuela through sanctions, recent reports as well as public statements by US officials have made clear that a military option against Venezuela is under serious consideration.

As people in the US and Canada, we have the responsibility to end our governments’ practice of illegal foreign intervention, including the current economic sanctions against the people of Venezuela. These sanctions are a collective punishment designed to create enough human misery to bring about the overthrow of a democratically-elected government, including via a military coup. Economic sanctions violate Venezuela’s national sovereignty and the basic rights of Venezuelan citizens.

**The campaign invites you and/or your organization to endorse this call against the illegal, unjust and cruel sanctions being inflicted on the people of Venezuela.**

## Initial Signers

- Akinyele K. Umoja, Founding Member, New Afrikan People’s Organization
- Alexander Main, Director for International Policy, Center for Economic and Policy Research
- Alliance for Global Justice
- Common Frontiers
- Dan Kovalik, Adjunct Professor of International Human Rights, University of Pittsburgh School of Law
- Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice – Venezuela Solidarity Campaign
- Frederick B. Mills, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy Department of History and Government Bowie State University
- Gerardo Renique, Associate Professor, City College (SUNY)
- Gregory Wilpert, Venezuelanalysis.com
- International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity
- Ivan Dario Hernandez, Artist, Venezuela
- Popular Resistance
- Shirley Pate, DC Venezuela Action Network
- Shontae Cannon-Buckley, Co-owner, Burning Books, Buffalo, New York
- Stansfield Smith, Chicago ALBA Solidarity
- Susan Scott, Member, National Lawyers Guild
- Task Force on the Americas
- Teri Mattson, Founder, The Intrepid News Fund
- Tom Gallagher, Chair, San Francisco Progressive Democrats of America
- William Camacaro, Venezuelan Activist/ Radio Host WBAI Pacifica Network

# TRUMP, TRUDEAU Y ALMAGRO: ¡MANOS FUERA DE VENEZUELA!

**\* EN ESPAÑOL \***

Declaración de la Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela  
del Movimiento por Justicia Social "Fire This Time"  
18 de septiembre de 2018

La Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela del Movimiento por Justicia Social "Fire This Time" condena rotundamente las amenazas cada vez más frenéticas y violentas de los Estados Unidos y Canadá contra Venezuela, un país independiente. Estos son predeciblemente repetidos por sus marionetas pagas en América Latina, y el director de la Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA), Luis Almagro, declaró el viernes pasado, "En cuanto a intervención militar para derrocar el régimen de Nicolás Maduro, creo que no debemos descartar ninguna opción."

En un extraño giro de los acontecimientos, 10 de los 14 gobiernos del "Grupo de Lima" sintieron la necesidad de lanzar una declaración conjunta que describa su negativa a participar en una intervención militar. "El Grupo de Lima" se creó específicamente para apuntar a Venezuela y a su presidente democráticamente elegido, Nicolás Maduro. Esta división y declaración subsiguiente sin precedentes es una prueba bastante clara de que las amenazas de intervención militar son mortalmente graves.

Cuatro países del Grupo de Lima rechazaron ser parte de la declaración conjunta. Que Canadá, Panamá, Guyana y Colombia no estén dispuestos a hacer la simple promesa de no invadir un país soberano es extremadamente alarmante.

El mes pasado, el presidente Maduro sobrevivió a un magnicidio frustrado por aeronaves pilotadas a distancia equipado con las bombas, y apenas una semana más tarde un informe del New York Times reveló que funcionarios estadounidenses se habían reunido con ex oficiales del ejército venezolano que planeaban a derrocar el presidente Maduro.

Hemos llegado a un punto en el que existe la necesidad absoluta de que cualquier persona, incluyendo los que están remotamente preocupada por los derechos humanos y la soberanía, se pronuncie en contra de los implacables ataques contra Venezuela. Las últimas dos décadas solo han reforzado que Estados Unidos y Canadá no tengan problemas para usar el poder militar mortal para lograr sus objetivos de política exterior, especialmente en Medio Oriente. No necesitamos más destrucción como en Iraq, Libia o Siria. No podemos darnos el lujo de que la Nueva Era de la Guerra y la Ocupación extienda sus garras sangrientas a América Latina.

El presidente boliviano, Evo Morales, tiene una perspectiva clara: "Al atacar a Venezuela, Trump ataca Latinoamérica". Exigimos la renuncia inmediata de Luis Almagro y su completa retractación y disculpa a Venezuela. Aquí en Canadá debemos decir: "Al atacar a Venezuela está atacando a todas las personas pobres y obreros en el país y en el extranjero". Exigimos un gobierno que priorice la atención médica, la educación y la vivienda, no la conquista militar. Exigimos al gobierno de Canadá que respete la soberanía y la autodeterminación de Venezuela.

*Trump, Trudeau y Almagro: ¡Manos fuera de Venezuela!*

*¡Poner fin a las sanciones y amenazas contra Venezuela!*

*¡No a la campaña "cambio de régimen" contra Venezuela!*

# TRUMP, TRUDEAU AND ALMAGRO: HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!

Statement by Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice  
Venezuela Solidarity Campaign  
September 18, 2018

Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice Venezuela Solidarity Campaign condemns in the strongest possible terms the increasingly frantic and violent threats made by the United States and Canada against the independent country of Venezuela. These are predictably parroted by their paid puppets in Latin America, with Organization of American States (OAS) director Luis Almagro declaring last Friday, "With respect to a military intervention to overthrow Nicolas Maduro's regime, I don't think any option should be ruled out."

In a bizarre turn of events, 10 of 14 "Lima Group" governments felt the need to release a joint statement outlining their refusal to participate in a military intervention. The "Lima Group" was created specifically to target Venezuela and its democratically elected President, Nicolas Maduro. This unprecedented division and ensuing statement are clear enough proof that threats of military intervention are deadly serious.

Four Lima Group countries refused to be part of the joint statement. That Canada, Panama, Guyana, and Colombia are unwilling to make the simple promise not to invade a sovereign country is extremely alarming.

Just last month President Maduro survived an assassination attempt by a bomb equipped drone, and just last a week a New York Times report revealed U.S. officials had been meeting with ex-Venezuelan army officers who were plotting to overthrow President Maduro.

We have reached a point where there is the absolute necessity for anyone even remotely concerned with human rights and sovereignty to speak out against the unrelenting attacks on Venezuela. The last two decades have only reinforced that the U.S. and Canada have no problem using deadly military might to achieve their foreign policy objectives, especially in the Middle East. We do not need any more destruction like in Iraq, Libya or Syria. We cannot afford for the New Era of War and Occupation to stretch its bloody claws into Latin America.

Bolivian President Evo Morales has a clear perspective, "Attacking Venezuela is attacking Latin America." We demand Luis Almagro's immediate resignation, retraction and full apology to Venezuela. We here in Canada must say, "Attacking Venezuela is attacking all poor and working people at home and abroad." We demand a government that prioritizes healthcare, education and housing, not military conquest. We demand the government of Canada respect the sovereignty and self-determination of Venezuela.

*Trump, Trudeau and Almagro: Hands Off Venezuela!*

*End the Sanctions and Threats Against Venezuela!*

*No "Regime Change" Against Venezuela!*



On the streets in Vancouver petitioning for "U.S./Canada Hands Off Venezuela!" Sept 7, 2018

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# AXIS OF EVIL: Genocide in Yemen by the US, Saudi Arabia and UAE



*By Azza Rojbi*

*“The Security Council have asked me to update you today on the humanitarian situation in Yemen. In a word, it is bleak. We are losing the fight against famine. The position has deteriorated alarmingly in recent weeks. We may now be approaching a tipping point, beyond which it will be impossible to prevent massive loss of life as a result of widespread famine across the country.”*

Those were the words of UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock as he briefed the UN Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Yemen on September 21, 2018.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), “18 million Yemenis (or two-thirds of the population) are food insecure, 8.4 million of which severely so.” WFP’s Executive Director David Beasley told reporters that, “Yemen is undeniably the world’s worst humanitarian crisis by far.”

What all the reports and statements from the United Nations and its different bodies and agencies lack is a clear condemnation

of who is responsible for creating and aggravating this humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

In Fire This Time Volume 11 Issue 12, December 2017, in an article titled “Who is Behind the World’s Worst Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen?” we wrote:

“The U.S. backed Saudi-led coalition’s war, and blockade of Yemen is at the root of this crisis...Saudi Arabia continues to claim that it is fighting to bring back legitimacy and stability to Yemen, and the region, by reinstating Yemen’s former president Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi...Backed by the United States, the Saudi-led coalition started its bombing campaign on Yemen called “Operation Decisive Storm,” in March 2015. Within a month of their indiscriminate bombing campaign, the Saudi government claimed success and announced the end of “Operation Decisive

Storm” and the start of a reconstruction effort named “Operation Renewal of Hope.”

Now over three years of Saudi-led coalition war on Yemen, where is the renewal of hope? In the words of WFP’s David Beasley, “Yemen is a disaster, and I don’t see any light at the end of the tunnel right now.” The Saudi led military intervention in Yemen has only aggravated the situation in Yemen.

The UN has documented over 17,000 civilian casualties in Yemen. In addition to the human loss, the U.S. backed Saudi-led coalition has bombed and destroyed vital infrastructure, homes, schools, hospitals, roads, sanitary and water system, cultural centers and even historical monuments. This has left millions of Yemenis without access to necessities. According to the UN, 22.3 million out of the country’s population of 29.3 million rely on humanitarian assistance to survive.

The people of Yemen are not only victims of the daily bombings, but Saudi Arabia is also imposing a sea, land and air blockade on the country. This blockade is causing a shortage of fuel, food and medicine which has worsened the humanitarian crisis.

The situation has recently become direr after the Saudi and Emirati military started their assault on the key Yemeni port city of Hodeida. More than 80 percent of imports pass through the Red Sea port, including commercial and

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humanitarian aid. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen said, in June 2018, in response to the start of the Saudi-led military offensive on Hodeida that in a “prolonged worst case (scenario), we fear that as many as 250,000 people may lose everything - even their lives”.

### Who is An accomplice of the Crisis?

The United States government has been supporting the Saudi-led coalition to carry out their bombing campaign on Yemen since day one. The U.S. has been providing political, military, logistical and intelligence support to the Saudi-led coalition, in addition to restocking the weaponry of the Saudi and Emirati militaries.

More recently, on September 12, 2018, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that he has certified to Congress “that the governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are undertaking demonstrable actions to reduce the risk of harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure resulting from military operations of these governments.” This certification was needed to allow U.S. military aircraft to continue their mid-air refuelling missions of Saudi and UAE fighter jets bombing Yemen.

The Canadian government is also guilty of providing military support to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia was the largest non-U.S. importer of Canadian-made military goods and technology in 2016 and 2017. The Trudeau government has also approved a \$15 billion arms deal

to provide Saudi Arabia with light armoured vehicles (LAV) equipped with heavy guns and cannon.

### Stop Bombing Yemen! End Blockade of Yemen!

Despite all the military and political support, the Saudi-led coalition gets from the United States and other imperialist countries, Saudi Arabia is in a quagmire in Yemen. They haven't been able to impose their control or dominance over the country. They have only brought death and destruction to Yemen, their claim of wanting peace and stability is a big ugly lie.

The people of Yemen continue to resist daily to the war, and military intervention on their country by the U.S. backed Saudi-led coalition. They are sharing their stories with the world through their voices and their art. They are braving the Saudi fighter jets to take to the streets around Yemen and protest against the war on their country.

Peace-loving people around the world have been joining the Yemeni people to help break the media silence and oppose the Saudi-led military intervention in the country. We stand with the Yemeni people as they fight for their freedom, self-determination, sovereignty, human rights and better future for the children of Yemen!

*Follow Azza Rojbi on Twitter:  
@azza\_r14*



**A Young Boy Standing Amidst the Destruction in the City of Sana'a - one of the oldest cities in the world**

*continued from page 5*

folks there because we know that they are not going to get any aid.

La Jornada Se Acabaron Las Promesas, when they do their pickets and demonstrations, they have to scramble around for funds.

**FTT: Considering all the difficulties facing Puerto Rico today, is one of the biggest steps to help the island and the people of Puerto Rico the independence of Puerto Rico from the colonial United States?**

FV: Yes. One of the wake-up calls that the masses of people in Puerto Rico have started to awaken to is that the U.S. administration is not our friends. The response of the Trump administration and the U.S. non-profits has created a new level of consciousness among people. That is one of the elements that are fueling the resistance movement because people who were not that active, or not active at all, are now like, “Oh no, this is messed up, we have to stop these people, they are not helping us, we have to help ourselves.” That little bit of self-reliance has been fed by the response of the U.S. Federal government.

The new crop of activists was not waiting for the debate to happen in the Independence movement. They hit the streets, and even though it is multi-generational, it is mostly younger people. We are talking about people in their 20's and 30's that are very progressive, they come from traditions of independence, out of organizing in the student movement, etc. They have been hit hard too. Before the hurricane, they had closed 340 public schools in Puerto Rico. Since the hurricane and the installation of this the education person that was sent by the Trump administration, they have closed another 400. They are giving them away to the evangelical movement, to the private charter movement. Puerto Rico was one of the few places where charter schools were not imposed on the public school system, and now they see it as an opportunity to do that.

**FTT: Is there anything else that you would like to say?**

FV: We appreciate the internationalism and the solidarity you comrades have shown in reaching out to us to educate folks around the reality of the colony of the Empire of the United States, Puerto Rico.

**FTT: Thank you.**

*Follow Alison on Twitter:  
@Alisoncolette*



# ANTIWAR ACTIONS IN VANCOUVER M.A.W.O. TAKES TO THE STREETS

By Tamara Hansen

In September 2018, the Saudi-led, U.S.-backed coalition launched a new offensive in Yemen against the port city of Hodeidah. This brutal assault will take away food, fuel and medical supplies from the 8 million Yemenis in danger of starvation as a result of over three years of bombing and air, land and sea blockade imposed by Saudi Arabia and their allies.

On Friday, September 21, Vancouver's antiwar coalition, Mobilization Against War & Occupation – MAWO, took to the streets for a monthly antiwar rally and petition drive to demand: "US & Saudi Arabia Stop Bombing Yemen!", along with, "Canada Cancel the Arms

Deal with Saudi Arabia Now!" and "U.S. Hands Off Syria! Don't Attack Syria!"

MAWO's consistent organizing against war expands beyond these demands, to bring attention to all imperialist and colonial wars, including those of the New Era of War & Occupation, which began almost 17 years ago with the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan.

MAWO is also working with groups across Canada, the United States, and around the world to bring an end to imperialist wars and occupations, towards a new era of self-determination for all oppressed nations. In the past few months MAWO Chair, Alison Bodine and MAWO organizers have been working together with coalitions



Mobilization Against War & Occupation rally & petition drive at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Sept. 21, 2018.



in the United States towards organizing two important international days of the action taking place in Washington DC, the belly of the imperialist beast. First, the Women's March on the Pentagon October 20-21, 2018 (see advertisement below). Secondly, the "Reclaim Armistice Day - Stop the Wars at Home and Abroad" International days of action November 9-11, 2018 (visit: <http://notrumpmilitaryparade.us>).

MAWO is looking forward to supporting and participating in these important international days of action towards building a better world for all working and oppressed people. To find out about upcoming events and actions, visit [www.mawovancouver.org](http://www.mawovancouver.org) or follow on Facebook or @mawovan on Twitter.

## OUR HERITAGE



**Nawal El Saadawi**  
(October 27, 1931- )

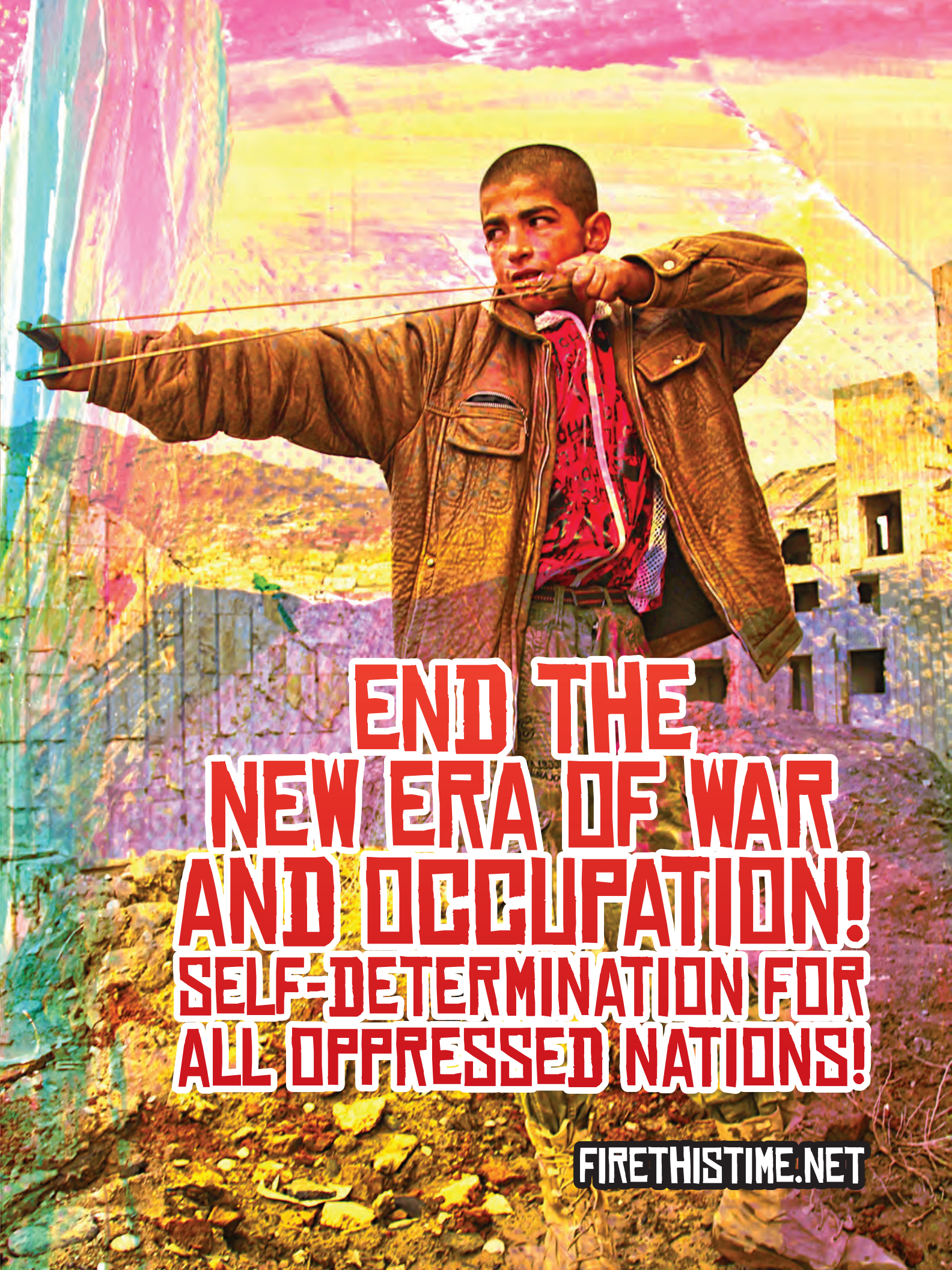
*Nawal El Saadawi is a leading Egyptian feminist writer, activist and physician, and an advocate of equal rights for women. She is a former political prisoner and her incarceration formed the basis for her memoir, "Memoirs from the Women's Prison" (1983).*

"Writing: such has been my crime ever since I was a small child. To this day writing remains my crime. Now, although I am out of prison, I continue to live inside a prison of another sort, one without steel bars. For the technology of oppression and might without justice has become more advanced, and the fetters imposed on mind and body have become invisible. The most dangerous shackles are the invisible ones, because they deceive people into believing they are free. This delusion is the new prison that people inhabit today, north and south, east and west...We inhabit the age of the technology of hiding truths behind amiable humanistic slogans that may change from one era to another... Democracy is not just freedom to criticize the government or head of state, or to hold parliamentary elections. True democracy obtains only when the people - women, men, young people, children - have the ability to change the system of industrial capitalism that has oppressed them since the earliest days of slavery: a system based on class division, patriarchy, and military might, a hierarchical system that subjugates people merely because they are born poor, or female, or dark-skinned."

- "Memoirs from the Women's Prison" (1983)



**MARKING 17 YEARS OF  
WAR AND OCCUPATION  
IN AFGHANISTAN**



**END THE  
NEW ERA OF WAR  
AND OCCUPATION!  
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR  
ALL OPPRESSED NATIONS!**

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Affairs in a 2016 report. Not only have 2413 U.S. soldiers come back from Afghanistan in body bags, according to the casualties casualty tracking website. In 2016, about 20 current or former U.S. service members died by suicide each day, as noted by Veterans Affairs spokesperson Curtis Cashour. In Canada, while 158 soldiers were killed in Afghanistan, an additional 59 Canadian soldiers died by suicide as reported by the Globe and Mail from Canadian military statistics in 2015.

### What do 17 years of war look like for Afghanistan

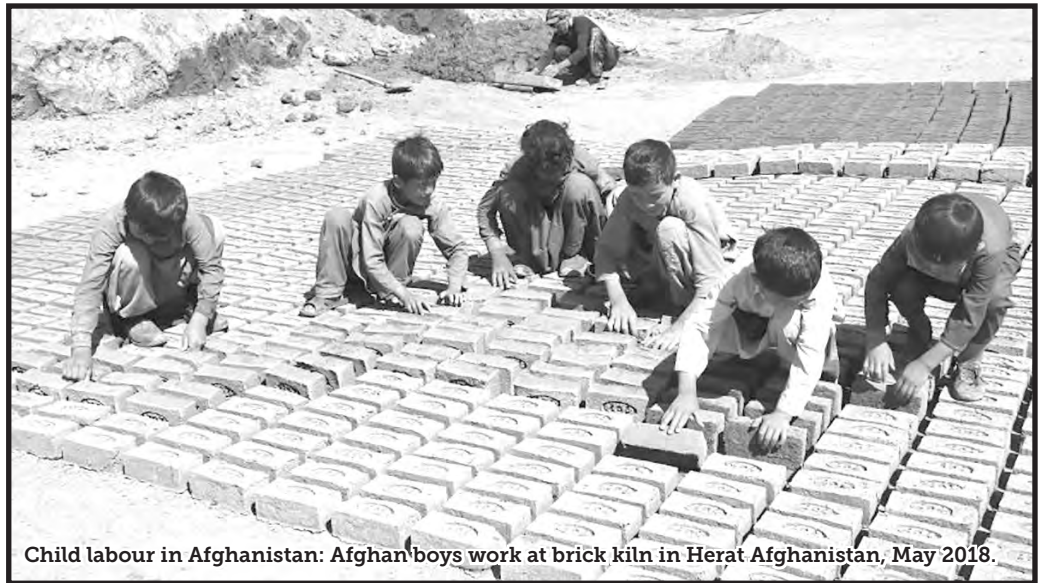
After 17 years, trillions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of troops, where does this leave the Afghan people?

Between October 2001 and July 2016, 31,419 Afghan civilians were documented as killed by the Costs of War report of Watson Institute, Brown University. This doesn't count U.S., coalition, Afghan military, Taliban, journalist or aid worker deaths. Considering this number, one must also remember just how difficult tracking the death count is in Afghanistan. In 2002, U.S. Army General Tommy Franks famously told reporters "we don't do body counts." The U.S. military forces couldn't care to count how many Afghan people they killed. Much of the data for casualty counting comes from UNAMA, which only began documenting civilian casualties in 2009, and only tracks incidents that have been investigated by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC).

Year after year new grim records is broken. 2017 saw a 23% rise in the number of women killed, and a 9% increase in children killed compared to the year before, as per UNAMA. 2018 has the highest civilian deaths on record, with 1,692 civilians killed by June 30, 2018, according to the UN. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program also shows the number of battle deaths in Afghanistan will likely surpass 20,000 in 2018 – also breaking the record over 17 years.

The impact of war on Afghanistan goes far beyond those killed from airstrikes, checkpoint shootings and night raids. Those surviving the war in Afghanistan are struggling to do so.

A 2017 World Bank report found that poverty is on the rise, increasing from 36% in 2011-12 to 39% in 2013-14. As a result,



Child labour in Afghanistan: Afghan boys work at brick kiln in Herat Afghanistan, May 2018.

1.3 million more Afghans are facing poverty. According to the World Food Programme, around 33% of Afghans are food insecure (around 9.3 million people), and around 3.4 million of them are severely food insecure.

Poverty and food insecurity are directly related to the lack of employment available in Afghanistan. The World Bank reported that 4 out of 5 jobs that were created between 2007-08 and 2011-12 were lost by 2013-14 in the rural service sector. The World Bank lists Afghanistan's employment rate at only 41% in 2016-17. These statistics translate to a stark reality for Afghan people, as a September 30, 2018 interview by Al Jazeera with an Afghan citizen explains. "Right now if Taliban or ISIS came here with a truck offering work, all of us would go with them, all of us. That's because we don't have money and we need to eat."

The effects of war can be seen most dramatically in the scope of women and children – the populations that the governments of the U.S., Canada and their allies claimed to be protecting when this war began.

However, according to UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund), Afghanistan remains one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a baby, a child or a mother.

UNAMA reported that from 2015 to 2016, casualties among children increased by 24%. More than 1 million of Afghanistan's children suffer from acute malnutrition, an increase of more than 40% since January 2015, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and reported by International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in May 2017.

In a situation where surviving is the top priority, school falls to the wayside. In 2016

Human Rights Watch reported at least a quarter of Afghan children between the ages 5 and 14 to work for a living or to help their families, often in hazardous working conditions. This, along with the lack of security and lack of schools and teachers, has to lead to nearly half of children aged 7 to 17 years old (or 3.7 million children) missing out on school, as per a UNICEF report from June 3, 2018.

With many war widows who have lost their husbands and bread-winners to the war, female-headed households are almost 50% more likely to be severely food insecure than other households in Afghanistan, according to a 2015 World Food Programme report. The last 17 years have been full of reports of women turning to prostitution out of desperation to feed their families and survive. The promised liberation of women has instead been that women are in a more precarious situation. Poverty has resulted in an increase of child brides and the trafficking of vulnerable women, and consequently, women turning to suicide to escape their situations. Particularly horrific has been the cases of self-immolation by women, who have set fire to themselves to attempt suicide.

Within Afghanistan's collapsed health care system, women are also suffering the most from the lack of care, especially before, during and after childbirth. A 2014 Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) report found that 4 out of 5 Afghans said they did not use their closest public clinic because they believed the quality of services and availability of staff was so poor. According to a 2016 report from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 9 million Afghans are without access to basic health services. While some reports have boasted improvements to

Afghanistan's maternal mortality rates, on January 30, 2017, the Guardian reported that previously unpublished studies by the Afghan Government found an average level of maternal deaths between 800 and 1,200 for every 100,000 live births. The article also reported the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) found as many as 1,800 maternal deaths a year in the remote Afghan province of Ghor. Nine out of 11 provinces had higher death rates than the number normally used by donors.

Aid organizations that run much of Afghanistan's health services are having the withdraw due to the lack of security. One example is from October 3rd, 2015, when repeated and continuous U.S. airstrikes on a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, killed more than 42 innocent people, mainly patients and staff. Under International Humanitarian Law hospitals in conflict zones are protected spaces, and an MSF statement denouncing the attack noted that the hospital was well-known and the GPS coordinates had been regularly shared with coalition and Afghan military and civilian officials.

**What about reconstruction?**

Despite billions of dollars spent on reconstruction contracts in Afghanistan, this has not equalled jobs for Afghan people, or even a real improvement to infrastructure. On the contrary, reconstruction has gone hand in hand with corruption.

A young member of the Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan (RAWA) outlined the link between occupation forces and corruption in Afghanistan, at a women's rights conference in Karachi, Pakistan in 2016. "The U.S. used women's rights as an excuse to invade my country Afghanistan and continues to kill innocent women and children and conduct their terrifying drone attacks and chilling night raids in all parts of Afghanistan. Afghanistan's current government, Parliament, and judiciary are all occupied at highest positions by criminals, heinous fundamentalists and warlords implicated in grave war crimes, and enjoy the unconditional backing of western powers".

As the speaker noted, the U.S. again employed the strategy of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." During the initial days of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. funded and armed the Northern Alliance, a group of militias that, like the Taliban, grew out of the Mujaheddin, to help overthrow the Taliban. These Northern Alliance leaders, with the support of the U.S., became ministers and governors in the new, U.S.-puppet government in Afghanistan. April 1, 2015, Washington Post article does a fine job of outlining the various characters of the Northern Alliance and their nefarious connections, and the power they now hold. For example - Atta Mohammad Noor, a senior commander for the Northern Alliance. Hamid Karzai, Afghanistan's

intervention] in Afghanistan was systemic corruption – pervasive and entrenched, affecting the courts, the army and police, banking and other critical sectors." A 2010 report to the U.S. House of Representatives titled "Warlord, Inc." found that "the Department of Defense designed a contract that put responsibility for the security of vital U.S. supplies on contractors and their unaccountable security providers. This arrangement has fueled a vast protection racket run by a shadowy network of warlords, strongmen, commanders, corrupt Afghan officials, and perhaps others."

"Reconstruction" in Afghanistan has meant the U.S. government is holding on to its occupation with the language of corruption.

The "success" of reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan are the massive U.S. embassy in Kabul, military bases and luxury hotels, and roads and infrastructure to support it. The promised schools, health care facilities, and roads to help farmers make their harvests profitable, are not the priority.

**Opium Production, A tragedy for Afghanistan and the World**

Another evidence of corruption is in opium production. In the 1990's, the U.S.-supported Northern

Alliance gained control in Afghanistan and with it came the rise of opium production. In 2000, the Taliban ordered an end to opium production, and by 2001, opium production dropped by 90%. However, under U.S. occupation opium production quickly grew again. By 2015, Afghanistan supplied 90% of the world's opium, much of it is refined into heroin.

Could this happen without U.S. involvement? An entire article could be written on U.S. connections to the drug trade in Afghanistan, and many other U.S. military operations throughout history. One major player was Ahmad Wali Karzai (brother of former President Karzai), who was Chairman of the Kandahar Provincial Council from 2005 until his death in 2011. Described in the New Yorker as the "Afghan Godfather" he was the biggest drug dealer of not just Afghanistan, but the region. The whole time, he was on the payroll of the



Afghan women protest carrying a banner that reads "down with occupying forces and their allies", Oct 6, 2011.

U.S.-installed former President, appointed him as the governor of Balkh province. The Washington Post reports "He ruled the northern region with an iron fist, leading to accusations of widespread looting and mass executions. With his warlord legacy tucked in, he has now transformed himself into an ultra-rich businessman."

Besides supporting and enabling the rise of corrupt warlords to political power, how did the U.S. government contribute to corruption in Afghanistan? Through cash, of course. An October 2016 report by the U.S. Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) detailed how billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars spent in Afghanistan were funneled into the hands of corrupt elites and warlords. "While corruption in Afghanistan predates 2001, it has become far more serious and widespread since then," noted John Sopko, head of SIGAR. "The result [of US/NATO



CIA.

The rise of opium has had a tragic effect on the Afghan population. UN reported the use of opium as “a kind of self-medication against the hardships of life.” By 2015, they reported the number of addicts in the country had soared to 3 million — an astonishing 12 percent of the populace — with heroin being increasingly used. Though addiction traditionally was limited to men, women are increasingly becoming addicted, as well as children who are given opium to quiet them when medication and food are not available.

### U.S./NATO Out of Afghanistan!

With 17 years of U.S. and NATO occupation of Afghanistan, preceded by decades of war which involved the U.S. covertly training and arming the Taliban, it is no wonder that Afghanistan has one of the world's highest number of refugees. At 2.6 million refugees, this is 10% of the country's population according to UNHCR data from 2016. Additionally, about 2 million Afghans are internally displaced. Many refugees returned to Afghanistan early into the U.S. occupation hoping for more stability, and still, others were forced by their host countries to return. Of those who returned to Afghanistan after living as refugees abroad, 72% of those surveyed were displaced twice and many three times, according to a January 2018 report by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). In 2017, on average, 1,200 Afghans were forced to flee every single day.

This article has barely scratched at the surface of how every aspect of life for the Afghan people has been dominated and dictated by foreign occupation. The chance for Afghanistan's social and intellectual progress, including the advance of women's rights, are stifled under the basic need to survive. The political and economic structures of Afghanistan cannot move

without being directed by the imperialist occupation that holds Afghanistan in a tight grip.

As Afghanistan prepares for parliamentary elections on October 20, which have been delayed for three years, it is with zero legitimacy and without the expectation that this election will be different than previous ones that have had no real impact on the lives of Afghan people. Another reason why these elections are a farce is that much of the country isn't even under government control.

While the war and occupation have destroyed the lives of Afghan people, it hasn't been a success for occupation forces. While a situation of permanent occupation mean Afghanistan is a permanent base for U.S. forces, the U.S. doesn't have anywhere near the hold on the country that it requires. A July 2018 report from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) cited NATO's Resolute Support as tallying only 56.3% of Afghanistan's districts as under government control or influence. A full 30 percent of districts, were reported as contested territory, meaning they were “controlled by neither the Afghan government nor the insurgency.” In reality, the U.S.-backed government of Afghanistan only has control of the capital Kabul.

The fact is that the Taliban have gained strength in Afghanistan because, in a country that has for centuries fought to the tooth against attempts at foreign domination, any Afghan wanting to fight the occupation sees the Taliban as the most viable fighting force. The situation has forced the U.S. into talks with the Taliban, as 17 years of the most advanced military in the world is no match for a people that simply want foreign occupiers out. On the U.S. government talks with the Taliban, September 14, 2018, Voice of America (VOA) news report quoted Waheed Muzhda, a former Taliban official in Kabul who remains in regular

contact with Taliban leaders. “U.S. wants the Taliban to accept at least two military bases, Bagram and Shorabak. The Taliban are not willing to accept it.” Muzhda added that Taliban leaders are unwilling to accept anything more than a nominal number of troops required to secure the U.S. diplomatic mission. In short, no more foreign occupation.

### What way forward for Afghanistan?

After 17 years of U.S. and NATO occupation, preceded by decades of war, Afghanistan's problems will not be solved overnight. However, the only people with the real interest to solve Afghanistan's problems are the Afghan people themselves. As discussed earlier in this article, in the brief periods without foreign involvement, Afghanistan progressed socially and politically. The best chance Afghanistan can have is one where their self-determination is respected, and the interests of the Afghan people can function free of foreign domination.

No to War and Occupation in Afghanistan!  
Yes to Self-Determination for people of Afghanistan!

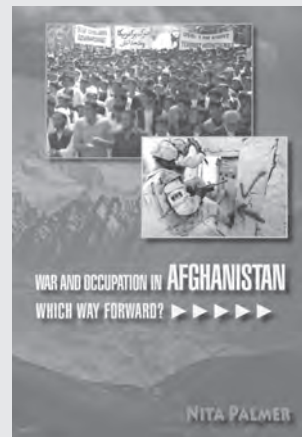
All foreign troops out of Afghanistan!

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## Battle of Ideas Press

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



By Nita Palmer

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

January 2010, paperback, \$7.00

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*By Thomas Davies*

Things have gotten messier in Canadian political life lately. There has been a lot of condemnation of Ontario Premier Doug Ford's attempt to use the "Notwithstanding Clause" of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to override an Ontario Superior Court judge ruling against his government's new law cutting the size of seats available in the upcoming Toronto City Council election. The Superior Court judge had found that his law violated the Charter's freedom of expression guarantee.

In the end, it looks like he won't have to use it. The Ontario's Court of Appeals ruled that the new provincial law cutting the number of council seats from 47 to 25 - after the municipal campaign had already started - was allowable. Apparently, "Unfairness alone does not establish a charter breach." Not satisfied, Premier Ford has already promised to use the Clause if any other judges rule against his government.

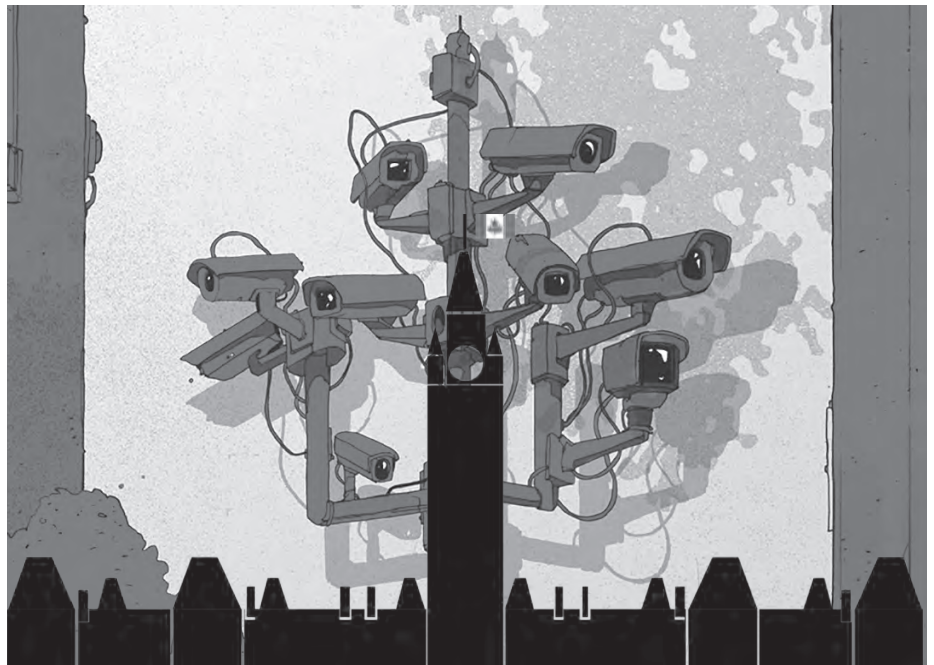
Sound confusing? Yes. But one thing has been demonstrated through the whole ordeal: how weak the "official" protections of our democratic and human rights can be. Doug Ford is not the first, and he will not be the last, to undermine our rights using technically legal, even constitutional, means. While Prime Minister Justin Trudeau may have condemned Ford's actions - he has been continuing a long effort to weaken further government recognition and protections of our rights with his "National Security" Bill C-59, which is in the final Senate hearings before likely becoming law.

#### **What the Heck is this Clause?**

The Notwithstanding Clause, also known as Section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, allows the federal parliament or provincial legislatures to pass legislation that overrides certain Charter-established rights and freedoms, for five-year periods. The sections of the Charter that can be overwritten are Section 2, regarding fundamental freedoms such as expression, conscience, association, and assembly; and Sections 7 to 15 regarding the right to life, liberty, and security. The clause cannot be used on some other sections of the Charter, including those concerning democratic rights, mobility, and language rights.

Pretty incredible - most people didn't even know that there was this relatively easy to use official exception available for such fundamental human rights.

#### **How Did That Happen?**



# DEMOCRACY IN CANADA?

Canada didn't even have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms until 1982, 115 years after its original Constitution. It was part of Canada's first Constitution which the British Parliament didn't have the right to amend.

The Notwithstanding Clause came out of something called the "Kitchen Accord" wherein the pantry of a fancy Ottawa hotel, then Federal Justice Minister Jean Chrétien and the Attorneys General from Saskatchewan and Ontario, Roy Romanow and Roy McMurtry, came up with the exception which they believed would open the door to getting all of the Provinces and Federal government to agree on the Charter as part of the updated constitution. Unfortunately for us, they were right. It took some more secret negotiations, most of which ended up excluding Quebec, but on April 17, 1982, Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau signed Canada's Proclamation of the Constitution Act, 1982. The Constitution included the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and also the Notwithstanding Clause.

Interestingly, Chrétien, Romanow and McMurtry recently released a joint statement condemning Doug Ford's attempted use of the clause. They said,

"The clause was designed to be invoked by legislatures in exceptional situations, and only as a last resort after careful consideration. It was not designed to be used by governments as a convenience or as a means to circumvent the proper process."

You would think if they didn't want to be so convenient to use they wouldn't have made it...so convenient to use.

#### **The Rule Not the Exception**

The supposed shock of politicians is a little hard to believe. The Canadian government has always been in the habit of giving itself the ability to override the rights it says it upholds.

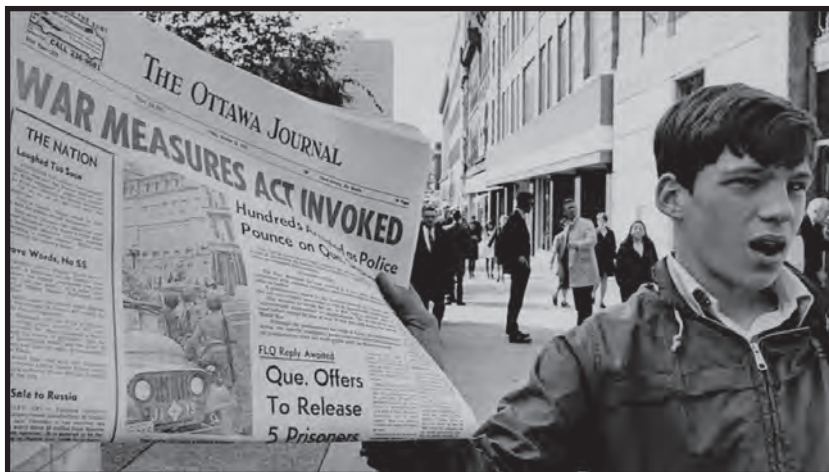
The War Measures Act was a federal law adopted by Parliament in 1914, after the outbreak of the First World War. The Act gave the government full authority during wartime to censor and suppress communications; to arrest, detain and deport people without charges or trials; to control transportation, trade and manufacturing; and to seize private property.

Hundreds of publications, especially communist or "foreign" were banned. After the Russian Revolution in 1917,



Top: Japanese internment during World War II in Canada, 1942.

Bottom: "War Measures Act" declared by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, 1970.



membership in left-leaning or even pacifist organizations was made illegal as well. People were regularly jailed for their political beliefs. Over the course of the war, the federal government interned 8,579 “enemy aliens” across the country. Another 80,000 people, mostly Ukrainian Canadians, were also forced to register as “enemy aliens,” carry identity papers and report regularly to the police.

The government also used the War Measures Act to declare martial law and deploy 6000 soldiers to break up anti-conscription (forced military service) rallies in Quebec in 1918. They killed four people and injured 150 more.

### Defending What?

Using World War 2 as the justification, the government enacted “Defence of Canada Regulations,” which allowed the Minister of Justice to detain anyone without due process who fit the vague charge of acting “in any manner prejudicial to the public safety or the safety of the state.” 325 newspapers and periodicals were banned, along with more than thirty religious, cultural and political organizations, including Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Communist Party of Canada.

Under regulations, any person critical of government positions could be interned without charge or trial. Montreal mayor Camillien Houde was jailed for four years without trial for telling people to defy war conscription.

Using the War Measures Act, 22,000 Japanese Canadians were also interned without trial in 1942. They were also stripped of their property and pressured to accept mass deportation at the end of the war.

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau had also shown no hesitation in using the Act to declare martial law in 1970 when Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) members

kidnapped the provincial Deputy Premier Pierre Laporte and the British diplomat James Cross. The military flooded the streets, and 497 people were arrested without bail. All but 62 of whom were later released without charges. When responding to a CBC reporter’s questions about the possibility of enacting the War Measures Act during peacetime being a heavy-handed approach, Trudeau responded, “Just watch me.”

Since 1988 we now live under the “Emergencies Act, which differs from the War Measures Act in that a declaration of an emergency by Cabinet must be reviewed by Parliament, and any temporary laws made under the Act are subject to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Sounds better, but Doug Ford has kindly reminded us how easily the Charter can be overridden by the notwithstanding clause.

### Right to Organize?

One of the primary themes we are seeing is that we seem to have rights on paper until the government decides they inconvenient to their rule and objectives. This is also seen most clearly with the attack on working

people and their unions, especially over the past three decades. According to a report by the Canadian Foundation for Labour Rights:

“Since the early 1980s, the number of instances of back-to-work legislation is higher than any other period in the history of labour relations in Canada. 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 74 pieces of back-to-work legislation.

Most of this legislation (50 of the 92 pieces of legislation) not only forced workers back to work after taking strike action but also arbitrarily imposed settlements on the striking workers.”

So, we have a right to form unions and act collectively to defend our rights at work until it gets in the way of corporate profits or government cutbacks.

### Which Side are You On?

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he is a “staunch believer and defender” of the charter but would not take action to try to stop Ford. This is classic Justin Trudeau. “Sympathizing” with our concerns and then doing the opposite completely. It has been the same textbook he’s used to approach Bill C-51, previous Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s original “Anti-Terrorism” law, which blew open the door to increased government and police spying, detention and secrecy under the pretext of protecting us. Trudeau spoke against Bill C-51, but he and every single Liberal member of parliament voted in favour of it.

His promised fix after being elected Prime Minister, Bill C-59, has been anything but. Tim McSorley, National Coordinator for the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, attended the Parliamentary hearings on the law, which was passed and sent to the Senate for approval. His assessment?

“From mass surveillance to continuing



Ontario Secondary students walk out of classes to protest Doug Ford government's elimination of new sex-ed curriculum, September 21, 2018.

the unfair, ineffective No Fly List, and from secret 'threat disruption activities' to new cyber-attack powers, nearly all aspects of Bill C-59 remain the same. And nearly all the 'problematic' aspects of Bill C-51 remain unfixed.

Even if the government improved the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency and Intelligence Commissioner, though, good review and oversight can never make up for bad legislation. Instead, the bodies tasked with monitoring for errors and keeping the excesses of our national security agencies in check are forced to be rubber stamps reduced to making sure that bad laws aren't broken and justifying a system that undermines our rights."

#### Do as I Say. Not as I Do.

So who do you trust? The politician who says he respects your rights before violating them, or the one who just goes right out and does it? Neither. Trudeau, Chretien and all the other politicians grumbling about Ford aren't doing it because they care about our rights. They're concerned he's exposing too much of the ruling class's hand too fast. They have tactical and strategic differences with him, not moral or political ones.

We need to be especially vigilant against racist, islamophobic and anti-immigrant campaigns which are now common in Canada, the United States and Europe. It's the same attempt to blame "others" for a crisis created by capitalist governments and corporations and used to justify cracking down on human and democratic rights – especially to organize an effective opposition. We have seen this done before, and we can't let it happen again.

The best way to confront these attacks is always a united, consistent and independent movement defending the human and democratic rights of all poor, working and oppressed people. We've seen glimpses and powerful possibilities with different upsurges such as Occupy Wall Street, Idle No More, and the initial Canada-wide movement opposing Bill C-51. We need to build on those and understanding the power and oppressed people working together to defend their interests.

Follow Thomas on Twitter: @thomasdavies9

# REPEAL BILL C-51

## SCRAP BILL C-59!

FIGHTING BACK AGAINST UNDEMOCRATIC LAWS

By Thomas Davies

September is always an important month for social justice organizing. Schools are back in session, and the Parliament of Canada usually

resumes as well. This September had a special significance for the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51. As Parliament resumed, the Senate was reaching the last stages before making a final decision on the Liberal's Bill C-59. Despite promises otherwise, this new law would do little to address the human rights concerns created by its predecessor. This made it all the more important to be out in public educating and organizing in defence of human and democratic rights.

Weekly actions had continued through the summer, but now the Working Group prioritized holding pickets and petition drives outside of busy college and university campuses in Vancouver. The response was enthusiastic, and many students stopped to ask questions and sign petitions.

While the days were getting shorter, there was still time to get in a few last banner drops before Fall truly set in. While Bill C-51 has been covered very little by mainstream media recently, there was still a lot of responsive honking both in New Westminster and Burnaby.

After 186 consecutive weekly actions there continues to be many interactions with new allies longtime supporters. The Working Group continues to emphasize that both Bill C-51 and Bill C-59 have nothing to do with "safety" and everything to do with expanding governments suppression of human and democratic rights. We cannot allow these to go unchallenged.



Picket at Stadium Skytrain Station in Vancouver to "Stop Bill C-51 & C-59", Sept. 24, 2018.

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Interview transcribed by Thomas  
Davies & Alison Bodine

*Interview with Cuban Ambassador to Canada,  
Josefina Vidal with the radio program America  
Latina al Dia (ALAD), Co-Op Radio  
Vancouver 100.5 FM. September 29, 2018.*

**ALAD: Good afternoon, thank you so much for joining us today Ambassador. To begin, can you speak to the feeling of Cubans in this Post-Castro Cuba.**

**Ambassador Vidal:** Good afternoon, it's a pleasure to be with you this afternoon from Ottawa in Canada. Concerning your questions, I can tell you that for more than 20 years now Cuba has been going through many changes, important changes, particularly since 2011 when a process of important transformations in our economy and social model has been taking place. This process of transformation was dictated by changes that took place in the international situation - including the reinforcement of the US blockade against Cuba, but also some important domestic needs, mainly in achieving a more efficient economy and improving the standard of living of the population.

All those changes I have to say are happening within socialism. Keeping the social achievements which are very important for us, we are very proud of, like universal education and health care and social security. In essence, what we are doing in Cuba is making changes within continuity with the goal of improving our development model. With the goal of building a more democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation within socialism. We will never go back to the past. This is a decision that is supported by the majority of the Cuban population and the same applies to the recent changes that have taken place in the head of our government with the election last April of a new President, Miguel Diaz-Canal. I have to say that he is, of course, a generational change, but there is no rupture with the goals I just described for you and the direction that the country is taking was decided more than seven years ago by the Cuban Communist Party in its 6th and 7th Congress, and then by the Cuban parliament after a big popular debate in the whole country.

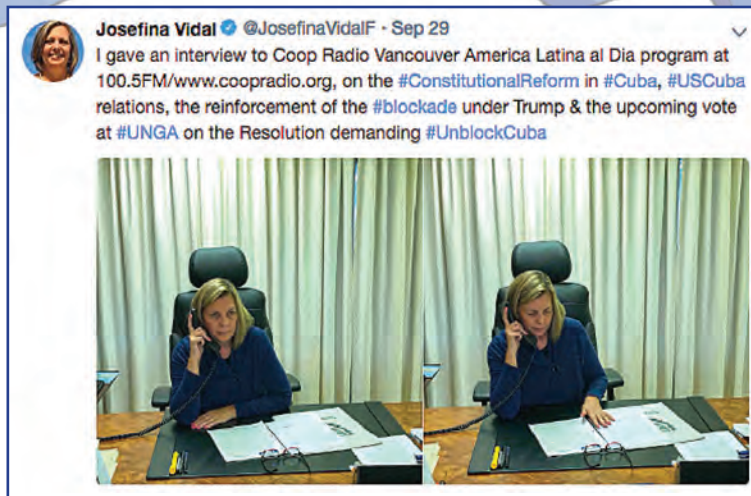
**ALAD: There are several proposed changes**

**to the Constitution including recognizing private property and making same-sex marriages legal in the country by changing the constitution to define marriage as a union between two people - what can you tell us about that?**

**Ambassador Vidal:** Yes, there is a very important process going on in Cuba, which is the constitutional reform. This process responds to the important economic and social

**ALL CHANGES IN CUBA  
ARE HAPPENING WITHIN  
SOCIALISM!**

## Interview with Her Excellency **Josefina Vidal** Cuban Ambassador to Canada



changes which have been taking place in recent years in Cuba as I already explained. This is really a genuine democratic exercise in which the whole Cuban population has become a sort of constituent assembly, to express its opinions and amendments to the Draft Constitution which was prepared by the Constitutional

Commission made up of political leaders of different social organizations and also many lawyers, and members of the Cuban Parliament, and having already been enriched by the Cuban parliament itself. Now what is happening is a huge popular debate all over the country, even Cubans abroad in other countries in the world are invited to express their opinions and views and should suggest changes to the constitution. After this whole debate finishes in the next few months, the draft of the constitution will go to a referendum in February next year. This new constitution will consolidate the continuity to our socialist system and, as I already said, ratify things that are already there for the Cuban people such as the principles of social justice and humanism that are very important characteristics of our political, economic and social system.

Concerning the main changes that are proposed in the draft of the new constitution, if you allow me, I can mention just a few. For example, the new constitution will ratify and give more space to the principles that sustain Cuban foreign policy. Specifically in incorporates some new principles that we have followed for many years but are not reflected in the current constitution - such as the respect for international law and multilateralism, the fight against terrorism and nuclear proliferation, and the respect for human rights.

Another important change is that it reinforces socialist property as an essential principle of our economic model, but at the same time recognizes some role for the market and new forms of non-state property are recognized.

For example, cooperative property, private property, personal property and mixed property. Of course, the big state socialist enterprise continues to be the main economic actor in Cuba and the state will continue directing, regulating and controlling the economic activity in the county.

**"NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL  
BLOCKADE IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA"**



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Report on Resolution 72/4 of the  
United Nations General Assembly**



Another change is that all types of citizens rights are expanding to guarantee equality and non-discrimination of any kind. A new right, for example, for the projection of old age people will be incorporated into this draft. New rights in the areas of justice and due process are recognized too. Marriage is also defined not anymore as the union between a man and a woman, but as a union between two persons - which is something



very advanced in our constitution. And also, regarding the structure of the state and the government, the figures of the President of the Republic as the head of state and the Prime Minister in charge of the government are incorporated. That didn't exist before. More properties are also going to be given to the municipal governments. These are among the most important changes that are included in the draft that is being discussed now by the Cuban population.

**ALAD: What is the status of US – Cuban relations? We know that under former President Obama, there was a historic visit to Cuba and talks of diplomatic relations seemed to go in the proper direction, however with the new government in the United States, what is the status the economic blockade against the island?**

**Ambassador Vidal:** During the last two years of the Obama administration some progress was made in bilateral relations, and a process towards the normalization of relations was launched. I have to say that there is now a setback. The Trump administration has gone back to confrontation mode with Cuba. He has decided to stop the process towards the normalization of relations and has issued a new policy which is a policy to reinforce the U.S. approach towards Cuba. As a result, the U.S. blockade has been again strengthened. New restrictions have been imposed again on travel to Cuba and trade with Cuba, and there is a setback in general in the bilateral relations. The bilateral climate has deteriorated, and at the same time, some exchanges between the two governments have been discontinued.

The blockade is there. President Obama did not lift the blockade; he didn't. It is up to the U.S. Congress to decide. This is a reality that we have to continue to face. That is why Cuba will go again this year, as we have been doing

in the last 25 years, to the United National General Assembly to present a resolution demanding the U.S. government to put an end to the blockade imposed on Cuba.

**ALAD: Thank you very much, Ambassador, for attending our call. DO you wish to send a message to Canadians? Anything that we should be working within solidarity with the people of Cuba and the process?**

**Ambassador Vidal:** You know that Cuba and Canada have had a positive and long-lasting relationship for many many years. We are very grateful to all Canadians who have been supporting Cuba for such a long time. There are many Canadians who visit Cuba every year. Strong bonds exist between the Canadian and Cuba peoples. Canadians are very welcome in Cuba; we will continue welcoming them. Cuba is a very close, safe and friendly destination for Canadians.

In summary, Canada is a very important country for Cuba. It is the first source of tourists for Cuba, the second largest foreign investor, and our fourth largest trading

partner. But, we would like Canada to become a more relevant actor in the development of the Cuban economy, and this is part of my task here; to continue strengthening and expanding bilateral relations between Cuba and Canada. It is going to be my endeavour while I am here in Canada, to continue doing what has begun many years ago.

**ALAD: Thank you very much, Ambassador Josefina Vidal.**

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## Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba Sponsors Cuban Film "CANDELARIA" at Vancouver Latin American Film Festival



*By Tamara Hansen*

The Vancouver Latin American Film Festival kicked off at the end of August with many exciting films from across Latin America and Canada. This year, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) was once again a proud community partner of this important annual festival.

This year VCSC sponsored a Cuba-Colombia co-production, "Candelaria." A tragic-comedy is featuring legendary stars of Cuban cinema, Alden Knight and Verónica Lynn. The film

begins in Havana in 1994, with an elderly couple, Candelaria and Victor Hugo whose lives are bound by monotony until Candelaria finds a video camera tangled in some sheets at the hotel where she works, which leads to all kinds of unexpected consequences for the pair.

Colombian director Jhonny Hendrix was in attendance at both screenings, of "Candelaria" on Saturday, Sept 1 at SFU Woodwards and Sunday, Sept 2 at The Cinematheque. Tamara Hansen, Coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC), welcomed audiences and

invited them to get involved in Cuba solidarity work with VCSC, as well as to visit the literature table after the film showing. The film sparked many good questions for the director which led to dynamic discussions at the VCSC table.

VCSC was also honoured to be invited to participate in the 15th annual Canada-El Salvador Action Network (CELSAN) Festival de Maiz (Corn Festival) on September 2 in Vancouver. The Cuba solidarity table was busy throughout the day, and the festival was once again a great chance to enjoy delicious food and culture from throughout Latin America.



**Statement by the President of the Councils of State and Ministers, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, in the "Nelson Mandela Peace Summit"**

Mrs. President:

We are so happy and take comfort in the fact that the United Nations General Assembly is convening a peace summit, and that such summit has been named after Nelson Mandela.

Less than 30 years ago, beloved Madiba was a political prisoner in the apartheid jails, serving a life sentence as a result of his noble struggle for justice and equality among all men and women in South Africa, where a white minority was subjecting the black majority to the scorn of segregation.

We do not forget that during the dark apartheid years and even long after being elected President, Mandela and the most brilliant and honest African freedom fighters were still kept on lists of alleged terrorists.

Cuba is honored to recall that we shared in their struggles, on the first line of combat, together with its African brothers and sisters from Angola and Namibia. We will never forget Cuito Cuanavale.

And there was not greater acknowledgement than the embrace of a freed Nelson Mandela to our historic leader, Fidel Castro, on Cuban soil.

I intend that our tribute to Mandela is not only to South Africa's first black president and the Nobel Peace Laureate, but we should also think about the rebel who had to fight against injustice when peaceful ways were shut down; the political prisoner, the advocate for human rights and for the rights of his people, and the politician who changed the history.

We are pleased that in remembering Mandela the struggle of the South African people against the opprobrious apartheid regime is also recognized. That struggle was waged under the leadership of the African National Congress and many other combatants who gave their lives for the cause of freedom in Africa.

The First Secretary of our Party, Army

General Raul Castro, called Mandela a "prophet of unity, reconciliation and peace. On the other hand, the Commander-in-Chief of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, defined him as an example of "an absolutely honorable man (...), unyieldingly courageous, heroic, calm, intelligent, and capable..." This is how the Cuban people also remembers Nelson Mandela.

Mrs. President:

Recent announcements about military expenditure are alarming, which is pushing the world into a new arms race, to the detriment of the enormous resources that are needed to build a world of peace.

There cannot be development without peace and stability, nor can there be peace or stability without development. There cannot be peace and security for the peoples with high levels of poverty, chronic hunger and malnutrition, lack of sanitation and limited access to drinking water, illiteracy, high levels of infant mortality, deaths due to preventable diseases and a low life

expectancy.

To achieve a world where peace and peaceful solution of conflicts prevail, it is imperative to address the root causes that create them. The millions of excluded people as a result of the unfair economic international order, the displaced persons, the hungry, those fleeing wars and lack of opportunities towards lands of abundance built on the plundering of our peoples, have become victims of a noiseless and silenced segregation.

A lot remains to be done in order to make Mandela's dreams come true. The only tribute worthy of his memory is to promote development in underprivileged nations. Actions rather than words. Cooperation, not intervention. Solidarity, not plundering.

Mrs. President:

Cuba and Africa are united by bonds of blood. The cultural heritage of the African continent in the idiosyncrasy of Cubans is undeniable. The culture and the best values of the African peoples nurtured our own. We were inspired by their courage, nobility, wisdom and resilience.

Cuba's collaboration with the African peoples has been maintained for over 50 years as a priority of the foreign policy of the Cuban Revolution.

International peace remains threatened by the philosophy of domination. Therefore, we endorse Mandela's words when he said: "We also want to be masters of our own destiny".

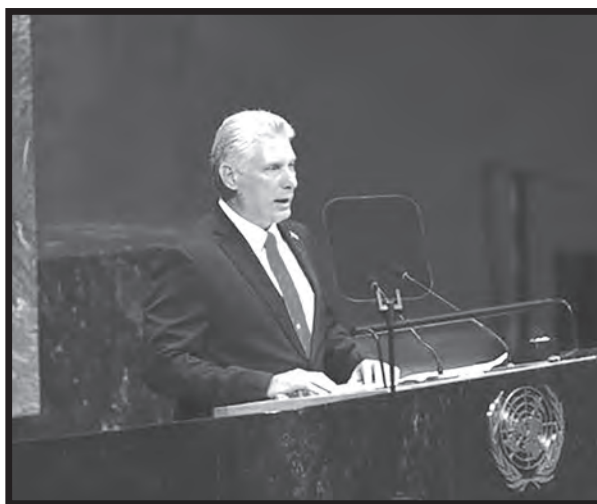
Let us then work for the future of peace that our peoples are entitled to in their own right. Let us really and fully honor unforgettable Mandela, whom the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution called him "an apostle of peace".

Thank you very much.

*From: [www.minrex.gob.cu](http://www.minrex.gob.cu)*

**Top: Comandante Fidel Castro, leader of the Cuban Revolution & President Nelson Mandela, South African leader against Apartheid**

**Bottom: Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel speaks at the U.N. "Nelson Mandela Peace Summit, Sept. 24, 2018.**



# **SPEECH BY CUBAN PRESIDENT MIGUEL DÍAZ-CANEL TO THE U.N. "NELSON MANDELA PEACE SUMMIT"**

**Intervención del Presidente de los Consejos de Estado y de Ministros de Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, en la Cumbre de Paz Nelson Mandela. Nueva York, 24 de septiembre de 2018.**

Señora Presidenta:

Cuánto nos alegra y reconforta que la Asamblea General de Naciones Unidas se reúna en una Cumbre por la Paz y que esa Cumbre lleve el nombre de Nelson Mandela.

Hace menos de 30 años, el entrañable Madiba era un preso político en las cárceles del apartheid, confinado de por vida, a causa de su noble lucha por la justicia y la igualdad entre todos los hombres y mujeres de Sudáfrica, donde una minoría blanca sometía a la mayoría negra al escarnio de la segregación.

No olvidamos que durante los oscuros años del apartheid y aún mucho tiempo después de ser elegido Presidente, a Mandela y a los más brillantes y honestos luchadores africanos, los mantuvieron en listas de presuntos terroristas.

Cuba se honra al recordar que compartió sus luchas, en la primera línea de combate, junto con sus hermanos africanos de Angola y de Namibia. Nunca olvidaremos a Cuito Cuanavale.

Y no hubo mayor reconocimiento que el abrazo de Nelson Mandela libre a nuestro líder histórico, Fidel Castro Ruz, en territorio cubano.

Pretendo que nuestro tributo a Mandela no sea sólo al primer presidente negro de Sudáfrica y al Premio Nobel de la Paz, sino que pensemos también en el rebelde que se vio obligado a luchar contra la injusticia cuando le cerraron los caminos pacíficos; al preso político, al defensor de los derechos humanos y de los derechos de su pueblo, y al político que cambió la historia.

Nos complace que al recordar a Mandela se reconozca la heroica lucha del pueblo sudafricano en contra del oprobioso régimen del Apartheid, conducida bajo el liderazgo del Congreso Nacional Africano y la contribución de muchos líderes y combatientes que dedicaron su vida a la causa de la libertad en África.

El Primer Secretario de nuestro Partido, General de Ejército Raúl Castro Ruz, calificó a Mandela como «un profeta de la unidad, la reconciliación y la paz». Por su parte, el Comandante en Jefe de la Revolución Cubana, Fidel Castro Ruz, lo definió como ejemplo de «hombre absolutamente íntegro (...),



inconmoviblemente firme, valiente, heroico, sereno, inteligente, capaz...” Así mismo recuerda el pueblo cubano a Nelson Mandela.

Señora Presidenta:

Alarman los recientes anuncios del aumento del gasto militar, que lanzará al mundo a una nueva carrera armamentista, en detrimento de los ingentes recursos que se necesitan para construir un mundo de paz.

No puede haber desarrollo sin paz y estabilidad, ni paz y estabilidad sin desarrollo. No puede haber paz y seguridad para pueblos con altos niveles de pobreza, con hambre crónica y malnutrición, insalubridad y escaso acceso al agua potable, analfabetismo, altos índices de mortalidad infantil, muertes por enfermedades prevenibles y baja esperanza de vida.

Para lograr un mundo en el que impere la paz y la solución pacífica de los conflictos, urge atender las causas raíz que los generan. Los millones de excluidos por el injusto orden económico internacional, los desplazados, los hambrientos, los que huyen de las guerras y de la falta de oportunidades hacia los territorios de la abundancia levantada con el saqueo de nuestros pueblos, son víctimas de una segregación silenciosa y silenciada.

Mucho queda aún por conquistar para hacer realidad los sueños de Mandela. El único tributo digno a su memoria es impulsar el desarrollo de las naciones en desventaja. Actos más que palabras. Cooperación, no intervención. Solidaridad, no saqueo.

Señora Presidenta:

Lazos de sangre unen a Cuba y África. La herencia cultural del continente africano en



**Arriba: el presidente cubano, Miguel Díaz-Canel, habla en la cumbre de paz de Nelson Mandela, 24 de septiembre de 2018.**

**Abajo: el comandante Fidel Castro, líder de la revolución cubana y el presidente Nelson Mandela, líder sudafricano contra el apartheid**

la idiosincrasia de los cubanos es innegable. La cultura y los mejores valores de sus pueblos nutrieron al nuestro. Nos inspiraron su valentía, nobleza, sabiduría y capacidad de resistencia.

La colaboración de Cuba con los pueblos de África se ha mantenido por más de 50 años como una prioridad de la política exterior de la Revolución cubana.

La paz internacional permanece amenazada por la filosofía de la dominación. Por ello hacemos nuestras las palabras de Mandela cuando dijo: «Nosotros también queremos ser dueños de nuestro propio destino».

Trabajemos entonces por el futuro de paz que corresponde por derecho a nuestros pueblos. Honremos de verdad, plenamente, al inolvidable Mandela, a quien el líder histórico de la Revolución cubana calificara como «Un Apóstol de la Paz».

Muchas Gracias.

*Desde: [www.minrex.gob.cu](http://www.minrex.gob.cu)*

# INTERVENCIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE CUBANO, MIGUEL DÍAZ-CANEL EN LA CUMBRE DE PAZ NELSON MANDELA DEL ONU



# Bernier's "People's Party of Canada"? Split in the right-wing conservative movement

By Tamara Hansen

A split in the conservative movement in Canada solidified this September as Member of Parliament (MP) Maxime Bernier announced he would leave the Conservative Party of Canada (lead by MP Andrew Scheer) to form a nation-wide far-right conservative party called the People's Party of Canada (PPC).

Across Canada, most political pundits are discussing if this split will simply ensure that Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party will win a majority government in the next election. There are also many questions about who will join Bernier because, as of now, he is the only Member of Parliament in Canada who has left Andrew Scheer's Conservative Party.

These are interesting points of discussion, but whether a conservative or a liberal party is in power, Canada's parliament always represents Canada's wealthy and capitalist elite and their desires and objectives. Indeed, Global News made fun of Bernier's boast about his party's fundraising efforts, explaining in an article, "Bernier said he'd raised around \$140,000 in a month (the Liberals reportedly spent a little more than \$40 million during the 2015 campaign)." While we might be glad that Bernier is not (yet) rolling in the millions, the fact that it takes \$40 million to run a successful electoral campaign in Canada is further proof that this so-called "democracy" is a specific type of democracy – a bourgeois democracy – built by and for the capitalist ruling class. No honest and conscious working people in Canada can afford to participate in this game and hope to win, Canada's parliamentary system was designed to insure this.

In the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice and as a revolutionary socialist we must ask, what the creation of this new "People's Party of Canada" and the split in

the conservative movement means for poor, working, and marginalized people in Canada.

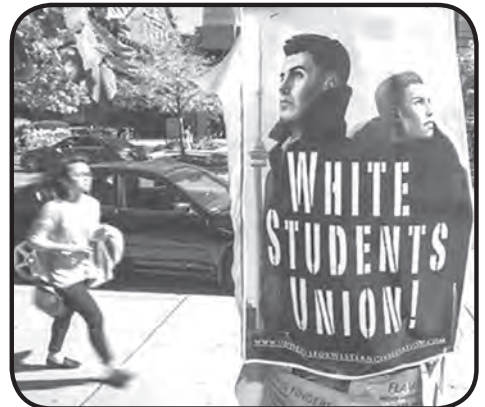
The truth is that Bernier's split from the Conservative Party of Canada represents a growing national and international trend towards dogmatist ultra-right-wing politics. From Germany to France and Poland, to the United States, England, Hungary and Italy, to Australia and Canada, a growing movement of right-wing extremists is committing itself to further dividing poor and working people along the lines of sexism, racism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia and anti-semitism. This trend represents an ultra-conservative section of the ruling class which believes that the best way to implement their economic and political agenda is by also promoting a conservative social and political agenda which whips up fear, division, and hatred.

## Why does Maxime Bernier believe this is the right time for his dogmatist ultra-right-wing agenda?

Maxime Bernier and Andrew Scheer were both candidates for the Conservative Party of Canada leadership in 2017. Scheer won 51% of the votes, and Bernier lost with 49%. With Bernier now leaving Scheer's Conservative Party to form PPC, a Toronto Star article titled, "Tory divide a painful lesson not learned by all," by conservative strategist Jaime Watt, explains some of the political differences between these two conservative representatives of the ruling class. Watt writes, "out of the gate, Bernier has criticized Andrew Scheer directly on a range of issues. From Scheer's commitment to maintaining the unfair dairy supply management system to his comparatively light-handed criticism of Canada's refugee crisis, Bernier tacked right and did everything he could to position Scheer as a mushy moderate."

According to PPC website, their platform is still being finalized, but will include many of the following points:

- "Lowering corporate income tax."
- "Immigration must not be used as a tool to forcibly change the cultural character and social fabric of Canada."
- "Privatize Canada Post."
- "Get Ottawa out of healthcare."
- "Promote free-



**Two anti-diversity, anti-muslim, anti-communist & anti-homosexual posters "Make Canada Great Again" & "White Students' Union" found on University campaigns in Quebec and Ontario.**

market policies, liberalized trade, and private property rights around the world."

- "Work with allies to defend Canada's security, especially against radical Islamic terrorism."
- "Reduce the total number of immigrants to 25,000 per year."
- "Increase resources for CSIS, the RCMP, and Canadian immigration officials."

Of course, many of these points do not fall far from the Conservative and Liberal Party platforms either. However, Bernier's language on the privatization of many important public institutions, as well as his anti-immigrant rhetoric, are especially gross and divisive.

Watt further explains that "the reaction to Bernier's split among Conservatives was anything but warm." It is true, Bernier's decision to form the People's Party of Canada is being criticized by many conservatives who want to win the 2019 election against Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at any cost. While they may be sympathetic to Bernier's political views, they do not want their conservative votes divided between two parties.



**Maxime Bernier on his way to a news conference to announce the new political party, Sept. 14, 2018.**

# MOTHER OF ALL STRUGGLES!

## *Indigenous struggle against colonialism*



**E. Pauline Johnson  
(1861–1913)**

*E. Pauline Johnson (Mohawk/British) also known as "Tekahionwake". Johnson is remembered for publicly embracing her Mohawk heritage in her poetry and her public performances. Her poem "A Cry from an Indian Wife," uses the language of her time, while portraying an Indigenous woman's perspective regarding the Resistance of the First Nations and Metis people in 1885.*

### **A Cry from an Indian Wife**

My forest brave, my Red-skin love, farewell;  
We may not meet tomorrow; who can tell  
What mighty ills befall our little band,  
Or what you'll suffer from the white man's hand?  
Here is your knife! I thought 'twas sheathed for aye.  
No roaming bison calls for it today;  
No hide of prairie cattle will it maim;  
The plains are bare, it seeks a nobler game:  
'Twill drink the life-blood of a soldier host.  
Go; rise and strike, no matter what the cost.  
Yet stay. Revolt not at the Union Jack,  
Nor raise Thy hand against this stipling pack  
Of white-faced warriors, marching West to quell  
Our fallen tribe that rises to rebel.  
They all are young and beautiful and good;  
Curse to the war that drinks their harmless blood.  
Curse to the fate that brought them from the East  
To be our chiefs—to make our nation least  
That breathes the air of this vast continent.  
Still their new rule and council is well meant.  
They but forget we Indians owned the land  
From ocean unto ocean; that they stand  
Upon a soil that centuries ago  
Was our sole kingdom and our right alone.  
They never think how they would feel today,  
If some great nation came from far away,  
Wresting their country from their hapless braves,  
Giving what they gave us—but wars and graves.  
Then go and strike for liberty and life,  
And bring back honour to your Indian wife.

Your wife? Ah, what of that, who cares for me?  
Who pities my poor love and agony?  
What white-robed priest prays for your safety here,  
As prayer is said for every volunteer  
That swells the ranks that Canada sends out?  
Who prays for vict'ry for the Indian scout?  
Who prays for our poor nation lying low?  
None—therefore take your tomahawk and go.  
My heart may break and burn into its core,  
But I am strong to bid you go to war.  
Yet stay, my heart is not the only one  
That grieves the loss of husband and of son;  
Think of the mothers o'er the inland seas;  
Think of the pale-faced maiden on her knees;  
One pleads her God to guard some sweet-faced child  
That marches on toward the North-West wild.  
The other prays to shield her love from harm,  
To strengthen his young, proud uplifted arm.  
Ah, how her white face quivers thus to think,  
Your tomahawk his life's best blood will drink.  
She never thinks of my wild aching breast,  
Nor prays for your dark face and eagle crest  
Endangered by a thousand rifle balls,  
My heart the target if my warrior falls.  
O! coward self I hesitate no more;  
Go forth, and win the glories of the war.  
Go forth, nor bend to greed of white men's hands,  
By right, by birth we Indians own these lands,  
Though starved, crushed, plundered, lies our nation  
low...  
Perhaps the white man's God has willed it so.

However, Watt smartly warns not to discount Bernier either, explaining, "there is a significant chunk of Canadian citizens who are frustrated with many of the issues he is championing. There remains a deep well of frustration on the same hot-button issues that got Mr. Trump elected." Bernier seems to recognize that there is a segment of ultra-right-wing followers in Canada who are giving up on politics as they do not see their extreme right-wing views reflected in any of the major political parties, he hopes to bring them back into the fold.

This same political trend can be seen in the election of Trump in the U.S. and Premier Doug Ford in Ontario – the financial and economic crisis of capitalism, and its failure to improve the standard of living of mass majority have opened a growing demand for these types of ugly divisive leadership in Canada and around the world. Bernier intends to be the lightning rod to attract these anti-immigrant, anti-refugee, anti-environment, anti-women, anti-Indigenous, and anti-diversity hoards to a new party, the so-called "People's Party." Bernier plans to rip a page out of Trump's playbook when Trump called himself, "the least racist person," all the while promoting policies which divide and oppress human beings based on their race, ethnicity, and country of origin.

### **What's next for working and oppressed people?**

Poor, marginalized, and working people in Canada cannot afford to be confused by political tendencies which seek to blame women, queer people, Indigenous people, people of colour, refugees, immigrants, unions, poor people, and 'multiculturalism' for the problems facing our society. We must instead understand how much we have in common as human beings living under the domination of bourgeois democracy and capitalism. These two systems are working hand in hand to ensure the wealthy are consistently getting wealthier and consolidating their power, while poor and working people struggle to get by.

We must confront not only the dangerous right-wing populism of Maxime Bernier and PPC, but also the main-stream conservatism of Scheer, the hypocritical liberalism of Trudeau, and the mis-leaderships of all political parties which defend the unjust and unequal institutions of bourgeois democracy and capitalism. These are the institutions and politicians which continue to use divide and conquer policies against working and oppressed people in an attempt to stabilize their capitalist system which is in deep unresolved crisis. Our job, as working and oppressed people is to unite and win against their bigotry and hatred, as well as against the unjust and corrupt system they represent, capitalism.

*Follow Tamara on Twitter: @THans01*



# HEY TRUMP! LIFT THE BLOCKADE ON CUBA!

By Alison Bodine

On August 24, 2018, Cuba released its yearly report to the United Nations General Assembly on the impacts of the cruel U.S. blockade against Cuba. The report detailed: "The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba constitutes the principal obstacle for the development of all the potentials

for the Cuban economy...In the period considered by this report [April 2017-March 2018], the blockade has caused losses to Cuba for around \$ 4,321,200,000."

Just imagine what the government of Cuba would be capable of achieving with \$4.3 billion more to spend on housing, education and healthcare each year. This thought fueled the energetic chants of September 17, 2018, monthly picket action organized by Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade - Vancouver. Together with friends of Cuba in Ottawa and Montreal, Canada and Kiev, Ukraine, who organize a monthly picket action on the 17<sup>th</sup> of each month, participants also protested the illegal U.S. occupation of the territory of Guantánamo Bay, Cuba as well as further hostile and aggressive policies against Cuba.



Monthly picket against the U.S. blockade on Cuba in front of the U.S. consulate in Vancouver.



Monthly picket against the U.S. blockade on Cuba in front of the U.S. consulate in Montreal.



Monthly picket against the U.S. blockade on Cuba in front of the U.S. embassy in Ottawa.



Monthly picket against the U.S. blockade on Cuba in front of the U.S. embassy in Kiev, Ukraine.

Colourful and dynamic photos from the picket actions were shared far and wide, as part of the September 17 Twitter Storm for Cuba organized by the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), alongside the hashtags #Cuba, #NoMasBloqueo and #UnblockCuba.

On October 31, 2018, the United Nations will vote on a resolution against the U.S. blockade on Cuba for the 25<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. Each year, the UN overwhelmingly condemns this criminal policy (last years vote was 191 countries against the blockade, and only two - the United States and Israel, in favour). From Vancouver, Canada we will continue uniting our voices demanding an end to the U.S. blockade on Cuba and the full normalization of U.S. - Cuba relations!

For more information or to participate in the next action against the U.S. blockade on Cuba, visit [www.vancubavblockade.org](http://www.vancubavblockade.org) or follow on Facebook and Twitter @NoBloqueoVan

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



**MALCOLM X SPEAKS**

**MALCOLM X AT UC BERKELEY (OCTOBER 11, 1963)**

Because we are forced to live in the poorest sections of the city, we attend inferior schools. We have inferior teachers and we get an inferior education. The white power structure downtown makes certain that by the time our people do graduate, we won't be equipped or qualified for anything but the dirtiest, heaviest, poorest-paying jobs. Jobs that no one else wants.

We are trapped in a vicious cycle of economic, intellectual, social, and political death. Inferior jobs, inferior housing, inferior education which in turn again leads to inferior jobs. We spend a lifetime in this vicious circle. Or in this vicious cycle going in circles. Giving birth to children who see no hope or future but to follow in our miserable footsteps.

# FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD IN U.S. JAILS



On May 17, 2017 two important political prisoners held in U.S. prisons, Chelsea Manning and Oscar Lopez were officially pardoned by the out-going Obama administration and freed. Despite these two positive developments, Obama also blatantly ignored many other political prisoners, among them Mumia Abu Jamal and Leonard Peltier.

Imprisoned since 1982, Mumia Abu Jamal has served 36 years of a life sentence for the unproven killing of a Philadelphia police officer. Amnesty International said Mumia's trial "failed to meet international standards" due to a severe climate of racism and hostility. He suffers from diabetes and his health is constantly at risk due to improper medical treatment.

Leonard Peltier was

convicted for the deaths of two FBI agents who died during a 1975 shoot-out on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. In a trial full of discrimination and manipulations, the prosecution even conceded that they did not know who shot the agents. He has been in prison for over 42 years, with a projected release date of October 11, 2040 at the age of 96. He also suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, and a heart condition which make the need for his immediate freedom even more important.

Two important factors brought about the freedom of Chelsea Manning and Oscar López: their dedication to the social justice causes they were defending, and the ongoing campaigns demanding their release by people around the world. Both Mumia and Leonard have shown their incredible spirits of resistance, and we must continue to support the ongoing international campaigns demanding their freedom.

FREE LEONARD PELTIER NOW!

FREE MUMIA ABU JAMAL NOW!

FREE ALL U.S. POLITICAL PRISONERS NOW!



**VISIT THESE WEBSITES TO LEARN MORE & GET INVOLVED:  
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# WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING IN VENEZUELA?

**PUBLIC FORUM**



**CARLOS RON**  
VICE MINISTER  
Venezuelan Ministry of  
External Affairs for  
North America



**STEVE ELLNER**  
PROFESSOR  
Universidad de Oriente  
in Puerto La Cruz  
Venezuela

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350 West Georgia St, Downtown Vancouver  
5:00-7:00pm

ORGANIZED BY: FIRE THIS TIME VENEZUELA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN  
[WWW.FIRETHISTIME.NET](http://WWW.FIRETHISTIME.NET) | 604-518-7361



**END SANCTIONS  
AGAINST VENEZUELA!**

**U.S./CANADA  
HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!**

**NO REGIME CHANGE  
IN VENEZUELA!**



**Friday October 12 2018**

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

FIRE THIS TIME - VENEZUELA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

**WWW.FIRETHISTIME.NET**



# U.S./CANADA HANDS OFF AFGHANISTAN!

MARKING 17 YEARS OF WAR AND OCCUPATION IN AFGHANISTAN



**U.S. & SAUDI ARABIA STOP BOMBING YEMEN!**  
CANADA CANCEL THE ARMS DEAL WITH SAUDI ARABIA NOW!  
**U.S./UK/FRANCE HANDS OFF SYRIA!**  
**U.S. HANDS OFF IRAN! END SANCTIONS ON IRAN!**  
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ALL OPPRESSED NATIONS!

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 7 2018 1 PM**

**VANCOUVER ART GALLERY (ROBSON & HOWE, DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER)**

MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR AND OCCUPATION ★ [WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG](http://WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG) ★ @MAWOVAN  
★ ANTI-WAR RALLY & PETITION CAMPAIGN ★

LIFT THE U.S.  
BLOCKADE



ON CUBA  
NOW!

RETURN  
GUANTANAMO  
TO CUBA NOW!

**WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 17 2018 4 PM**  
**U.S. CONSULATE** 1075 W. PENDER ST.  
DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER

FRIENDS OF CUBA AGAINST THE U.S. BLOCKADE-VANCOUVER  
[NOBLOQUEOVANCOUVER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:NOBLOQUEOVANCOUVER@GMAIL.COM) @NOBLOQUEOVAN

**WWW.VANGUBAVSBLOCKADE.ORG**