

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

Fire This Time!



Artwork by: Gerardo Gomez

José Martí
Cuban Revolutionary
Internationalist

“It's best to be lifting up all parties at the same time. In the end everyone will be up. Refusing to lift up one part is no way for lifting up the whole. Homeland is humanity.”

CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALISM IS SAVING LIVES AROUND THE WORLD FIGHTING COVID-19



Andorra



Honduras



Turin, Italy



Barbados



Gambia



Venezuela



Haiti



Qatar



Cuba's Revolutionary Internationalism Lights a Path Forward for Humanity During the Global Covid-19 Pandemic

By Tamara Hansen

May 19, 2020 marks 125 years since the death in combat of Cuba's national hero, poet, writer, and anti-colonial revolutionary, José Martí. At events in Cuba to mark this anniversary, Cuban President, Miguel Díaz-Canel expressed that when Martí died, "in an unfinished letter, he warns of the dangerous plans of the empire against Cuba and Our America. History confirms his prediction and affirms our rebellion."

José Martí famously proclaimed, "*patria es humanidad*" (homeland is humanity). Martí's call for unity has inspired Cuba's dedication to struggling for human dignity and independence around the world.

However, as José Martí warned, these important projects have come under attack, further revealing what President Díaz-Canel called, "dangerous plans of the empire." On May 1, U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, attempted to scold countries accepting Cuban doctors. He stated, "The regime in Havana has taken advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic to continue its exploitation of Cuban medical workers. [...] Governments accepting Cuban doctors must pay them directly. Otherwise, when they pay the regime, they are helping the Cuban government turn a profit on human trafficking."

Pompeo and the Trump administration have been slandering the work of internationalist Cuban doctors consistently. They have often referred to Cuban health professionals as 'modern slaves' or 'victims of human trafficking'. But while the U.S. attempts to demonize Cuba, the U.S. is leading the world in Covid-19 deaths. Despite the fact that

population-wise the U.S. is the 3rd largest country in the world. How do President Trump and Secretary Pompeo dare to accuse Cuba of crimes when the wealthiest country in the world has left its own people to die?

Humanity in the Face of a Global Pandemic

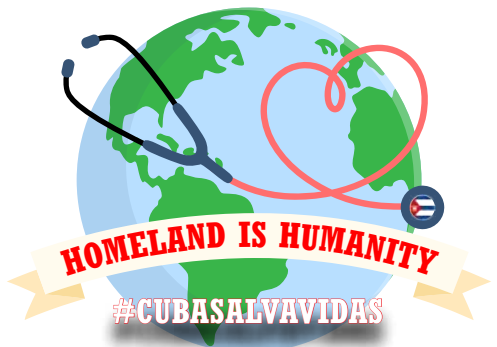
On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) formally declared the outbreak of Covid-19 a pandemic. At that time, a British cruise ship, the MS Braemar had five confirmed and dozens of suspected cases of Covid-19 on board. The ship had over a thousand passengers and crew aboard on its journey in the Caribbean Sea. The Braemar needed to dock urgently to fly its passengers home before the virus continued its deadly spread throughout the vessel. The cruise was denied entry to multiple countries – Cuba alone stood up and invited the ship to dock in its port, despite the risks.

One of the ship's passengers, Steve Dale, expressed on Twitter, "Thanks once more to the people of Cuba for their generosity and humanity."

When asked why Cuba welcomed the MS Braemar and its sick into Cuba – Cuban Foreign Minister, Bruno Rodriguez, simply expressed, "Let's reinforce healthcare, solidarity and international cooperation."

Send in the Reinforcements!

The comments of Cuba's Foreign Minister are not just words, they have been matched by Cuba's deeds. 2,579 Cuban medical professionals are working in 26 countries throughout the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. These are special emergency medical teams tackling the Covid-19 global pandemic, with the Henry Reeve International



Medical Brigades (HRIMB). Cuban medics are famous for working free of charge with their patients and for working in communities that often lack healthcare necessities.

While Covid-19 is a new virus, Cuba's medical internationalism is decades old. In fact, Cuba is marking 57 years since its first international medical brigade. That brigade left Cuba in May 1963 bound for Algeria, where 56 Cuban doctors, nurses, dentists, and medical technicians lent a hand to the newly independent country.

While the work of the HRIMB is truly impressive, Cuba actually has much more to offer humanity – from its focus on preventative medicine, to its biotech and new medicines, to its other forms of internationalist solidarity, to other lessons and gains of the Cuban revolution.

Building Solidarity with Cuba

During this time of global pandemic, humanity is being forced to reevaluate the societies in which we live. We are questioning our priorities, our lifestyles, and the foundation of our global economy, capitalism. One country which has been questioning the inequality and inhumanity of capitalism for over six decades, is Cuba and its revolutionary socialist leadership. During this time of questioning who we are and where we are going, undoubtedly Cuba is shining a light on the path forward for humanity.

If you have found this article and these stories compelling, please speak out for Cuba. The important work being done by Cuba to the benefit of humanity is under consistent attack by the U.S. government, which is seeking to destroy Cuba's example. Why? Because Cuba's example exposes the U.S. government's own lack of care for its citizens. Imagine the richest country in the world is the first nation to reach over 100,000 dead from Covid-19! Why are they trying to protect capitalist corporations and their profits, instead of using their wealth for humanity?

Just as Cuba is reaching out to help humanity, Cuba needs our help. There are many ongoing efforts to support Cuba today in Canada and the U.S. Please consider supporting them!

Follow Tamara on Twitter: @THans01



International Women's Day 2020

By Tamara Hansen

"What is 'Women's Day'? Is it really necessary?"

In 1913 Russian revolutionary, Alexandra Kollontai began her article for International Women's Day with the above two questions. In hindsight, I think almost everyone would agree that women in 1913 – who could not vote and had few civil/legal rights – needed a women's day to advance their rights. Since the first International Women's Days (the first women's day was 1909, while the first International Women's Day was 1911), the struggle of women to defend and expand our rights has resulted in many monumental gains throughout the world. Nevertheless, over 100 years after Kollontai was forced to answer these questions, feminists in 2020 are asked the same questions: "What is 'Women's Day'? Is it really necessary?" Indeed, our forbearers of the women's rights movements of the 1930s, 1950s, 1970s, 1990s, and 2010s also faced these same questions: "What is 'Women's Day'? Is it really necessary?"

But just as the question was ridiculous in 1913, it remains absurd today.

As Kollontai responded in 1913, "Life itself has already supplied a clear and eloquent answer."

What is life's "clear and eloquent answer"?

According to the United Nations' "2019-2020 Families in a Changing



Alexandra Kollontai (center) along with other delegates at the Second International Communist Women's Conference, in Moscow, Russia, 1921



Women's Memorial March in honour of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, Vancouver, Canada, February 14, 2020

What is 'Women's Day'? Is it really necessary?



World Report" & "Progress of the World's Women Report":

- Women earn 23% less than men globally.
- Women occupy only 24% of parliamentary seats worldwide.
- 1 in 3 women have experienced physical or sexual violence throughout their lifetime.
- In 2017, more than

half (58%) of all female victims of intentional homicide were killed by a family member, amounting to 50,000 deaths in the year or 137 women each day; and more than a third (30,000) of these were killed by their current or former intimate partner.

- In 19 countries and territories (out of 189) the law explicitly requires women to obey their husbands; in 17 countries and territories, married women are not allowed to travel outside of the home in the same way as married men.

The non-governmental organization Oxfam's annual report, "Time to care: Unpaid and underpaid care work and the global inequality crisis" reports that in 2020:

- The 22 richest men in the world have more wealth than all the women in Africa combined (approximately 670 million women).
- Women and girls put in 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work every day — a contribution to the global economy of at least \$10.8 trillion a year, more than three times the size of the global tech industry.

From economic inequality, to inequality under the law, to femicide, women worldwide continue to face injustice and inequality in every country. Fighting these injustices is a challenge, not only because

of systemic sexism and inequality but also because of the divisions we face as women. Racism, sexism, ageism, xenophobia, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of systemic discrimination are all ideologies that separate women from recognizing our common interests and working together for our rights.

Women in Canada: Highlighting one year since the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls

While International Women's Day celebrates the gains and achievements of women around the world, it is also a time to reflect on the year that has passed and assess our tasks for the years to come. In Canada, women have made many advancements in our rights: from the right to vote to equality under Canadian law, and the creation of various institutions for women. At the same time, many systemic issues continue to hold back women in Canada.

In my article for Fire This Time Newspaper for International Women's day in 2017, I wrote, "While Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau calls himself a 'feminist' and has garnered much praise for his open stance on gay marriage and LGBTQ+ rights, we have yet to see what he will do for Canada's most marginalized women; or how his feminism will work to provide affordable childcare and housing for women who need it; or his policies to end violence against women in Canada; or to improve access to abortion for women in rural communities, or eliminate the wage gap. Of course, we understand that men who call themselves feminists are useless to our cause unless they take action by our sides." ("From Canada to Cuba: What Women Have Achieved and What We Need to Keep Fighting For" FTT Vol. 11 Is. 3)

Today, three more years with Prime Minister Trudeau have elapsed, and his brand of 'feminism' has been further exposed. None of the issues I raised in 2017 have been tackled in any real or life-changing way for women in Canada. However, one of the steps taken for women under the Trudeau Liberal government, which was repeatedly rejected by the previous Conservative Harper government, was the establishment of the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG).

In September 2016, the government of Canada and all provincial and territorial

governments presented their mandate for the government-funded NIMMIWG. The mandate requested a report on:

"i. Systemic causes of all forms of violence – including sexual violence – against Indigenous women and girls in Canada, including underlying social, economic, cultural, institutional, and historical causes contributing to the ongoing violence

National Inquiry would be similar to dozens of previously written reports. Meanwhile, many unsolved cases and families are waiting for loved ones to come home – yet this inquiry had no mandate to open police files or demand the records for these families. So, while the report criticizes institutions and 'the system' – it did not actually have the power to force police to surrender information or to reform the inequalities in Canada's justice system.

Almost a year ago, on June 3, 2019, the NIMMIWG concluded and published its important report. Most surprisingly, the report called the ongoing neglect by the government of Canada towards murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls "an ongoing genocide." The report further explains, "The truths shared in these National Inquiry hearings tell the story – or, more accurately, thousands of stories – of acts of genocide against First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. [...] This genocide has been empowered by colonial structures, evidenced notably by the Indian Act, the Sixties Scoop, residential schools, and breaches of human and Inuit, Métis and First Nations rights, leading directly to the current increased rates of violence, death, and suicide in Indigenous populations."

While calling out Canada for genocide, the 1,200-page report also features 231 "Calls for Justice." Many of these calls are aimed at the government of Canada and its inaction in the face of dozens of reports on the issues facing Indigenous women and girls. The "Calls for Justice" also call for changes in other institutions, including the media, health services, social work, education, and others.

Meanwhile, the simple publishing of the NIMMIWG report has not made life safer for Indigenous women

and girls in Canada. The Statistics Canada "Homicide in Canada" report clarifies that in 2018, Indigenous women accounted for nearly 37% of female homicide victims, despite representing only 5% of Canada's female population (this is an 11% increase from 2014). The report also explains that, tragically, Indigenous homicide victims were generally younger than non-Indigenous victims, "the average age for Indigenous female victims was 30 compared to 43 for non-Indigenous females."

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Stolen Sisters Memorial March in honour of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, Victoria, B.C., February 15, 2020

Sisters in Spirit Vigil & March in downtown Saskatoon, SK to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, October 6, 2019



and particular vulnerabilities of Indigenous women and girls in Canada, and

ii. Institutional policies and practices implemented in response to violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls in Canada, including the identification and examination of practices that have been effective in reducing violence and increasing safety."

On the surface, this seems positive, as they are looking for systemic and 'root' causes of the issue, in many ways. However, this meant the



THE U.S. MILITARY IS THE WORLD'S BIGGEST CLIMATE DESTROYER!

NO TO WAR AND OCCUPATION! NO TO ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION! EMERGING DYNAMICS OF ANTIWAR AND CLIMATE JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

By Alison Bodine

Talk by Alison Bodine at the United National Antiwar Coalition National Conference held February 21-23, 2020 at the People's Forum in New York City.

To begin, I hope everyone has been able to see on of actions across Canada in solidarity with the people of Wet'suwet'en media and social media lately, footage and their hereditary chiefs who are standing against a fracked gas, or what they call a "natural" gas pipeline, up in northern British Columbia. This struggle is part of my talk today, however, the focus of what I wanted to say is about the importance of bringing the anti-war movement and the climate justice movement together or anti-war organizers and the climate justice movement together.

The Devastating Human and Environmental Impact of War & Occupation

I want to start with just three short examples of the impact of war on the environment that I think are very important to remember.

On January 24th, over a million people protested in Iraq. The streets were full in Baghdad of people demanding the U.S. Out of Iraq Now! It was incredibly inspiring.

Iraq is a country that has been devastated

for 17 years by U.S. led war and occupation. Over a million people have been killed, not to mention the millions who were killed before the war began in 2003 when the U.S. and the United Nations Security Council imposed severe sanctions between 1991 and 2003. Iraq is a devastated country where the U.S. has set up 500 big and small military bases throughout 17 years of occupation, and deployed countless bullets, bombs, chemical weapons, depleted uranium and burn pits filled with toxic plastics, heavy military machinery and shells of weaponry.

No wonder people in Iraq were demanding U.S. Out of Iraq Now! Because of the devastation that has been brought upon them. But I wanted to further centre our discussion on climate justice by talking about one example of what climate devastation and climate justice means to people in Iraq.

In 2010, the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health wrote an article where they reported a 38-fold increase in leukemia, a tenfold increase in breast cancer, and an infant mortality rate eight times higher than in neighboring Kuwait, following what had then been seven years of U.S. war and occupation in Iraq. A big cause of this could be linked to the chemical weapons used, and especially to depleted uranium,

which has a half-life of 4.5 billion years. According to a 2007 report by the U.N. Environment Program, between 1000 and 2000 metric tons of depleted uranium were fired into Iraq.

Now I will bring it back home to the U.S. and Canada. In Canada, an Indigenous Dené nation community in the Northwest Territories became known as the "Village of Widows" because men of the population died of cancers that they developed when mining for uranium. This was the same uranium that was used in the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As well, the radium and the uranium mines in the community released tailings into the lake and landfills. The devastating effects of this are still experienced in the community today.

That brings us to what has been said many times, importantly, in this conference already, which is that the U.S. Department of Defense is the world's largest polluter. We are talking about 1.2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases emitted annually. That is the equivalent of 257 million cars on the road for a year.

In Canada, the Department of National Defence also makes an enormous contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. A portion of this is through the fueling of the warplanes of Canada and other imperialist countries. The government of

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In Solidarity With Black Lives Matter & Victims of Police Brutality U.S. Colonialism at Home and Abroad A Human Appeal from Tunisia

By Hamma Al-Hammami

The demonstrations in the United States of America are growing greater and greater, day after day and have drawn protesters from all classes of society, groups, races, and ethnic communities. Their rage quickly reached the doors of the White House. Agents of the U.S. National Guard made the White House into a highly guarded fortress out of fear of being stormed and invaded by the protesters who are surrounding it.

These demonstrations began following the brutal racist killing of George Floyd, at the hands of the police. The victim was begging for help, telling the officer who had his knee on his neck that he was un-able to breathe, but the officer kept crushing his neck until he released his final breaths. That heinous crime lit the fuse on the already deteriorating situation, and the right wing, populist, extremist Donald Trump made it only worse with his reckless and racist policies and decisions.

Trump has behaved in the same way any dictator in any region of the world would. He quickly criminalized the protests and accuse the "radical left" of "chaos and sabotage" and even "of practicing terrorism". He demanded the police to crush the protestors relentlessly. When the police failed in containing the protests, he called on the "National Guards" for help. And finally, he threatened to use the U.S. army against the protesters. This is the first time in the U.S. for more than decades. It is on the record that not long ago he was criticizing others, in several countries of the world, and accusing them of having no respect for "people's right to freedom of assembly and protesting" which he then used to threaten military intervention in these countries. But this brutal repression and the increased threats only made the American demonstrators more determined to continue the fight for dignity, equality, and social justice.

The on-going police brutality in the United States of America reveals the atrocities of the capitalist system and its cruelty within its main stronghold. This proves that what the U.S. imperialism is doing abroad, such as, brutal attacks, looting, and racism is nothing but a horrible extension of its domestic policy. A deep rooted racism towards Blacks, Latinos, Asians and others, a savage exploitation and a horrible class system (the richest one percent of American hold more wealth than that of middle and upper class combined), a

scary un-employment rate (40 million out of 328 million people), an extreme poverty (more than 43 Million people) and a complete absence of national health insurance for everyone (approximately 50 million people without health insurance) and a persistent criminality (1.2 million crimes of violence, 132,000 acts of rape and 16,214 murders only in 2018) ...

The movement of the American people today gives the progressive forces in the world an unprecedented chance to express their support and help to the American people in their fight against the capitalist imperialist American beast. The American people are offering a huge service to all the nations of the world by denouncing and weakening this beast that has harmed and is still harming them. It is indeed a great opportunity for all nations around the world to rebel and liberate themselves from the shackles of U.S. imperialism. This matter means a lot to the Tunisian people in particular and to the Arab nations in general. It is a fact that this American beast that has always supported the dictatorship in Tunisia and provided the rulers with the necessary assistance to brutalize their own people. The different American governments have always supported the Tunisian government in its repression of its people's struggles (to name a few, the general strike in 1978, the bread riots in 1984, the December 17, 2010- January 14, 2011 Revolution...)

This beast is also the main ally to the Zionist entity who is raping Palestine's land and people. And Trump himself has taken unprecedented steps in this effort which could be summed up by what is called the "Deal of the Century" that aims to permanently bury the Palestinian cause. As well as, to allow the Zionist entity to get its hands on the whole land of Palestinian, in perfect collusion with reactionary Arab governments. It is that same beast who raped the lands of Iraq and destroyed it, and contributed to the destruction of Syria and Libya and the list goes on and on...

However, Arab people including Tunisians, like Europeans, must not remain silent,



Hamma Al-Hammami



Protest in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and against racism on June 6, 2020 in Tunisia, Tunisia

preoccupations or internal problems are not an excuse. There is no doubt that the many Arab rulers will not do it because they are afraid of Trump's anger and retaliation, but the people... or at least the progressive forces have nothing to fear and nothing to lose if they support the struggle of American people. By doing so, like them, we will gain dignity, honor, and humanity.

The America that is revolting today is neither Trump's America nor the America of injustice and criminal greed. It is the America of the hard-working class, the poor, the persecuted women, and the ethnic communities that suffer the worst.

This is the America of the women textile workers whose epic struggle is immortalized on Math 8, the International Women's Day, and the workers of Chicago whose great sacrifices and struggles in 1886, are immortalized on May 1st each year, International Workers Day. It is the America of John Steinbeck's "the Grapes of Wrath" in 1939, and Jack London's "the Iron Heel", Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin", William Faulkner's "The Sound and the Fury," that of working class heroes "Sacco and Vanzetti," Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" and Angela Davis, the famous communist activist, and Muhammad Ali, who refused his military enrolment to fight in Vietnam, and the list goes on ...

Young people of Tunisia, hard-workers, women, educated and creative people, stand up to support your sisters and brothers in the U.S. You are standing up for your own cause.

Hamma Al-Hammami, is the Secretary General of Workers Party of Tunisia

This is an excerpt of an article in arabic and translated and edited by Azza Rojbi originally published at: www.sawt-achaab.tn/?p=23511

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THE WARS COME HOME

**Defend Black Lives!
NO Police State!
NO Military Dictatorship!
Release all arrestees!
NO more attacks on
anti-racist protesters!**



A mural tribute to George Floyd painted by Palestinian artist Walid Ayoub on the Israeli apartheid wall in the West Bank

The United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) stands in solidarity with communities across the country who are rising up in protest against racist police violence. As Donald Trump calls for the deployment of the U.S. military in response to these national protests, UNAC condemns the use of any police and military forces being deployed to violently suppress these protests. We call on all anti-war activists to help organize or join in these actions demanding justice and an end to the state-terror being inflicted upon black and brown communities within this country.

The ongoing protests began in Minnesota on Monday May 25, 2020 in response to the murder of George Floyd, a 46-year old black man, by four police officers in the city of Minneapolis. The horrific killing was caught on multiple videos which revealed two cops pinning an already handcuffed Floyd facedown to the ground, one cop standing over him, and a fourth one pressing his knee into the victim's neck for nearly nine minutes even as he cried, "I can't breathe," and soon became unresponsive. Floyd died moments later.

On May 29, only after FIVE DAYS straight of militant protests in Minneapolis and in major cities across the country, the cop caught kneeling on Floyd's neck was finally arrested and charged with third degree murder. His three accomplices have yet to be charged.

Of course, this tragic killing did not happen in a vacuum. It represents a trend that has

gone on for too long in this country. There are over 1,000 victims of lethal force every year in the U.S. And unarmed black men and women and children have been terrorized and killed by police for over a century with hardly any of the cops involved ever facing charges for their crimes. Within the last years alone, only those cases caught on camera or other recording devices have caught the eyes and ears of those in power; and even then, justice is rarely served.

Most recently, cases such as that of Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery have gained national attention weeks after they were killed by police and former police officers and only after videos and 9-1-1 recordings were leaked to the media. The police who murdered Taylor in her own apartment

have not been charged, and Arbery's killers who shot him while he was out jogging were not indicted until video of the incident caused public outcry and protests weeks later.

This current nation-wide uprising has been

characterized by a week of major protests and acts of civil disobedience in nearly every state throughout the country. Hundreds of actions have taken place in cities big and small, from coast to coast, to denounce not only the murder of George Floyd, but the long history of oppression and state-violence against black Americans that never ended and that has never even been truly acknowledged by the United States.

Just as the antiwar movement has challenged the ongoing U.S. racist and imperialist wars abroad, the massive protests across the country today are challenging the institutionalized racist violence at home. The millions in the streets today are a harbinger of the broad and united mobilizations to come that have the potential of posing a fundamental challenge to the oppressive, racist, violent system itself.

Statement by The United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC)
www.unacpeace.org

**#EndPoliceBrutality
#BlackLivesMatter
#ICantBreathe
#GeorgeFloyd**



Massive march in Houston, Texas against George Floyd's death and police brutality



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US CONTINUES SANCTIONS AGAINST VENEZUELA, CUBA AND IRAN DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By Frederick B. Mills

As most of the world is building bonds of solidarity to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, the US continues to impose crippling economic sanctions on Cuba, Venezuela, Iran and other nations for resisting the political and economic imperatives of Washington. Even Colombia and Venezuela, whose relations recently reached a new low, today buried the hatchet in order to coordinate efforts against the coronavirus. Yet the US continues to impose sanctions on Venezuela and other nations, and this curtails their efforts to deal more effectively with the crisis, needlessly putting millions of more lives at risk.

Time is of the essence for lifting sanctions

The US economic war against Venezuela makes it more difficult to fight the pandemic because it freezes the country's foreign assets, prevents international bank transfers, and penalizes third party businesses for engaging in commercial transactions with this South American nation. This makes it more difficult to obtain vital medicines and equipment. As a form of collective punishment with lethal consequences, these punitive measures arguably constitute crimes against humanity.

Sanctions kill

On February 13, Venezuela asked the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to investigate U.S. officials for crimes against humanity because, said Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza, sanctions constitute "a death sentence for tens of thousands of Venezuelans per year."

There is empirical evidence for the claim that sanctions "are a death sentence". A report by the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), "Economic Sanctions as Collective Punishment: The Case of Venezuela," found that:

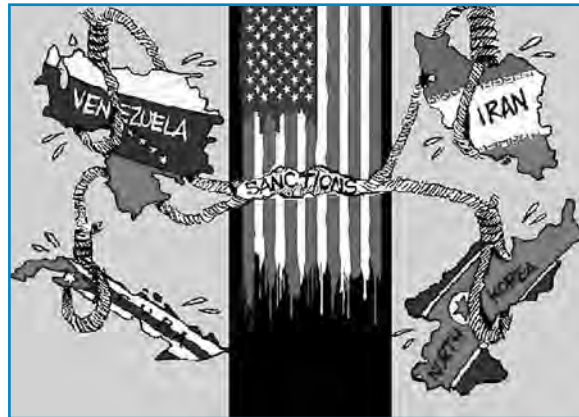
"The sanctions have inflicted, and increasingly inflict, very serious harm to human life and health, including an estimated more than 40,000 deaths from 2017–2018; and that these sanctions would fit the definition of collective punishment of the civilian population as described in both the Geneva and Hague international conventions, to which the US is a signatory. They are also illegal under international law and treaties which the US has signed and would appear to violate US law as well."

As the CEPR report suggests, sanctions are

not surgical strikes at government officials; they bring suffering and death to the most vulnerable. By hampering the government's ability to access medical equipment and supplies during the present pandemic, sanctions will only multiply the number of victims and therefore constitute a gross violation of human rights.

The US combines sanctions with threats of military intervention

Given the gravity of the present pandemic, it is unconscionable that sanctions remain an instrument of choice in Washington's foreign policy toolbox. Over the past two years, the Trump Administration has sought to ratchet up the pain imposed on Venezuelans, and President Trump has even contemplated a



naval blockade against this country. In May 2019, US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo warned "We have a full range of options that we're preparing for [Venezuela]" including "diplomatic options, political options, options with our allies and then ultimately a set of options that would involve use of U.S. military."

Such coercive measures and threats are unpopular in Venezuela, where a majority of Venezuelans want peace and support national dialogue. This dialogue, which has had the support of the UN, recently made significant strides in determining how to address political differences between the government and moderate sectors of the opposition.

Rather than support efforts of Venezuelans to resolve their own differences and to cope with the pandemic, the Trump administration continues to back the hardline right wing shadow government of Juan Guaidó which is opposed to the moderates who have opted for dialogue. Guaidó's base of support inside Venezuela has dwindled on account of

#SANCTIONS KILL

corruption scandals involving his inner circle and widespread anger over his support for sanctions and outside intervention against his own country. He is still the darling, however, of true believers in Washington.

Today Guaidó is overshadowed by moderate opposition forces who are pulling together to confront the pandemic. For example, opposition leader Claudio Fermin (Solutions for Venezuela SPV), who supports the path of dialogue and elections, issued a statement yesterday: "We call the political factors in dispute, above all those trapped in a war to the death on account of polarization, to a political truce, that suspends the permanent conflict to give priority to dealing with the pandemic in national unity."

Venezuela acts against the pandemic with one hand tied behind its back

The Maduro administration has acted decisively in the face of the crisis, including an education campaign, the implementation of a country wide quarantine, and an effort to equip designated hospitals to treat possible infected patients, despite a scarcity of medical equipment and supplies exacerbated by the sanctions. Maduro is starting out with one hand tied behind his back by the economic war against his country. But Venezuela is not alone.

This South American nation is presently receiving technical and material medical assistance from Russia, China and Cuba and is armed with a limited but vitally important supply of the Cuban drug, interferon alfa 2b. Executive Vice President of Venezuela, Delcy Rodríguez has been in contact with UN officials as well as the Pan American Health Organization to obtain testing kits and other supplies and to "reinforce planning and coordination of preventive measures to avoid the spread of Coronavirus Covid-19." This assistance is urgently needed, but the lifting of US sanctions would alleviate serious obstacles to meeting the challenges of this crisis.

States define their national character in the midst of a pandemic

Each state is defining its national character on the world stage in terms of its collective responsibility for human life on the planet in the face of the pandemic. China has risen to the occasion. China now plays a leading role in the worldwide fight against the coronavirus, offering assistance to other nations regardless of ideological differences.

It has also taken issue with US efforts to strangle non-compliant economies:

“The practice of the US of continuing with sanctions against Venezuela while countries around the world struggle together against the new pandemic . . . goes against the basic human spirit,” said Geng Shuang, spokesperson for China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Cuba has also risen to the occasion. And this is in keeping with its traditional leadership in training health professionals and providing medical assistance to countries in the global south.

Cuba has played an important role in China’s treatment of COVID-19 patients and both nations continue to provide material and professional medical assistance not only in underdeveloped countries, but in Europe as well. Today Cuba, at the request of the UK government, has authorized the cruise ship MS Braemar, which carries a number of travellers who are infected with the coronavirus, to dock in Cuba’s port, after being turned away by several other Caribbean countries. (18) Cuba will arrange for the safe return of the travellers, following World Health Organization and Cuban Ministry of Health protocols, to the UK.

The Cuban Embassy in Italy issued a statement on March 15 urging that “These are times in which understanding, and sensibility should prevail over any other cause. The challenge faces all of humanity, without distinctions. Only social responsibility, the joint effort of everyone and international collaboration will help bring about a solution, in the shortest possible time, to the health, social and economic situation caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.”

This is an opportune moment for Washington to end the embargo against Cuba and join forces against the coronavirus. Year after year the United Nations votes overwhelmingly against the embargo, yet Washington’s policy towards Cuba is still held hostage to an extreme right wing lobby that does not forgive the fierce independence and socialist form of governance on the island.

Today, in the name of defending human life and putting diplomacy over necropolitics, the Trump administration ought to end the sanctions against Venezuela, Cuba and Iran. These nations seek relations with the United States based on mutual respect and sovereign equality. All peoples of the world would benefit from cooperation and peace rather than aggression and economic warfare in the common cause of fighting the coronavirus pandemic, and, in the long term, building a world “in which many worlds can fit.”

This is an excerpt of an article originally published on: www.frederickbmills.com

#UNBLOCKCUBA #CUBAVSBLOQUEO



By Janine Solanki

For the last 60 years the U.S. government has imposed a criminal blockade against Cuba, costing Cuba’s economy over \$1 trillion in losses over the last six decades. The U.S. blockade prevents Cuba’s access to everything from vital medicines to construction supplies.

In order to counter the increasingly harsh U.S. blockade, individuals and organizations in the U.S. and Canada came together to organize the International Conference for the Normalization of U.S./Cuba Relations. While planned for March 21-22, 2020 in New York City, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the conference was rescheduled to November 13-15, 2020. The International Conference for the Normalization of U.S./Cuba Relations is now more important than ever, which is why the organizers are not waiting for the rescheduled dates but organizing ongoing online webinars about Cuba and the U.S. blockade.

March 21

The first online webinar organized by the U.S. Cuba Normalization Organizing Committee was on March 21 and 22, the original conference dates. The March 21 webinar was a conference opening plenary, with speakers including Ambassador Ana Silvia Rodríguez from the Cuban Mission to the United Nations and Cuba solidarity activists from throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico and Canada. The next day was the first International Cuba Solidarity Webinar titled “The Impact of the Blockade of Cuba on the People of the U.S. & What We can Do about It.”

April 9

The next International Cuba Solidarity Webinar was “Cuba Leads in the Global Fight Against Covid-19” held on April 9. This webinar was MC’d by Alison Bodine from Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice in Vancouver, Canada, and Claudia de la Cruz, the Executive Director of The People’s Forum in New York City. The webinar started with a featured speaker representing Cuba, Ambassador José Cabañas from the Cuban Embassy in Washington, DC. Speakers joined from many time zones, one of the benefits of an online forum! Dr. Helen Yaffe joined from Scotland where she is a lecturer in Economic and Social History at the University of Glasgow, as well as author of several books on Cuba. Dr. John Kirk joined from Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he is a professor in the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies at Dalhousie University. Dr. Isaac Saney, also in Halifax, is the co-chair of the Canadian Network on Cuba.

April 18

The next webinar was held on April 18, on the theme “Cuba Leads in Global Fight Against Covid-19 – Worldwide Health Crisis Demands Solidarity, Not Sanctions”. Alison Bodine also chaired this webinar, along with Brenda Lopez, co-coordinator of US Hands Off Cuba Committee in Los Angeles. For this webinar the Cuban Ambassador to Canada, Josefina Vidal, spoke and represented Cuba. Speakers also included: Dr. Christine Knight, a graduate of Cuba’s Latin American School of Medicine; Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Code Pink; Dr. Horace Campbell, Professor of African American Studies and Political Science in Syracuse, NY; Fernando Perez-Viart, former MD from Cuba and President of Louisiana’s Cuban Club.

May 2

This webinar was chaired by two members of teachers federations: Tamara Hansen, in Vancouver Canada, also coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, Executive Committee member of the Canadian Network on Cuba, and author; and Lucy Pagoda-Quesada, in New York City, Official Coordinator of the Honduran Libre Party. From Cuba, despite technological limitations due to the U.S. blockade, Cuba was represented by: Gilda Chacón Bravo from International Division of the Central Union of Cuban Workers, and World Federation of Trade Unions, Americas Region, Cuba; and Yamil Martínez Marrero, former General Secretary of the Trade Union at Cuban Institute of Friendship With the Peoples and Member of the National Secretariat, Union of Public Employees in Cuba; Tulio Virguez, International Secretary of the Venezuelan Public Sector Workers Union.

Find out how to join and watch previous webinars at www.us-cubanormalization.org

Follow Janine on Twitter: @janinesolanki

"THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN VENEZUELA HAS UNDERGONE GREAT CHANGES & MANY ACHIEVEMENTS."

Interview with Venezuelan Revolutionary Leader Carolys Pérez



Sign reads: "Women, Struggle and Resistance" seen at the International Women's Day march in Caracas, Venezuela. March 8, 2020

Interview by Alison Bodine

Transcribed & translated by Alison Bodine

While in Caracas, Venezuela, in January 2020 for the First International Encounter Against Imperialism, Fire This Time had the honour to sit down with Venezuelan revolutionary Carolys Perez to discuss the gains and the challenges facing women in Venezuela today. As a young Afro-Venezuelan woman and the Vice Minister for the Social Protection of Women's Rights of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), Carolys is a leader in the struggle for women's rights in Venezuela, as well as the in the fight against U.S. imperialism.

Fire This Time: Thank you for your time and your work as a revolutionary Venezuelan woman. Since the beginning, women's rights have been a focus of the Bolivarian revolution. What are the main achievements of women since Chávez was first elected in 1998?

Carolys Pérez: Well, since Chávez was elected, the women's movement in Venezuela has undergone significant changes and many achievements.

However, before I begin, I have to say something that is not necessarily related to the common struggle of feminism worldwide. Among other things, Chávez

raised the ability for women to self-organize. Chávez loved us with two hearts, with three hearts, and told us that we could take the reins towards transforming society and that for that, it was necessary for us to organize ourselves as women.

Because of this, from the beginning women took on the organization of people's power as leaders of the Urban Land Committees, first through the "mesas técnicas de agua," [community-based organizations formed at the beginning of the Bolivarian revolution that were dedicated to improving the availability of clean and potable water], as one tool to strengthen the work that women born and living in the most impoverished areas were already doing naturally.

On the other hand, the women's movement underwent significant changes when Chávez declared himself a feminist. Ours is the first revolution worldwide that has declared itself feminist from its first day, from its first President.

From this starting point, we built a legal system that now is considered one of the most advanced in the world, if not the most advanced, which classifies 21 forms of violence against women. This has allowed us to create prosecutors and courts specialized in the care of victims

of violence against women. At the same time, the ability to report violence against women has also increased because we recognize our rights and the forms of violence that are imposed against us. This increase in reporting has naturally developed in Venezuelan society. I would say that in general, in all societies, because when women identify the violence, they denounce it, and there is a dedication to seeking justice. Violence against women is recognized and is in our constitution, which reminds me to invite you to read it.

In our constitution, work in the home (or housework) is paid. The work of housewives is treated the same as a working day. As work done in the household is necessary work. It is, among other things, a way to include women in the social security system. Work at home is work that is done with love and for love, but it is a working day that is now recognized in the Venezuelan social system.

As well, since Comandante Chávez assumed the Presidency and the Bolivarian revolution began with him – and now continues with President Maduro – we have become visible. We are no longer afraid of putting ourselves out there, for example, in exercising our participation or being leaders in various spaces or institutions, because we recognize ourselves in others. You also should know that since the revolution, we have come to understand our strength and potential. Therefore,

institutional developments have also been accompanied by social development and the participation of our representatives.

FTT: Under imperialist attack, blockades, and sanctions, women suffer disproportionately due to their central role as caregivers and organizers in the family and society. What is the impact on women of the war and blockade led by the United States against Venezuela?

CP: Since the beginning of the attacks on the Bolivarian revolution by imperialists, sanctions, unilateral coercive measures by the United States, have had a direct impact on and been directed towards women.

Numerous, I would say, assaults have been carried out to make it impossible to access medicines, food, and items for our hygiene. These aggressions have been directed against women because the Venezuelan woman is a bastion, as I was saying, a fundamental pillar in the popular organization of society. Because of this, we have also been the target of forms of counter-revolutionary political violence, such as: attempts to criminalize community leaders and brutal murders which have been carried by paramilitary gangs or people on the payroll of criminal gangs. Some social leaders have been condemned in public squares or meeting places in communities, as an example to the rest of women not to mobilize.

Now, why have women become a target for this form of political violence?

We have various forms of social organization here in the revolution, for example, the communal councils. In the communal councils, more than 60% of the leaders are women. Additionally, regarding the party, in the United Socialist Party of Venezuela, which brings together almost 10 percent of the country's population, we have base organizations, which are the Hugo Chávez Battle Units [UBCh, by the acronym in Spanish]. There, 80% of the leaders are women.

As a result of the war and its impact on

the food production and distribution system, we have organized the Local Supply and Production Committees, CLAP, which now provide a supply chain based on popular production. Women run 72% of the CLAP's headquarters - so the organization of CLAP rests on the shoulders of women.

Now, a new process of organization is taking place in Venezuela through the development of socio-political action networks. These networks facilitate social mapping, community by community, street by street, and house by house. Once the social composition of each of these streets has been completed,

an assembly is held and people on the street choose their leadership. So far, 279,800 streets have been organized in this way in our country, perhaps a little more, and 80 percent of the elected leaders are women.

So, it is no coincidence that the impact of the war is felt by women, because women lead community organization, the care of children, and additionally, the political resistance against imperialism.

How have sanctions had an impact?

Of course, when you cannot access the medicine that you

need, when you cannot find food and you have a small child, it becomes a desperate situation. This desperation has increased intra-family violence because frustration often lashes out against what it considers the weakest element. Women and children have become the object of frustration in a macho society and have experienced violence because of this. So, there is a significant impact, but there is also a high capacity for resistance based on the consciousness of women and what we have



Hugo Chavez with Indigenous leaders in Venezuela

been through to create this consciousness.

Let me also give you other information. Venezuela has the fifth-highest level of university enrollment in the world. 72% of the university population, between 72 and 80 percent, are women. Women are studying and training to be able to fill all the roles that society has opened for them.

Of course, the war has an impact. Women experience it in everyday life, not by chance, because the popular organization of the revolution resides in us.

FTT: One of the achievements of women in Venezuela is the creation of a Women's Ministry. What is the main task and responsibilities of the Women's Ministry, and what are the main challenges of the Ministry right now?

CP: Yes, the Ministry of Popular Power for Women and Gender Equality was created in the revolution. The head of the Ministry is Minister Asia Villegas, who was appointed by President Nicolás Maduro. Together with Asia, we are a group of women with different responsibilities, the first of which is to promote the defense of women's rights.

One of the main challenges we face is the prevention of adolescent pregnancy. We are also challenged with the task to reform the Organic Law of the Right of Women to a Life Free of Violence so that other types of violence are included, in addition to the 21 that are included now. Fundamentally we need to incorporate laws against right-wing political violence and laws that strengthen the prevention of femicides and violence against women and that ensure justice for victims and their families.

Because of our level of organization, we have a great movement of defenders of women's rights in our communities. Also, fundamentally by mainstreaming the idea

Continued on page 31



Alison Bodine & Carolys Pérez after the interview at the Simon Bolivar Plaza in Caracas, Venezuela

Open Letter to Oil and Gas Workers from Climate Justice Organizers

Dear Oil and Gas Workers,

As climate and social justice activists, we acknowledge that you need help and solidarity right now. It may surprise you to learn that we believe the common ground we share far outweighs the number of issues on which we differ. More importantly, we wish you and your loved ones well, and we are not your enemy.

We want to address an open letter that ran recently in major Canadian newspapers, and whose CEO authors claim to speak on your behalf. What strikes us about that letter is not the concern it expresses for your welfare and the specific challenges you face, but the lack thereof. The only demands these CEOs make seem geared to benefit themselves, not working people.

In the midst of the Covid-19 crisis, your safety and wellbeing are on our minds. We understand that the Alberta government has designated your industry an essential service, leaving many of you no choice but to continue working in a dangerous environment exposed to Covid-19. On work sites in Alberta and in other provinces, including BC, there is evidence that social distancing protocols recommended by both Canadian medical authorities and the World Health Organization are not being followed.

Nowhere in the letter do the authors demand work stoppages and direct cash payments to oil and gas workers to tide you through this difficult period, and protect your families from the pandemic. With oil prices crashing below \$0, we believe such a policy would make real and immediate sense. The letter also omits the role automation has played in the mass layoffs in your industry in recent years, a process sure to continue as companies try to maintain profitability by shedding payroll. The record of deadly industrial accidents at oil sands worksites, even in normal times, doesn't come up either.

The authors' chief demand is yet another injection of public funds into the pockets of owners and investors in the oil and gas sector—funds that would be better spent elsewhere. To justify their position, these CEOs jump from one bogus argument to the next.

Have revenues from oil and gas production contributed to public coffers over recent decades,

helping to defray the costs of our healthcare system, among a great many other worthy programs? We should certainly hope so.

After all, it was mother nature, not “the industry,” that put oil and gas in the ground for companies to extract. People in Canada are entitled to expect to benefit from whatever revenue the natural resources inside its borders generates. But the history of the oil and gas sector in Canada is mostly one of corporations pocketing billions from the extraction of those resources, while operating under one of the most industry-friendly royalty regimes in the world. If the authors of the open letter get their way, the gap between the upside we all deserve and what most of us ultimately receive will be even greater.

No one in the country understands this disparity better than First Nations peoples, whose on-reserve public services are funded at cents on the dollar relative to those in non-Indigenous communities. Adding insult to injury, they are, in effect, the original owners of the resources the fossil fuel industry is extracting. Many are also forced to bear a disproportionate share of the increasingly heavy costs the fossil fuel industry imposes on the public, another important detail the authors neglect to mention. Is it any wonder that Indigenous peoples are so often on the front lines of the resistance to fossil fuel expansion?

What costs do we have in mind? For starters, there are direct, deferred expenses related to cleaning up orphaned wells and tailings ponds. There are the massive public subsidies that governments both federal and provincial continue to bestow on the oil and gas sector. (Though estimates vary, this figure amounts to billions annually, excluding the federal government's purchase of the Trans Mountain project, and the Alberta government's recent multi-billion-dollar investment in the Keystone XL.) Beyond that, there are also huge costs related to environmental degradation, pollution of land, air, and waterways, and arguably the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced: climate change. Left unchecked, the already vast human toll of that still escalating crisis will dwarf the value of all income derived from the fossil fuel sector in Canada.

Moreover, much like cigarette and asbestos corporations, by funding one of the most sweeping disinformation campaigns in living memory, the fossil

Continued on page 33

* EN ESPAÑOL *

Día de la Mujer

Por **MIRITA**

Celebramos nuestro día
marchando hasta el Panteón
una mano en la bandera
y otra en el corazón
luchamos contra el imperio
que nos quiere dominar
luchamos contra los hombres
que nos quieren silenciar
luchamos porque en el mundo
no haya desigualdad
luchamos por las mujeres
que viven en mi ciudad
por las que viven en Lima
en Santiago o Bogotá
la mujer a quien lastiman
y la que abusada está
por la desaparecida
y la que en la cárcel está
sin derecho a protestar
por las que lo tienen todo
por las que no tienen na
por las mujeres violadas
y las que en la tumba están
por las madres, por las hijas
MUJER es humanidad
Son tantas las que han matado
por defender su verdad
Derechos ? ya los tenemos
y hay que hacerlos respetar
Día para celebrar
Día de conmemorar
Día para no olvidar.

8 marzo 2020, Ottawa, Canadá

Miriam Meza de Acuña socióloga, jubilada de la administración pública en Venezuela en el área de vivienda. Actualmente formó parte de la Embajada de Venezuela en Canadá.



WOMEN'S DAY

By **MIRITA**

We celebrate our day
marching to the Pantheon
a hand on the flag

and another on the heart
we fight against the empire
who wants to dominate us
we fight against men
who want to silence us
we fight for a world
where there is no inequality
we fight for the women
who live in my city
for those who live in Lima
in Santiago or Bogotá
the women they have hurt
and the one they have abused
for the missing
and the one they have imprisoned
with no right to protest
for the ones who have everything
for the ones who have nothing
for the violated women
and those they put in the grave
for the mothers, for the daughters
WOMAN is humanity
So many that have been killed
for defending their truth
Rights? we have them
and they must be respected
A Day to celebrate
A day to commemorate
A day to not forget.

March 8, 2020, Ottawa, Canada

Miriam Meza de Acuña is a sociologist, retired from public administration in Venezuela in the area of housing. Currently working at the Embassy of Venezuela in Canada.

"By Any Means Necessary..."



MALCOLM X SPEAKS

"The police are able to use the press to make the white public think that ninety per cent or ninety-nine per cent of the Negroes in the Negro community are criminals, and once the white public is convinced that most of the Negro community is a criminal element, then this automatically paves the way for the police to move into the Negro community exercising Gestapo tactics, stopping any black man who is on the sidewalk, whether he is guilty or whether he is innocent, whether he is well-dressed or whether he is poorly dressed, whether he is educated or whether he is dumb, whether he's a Christian or whether he's a Muslim, as long as he is black and a member of the Negro community the white public thinks that the white policeman is justified in going in there and trampling on that man's civil rights and on that man's human rights.

Once the police have convinced the white public that the so-called negro community is a criminal element, they can go in and question, brutalize, murder, unarmed innocent negroes and the white public is gullible enough to back them up."

Excerpt from Malcolm X speech in Los Angeles, May 5, 1962



Scan to endorse



Saving Lives Campaign

The campaign calls for:

① Allowing U.S.-Cuba-Canada medical, clinical and scientific collaboration, including inviting Cuban medical

brigades to provide direct medical assistance and/or to provide advice and guidance in treating COVID-19.

② Incorporating Cuba's Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant in clinical trials in the U.S., Canada and the WHO, and the granting by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval for Cuba's Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant.

③ Ending U.S. economic and travel sanctions against Cuba, including its extraterritorial nature and the attempts to stop all other countries accepting Cuban medical brigades and assistance, and all ongoing measures that prevent Cuba accessing and importing medical equipment and medicines to confront COVID-19.

For more info visit: www.savinglives.us-cubanormalization.org

PRECEDENTS IN CUBA OF “OPERATION GIDEON”

By Manuel Yepe

The partial or total crushing of Operation Gideon against Venezuela left a significant number of mercenaries captured, including a self-confessed DEA agent supposedly dedicated to the fight against drug smuggling and abuse.

The DEA, which employs more than 10,000 people to implement its objectives as well as to prosecute money laundering linked to these crimes, also often serves the imperialist purposes of the U.S. government in Latin America and other parts of the world.

This new victory of the Bolivarian Armed Forces and the Venezuelan people has been another defeat for Donald Trump's neo-colonializing policy. It has created a focus of violence in various Venezuelan states and in the capital, Caracas. It's done against a backdrop of systematic campaigns of lies in the hegemonic media aimed at spreading disorder in order to make governance impossible.

The idea is to create a matrix of opinion that shows Venezuela as an ungovernable country by forcing its president, Nicolas Maduro, to ask for support from the OAS and Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR), first. These would then approve a humanitarian military intervention in his country.

It is not news that President Trump and his officials have denied Washington's participation in the defeated maritime incursion. They know that it would be contradictory and unacceptable for the U.S. government to appear linked to mercenaries and drug traffickers. Such a scenario is not compatible with the image of representation that they want to project to internal and external public opinion, much less admit this scandalous failure now.

That is why Mr. Mike Pompeo told the press

in his defense that “if we had been behind those actions the result would have been different”, omitting any comparison of such a humiliating American defeat what happened in Vietnam.

Something similar was done by the US ambassador to the UN, Adlai Stevenson, on April 15, 1961, when he denied any link of his country with the bombings of mercenary planes against Cuba.

The Cuban Foreign Minister at the time,



Arsenal of weapons and equipment confiscated from the mercenaries arrested by the Bolivarian Armed Forces in Venezuela

Raúl Roa, unmasked this when it became known that the mercenaries in the service of Washington had surrendered to the Cuban militia troops barely 64 hours after the invasion landed at Playa Girón (Bahía de Cochinos, aka Bay of Pigs).

Stevenson made an ethical gesture and recognized that this was the greatest humiliation that his government would have received, an ethical gesture that cannot be expected from Trump or Pompeo.

But now the shot has backfired on Trump, who apparently did not know that drug trafficker and DEA agent Jose Alberto Socorro-Hernandez, aka “Pepero,” had been apprehended in Caracas. There, he confessed to the instructions he received to carry out various violent actions in the state of Miranda that were carried out by DEA-oriented drug gangs and common criminals,

According to Pepero, they were intended to divert the attention of Venezuelan security services to entertain them and to guarantee protection for the landing plan, which took place this past May 3 in the town of Macuto, in the state of La Guaira.

It should come as no surprise to anyone that the U.S. government has used the DEA to carry out these actions, as well as to play a façade role in Operation Gideon. If this turned out to be successful, there would be applause, if it went wrong, they would disqualify their agent.

Poerso did not use an American, but rather the Venezuelan drug trafficker-agent Socorro Hernández (aka) Pepero, who is linked to the Colombian cartels operating in Zulia. This is on the border with the Upper Guajiracolombian-Venezuelan region, a territory that was under the control of the powerful leader of the Northern Block of the narco-paramilitaries, Rodrigo Tovar Pupo, extradited by Álvaro Uribe Vélez in 2008, who claims that Uribe betrayed him.

It should come as no surprise to anyone that the U.S. government has used the DEA to carry out these actions, as well as to play a role as a front for Operation Gideon. If it went well, they would applaud it; if it went badly, they would disown their agent, and therefore they did not use an American, but a Venezuelan counter-revolutionary drug trafficker.

The installation of 10 U.S. military bases in Colombia, officially agreed to by the government of Barack Obama, is a humiliation to its people and a regional threat. It will take years for the Colombians to eliminate this Yankee military occupation. Guantánamo is an example, illegally occupied and denounced in all international forums whose agreements are not obeyed and/or blatantly violated.

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

Source: POR ESTO! newspaper

www.englishmanuelyepe.wordpress.com

*A CubaNews translation. Edited by
Walter Lippmann.*

www.walterlippmann.com

ATTACK ON EMBASSY OF CUBA IN THE UNITED STATES AND ONGOING U.S. AGGRESSION AGAINST CUBA



Introduction by Tamara Hansen

Early in the morning on Thursday April 30, 2020, a gunman attacked the Cuban Embassy in Washington, DC. He shot at the building using an assault rifle, while yelling obscenities and threats to those inside. Thirty-two bullets were fired damaging the building and courtyard, thankfully, no one was hurt.

Recently from Havana, Cuban Foreign Minister, Bruno Rodriguez, once again denounced the 'complicit silence' of the White House, which has taken little action in seeking justice for Cuba.

The attacker, Alexander Alazo Baró, has been presented as an unstable drug user living in his car who hears voices by the American mainstream media. However, Cuba sees clear evidence that this man arrived with the intention to attack and kill for political reasons, this was made clear with an "AK-47 rifle, 32 shell casings, 32 bullet holes and a statement," Rodriguez stated. Furthermore, Rodriguez reminded the world that the U.S. government's silence cannot be separated from its hostile policy against Cuba, which incites hatred and violence towards Cuba.

In a letter to Canada's Foreign Minister, François-Philippe Champagne, the Canadian Network on Cuba is asking Champagne to work with Cuba to insist that the U.S. investigates the April 30 attack with full transparency and disclosure.

Dear Minister Champagne,

Re: April 30, 2020 Attack on Embassy of Cuba in the United States and Ongoing U.S. Aggression Against Cuba

The world, including Canadians, were shocked by the attack on the Embassy of Cuba in the United States that occurred on April 30, 2020. The Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) resolutely and unreservedly condemns this terrorist act.

Under international law - specifically the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations - the United States is obligated to ensure the security of diplomats and diplomatic premises. Not only did Washington fail in that duty, it has failed to condemn the attack. The failure to condemn this act of terror is a flagrant violation of diplomatic norms, creating a situation in which Cuban diplomats in the United States will face the very real possibility of ongoing coercion or harassment. This is unacceptable.

Moreover, the April 30 attack occurs within

the context of increasingly hostile and belligerent actions against Cuba by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump. Washington's hostile actions extend to actively and openly denying the island nation access to the medical equipment, medicines and protective gear needed to confront the COVID-19 pandemic.

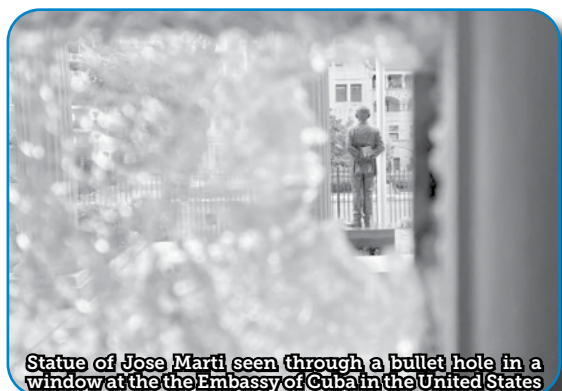
Surely, in the face of the worldwide corona virus menace, now is the time put political differences aside in order to control the pandemic and save lives?!

In 2014, the world rejoiced to see the restoration of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba. The world held out great hopes that relations between the two countries would be normalized. Canada helped by providing a venue for the talks which led to the improvement of those relations. However, under the administration of Donald Trump, we have witnessed an incessant and unabating policy of overt and ever escalating hostility and aggression against Cuba. The United States continues to zealously pursue and implement the extensive series of economic sanctions arrayed against the island nation. In short, Washington is waging an economic war - more than an embargo - and an overt campaign of subversion against Cuba, with the objective of negating and extinguishing Cuba's right to self-determination, sovereignty and independence.

For 28-consecutive years, the United Nations has rejected this policy of aggression and subversion by condemning the economic sanctions - a veritable blockade- imposed on Cuba by United States. Canada has repeatedly been counted in the vast ranks of the world's nations resoundingly rejecting the coercive and unilateral U.S. policy

Therefore, the CNC - representing, Canada-Cuba friendship and solidarity organizations across Canada, ranging from Vancouver to Halifax - calls on the Government of Canada to insist that the United States:

1. Investigates the April 30 attack with full transparency and disclosure;
2. Ceases its acts and policy of hostility and aggression against Cuba;
3. Ends its on going measures that prevent Cuba accessing and importing medical equipment and medicines to confront COVID-19; and
4. Ends all U.S. economic sanctions against



Statue of Jose Marti seen through a bullet hole in a window at the the Embassy of Cuba in the United States

the island nation.

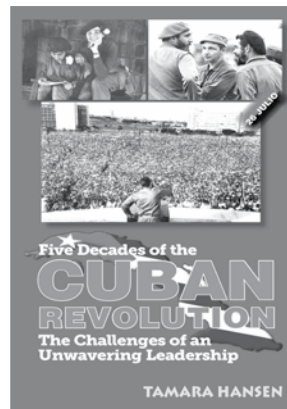
In closing, I wish to thank you in advance for your consideration of these issues. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Isaac Saney,
Co-Chair and National Spokesperson
Canadian Network On Cuba

Battle of Ideas Press

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



By Tamara Hansen

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

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Support Cuba to Fight Against COVID-19

Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) Fundraising for Cuba: A New Stage

There has been as yet no new hurricane, no earthquake, no tornado this year, affecting our dear Cuba. But there has been a combination of two things: a plague and an intensification of the viciousness of panicked imperialism.

This combination is compelling friends of Cuba to take some urgent action to help Cuba to alleviate the burdens being piled onto the island. Revolutionary Cuba has always been blessed with leaders who know how to think, to think with compassion about the interests of their own people and with extraordinary generosity about others. That attribute has gone a long way to keeping the country bouyant, spiritually and materially. Cuba knows how to multiply whatever help it gets. These qualities have evoked in frustrated imperialism the most flagrant manifestations of imperialist hatred.

Hurricanes, earthquakes and tornadoes lack this cruel emotion which imperialism with its present leader is now displaying. U.S. imperialism with its control of the world's reserve currency is able to print as much money as it wants to and to purchase the

compliance of some of its own citizens and of others in other parts of the world, in the ugliest schemes devised by its government in the attempt to frustrate Cuba's principled defiance of oppression.

One of the Revolution's great achievements in education has made it possible for Cuba to produce a therapy to combat the new corona virus, COVID-19: its Interferon Alfa 2B. The Trump administration's answer to this success is to launch an intense campaign to dissuade countries, desperate to help their people, from purchasing this desired source of reasonably priced medicine.

Already as of March 29, 45 countries have requested Cuba's inhalant Interferon. This includes Brazil, which, in a moment of Bolsonaro's extreme irrationality and mimicking imperialist propaganda, had expelled Cuban doctors from Brazil calling them terrorists. 6,000 Cuban doctors will now be redeployed to repentant Brazil. But the provocations will not end. The U.S. keeps arbitrarily imposing sanctions against the island and its stalwart allies, such as the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, whose president it now, in a preposterous gesture of war promotion, attempts to demonize as a narcotrafficker.

Firstly, we have to let Cuba's achievements be known. Interferon Alfa 2B has a high profile right now, but the lung cancer vaccine known as CIMAvax—developed by Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center based in Buffalo, New York, and Cuba's Center for Molecular Immunology, and produced at the first-ever joint venture between an American hospital and Cuba, launched in September 2019 in Cuba under the name: Innovative Immunotherapy Alliance, S.A.—may soon be seen as equally important.

Secondly, we have to help Cuba not only to continue providing for a healthy life for its heroic people, but to go further in fulfilling the potential of its educational and social systems so that it can contribute even more amazingly to human well-being and development. We will recognize the crucial importance of helping Cuba at this time by initiating a vigorous fundraising campaign, to support Cuba's humanitarian efforts in this fight against COVID-19.

The CNC is launching this Cuba Against COVID-19 and 100 percent of all funds used will be sent to Cuba. Cheques should be made out to the Canadian Network on Cuba note in the memo line – Cuba Against COVID-19. Mail to: Sharon Skup, 56 Riverwood Terrace, Bolton, Ontario L7E 1S4.

Unfortunately we are still not able to provide charitable tax receipts, although we send receipts for the funds donated, together with our thanks for your support.

March 30, 2020

Keith Ellis, Coordinator

CNC Campaign to Support Cuba's Contribution to World Fight Against COVID-19



CUBA FIGHTS COVID-19 AROUND THE WORLD



FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca

Donate to Cuban International Medical missions:

1) Write a cheque to "CNC", with "COVID-19" written in the memo line, and then mailed to:

CNC c/o Sharon Skup, 56 Riverwood Terrace, Bolton, Ontario L7E 1S4.

2) Send an email money transfer to:

✉ donate@canadiannetworkoncuba.ca

Contact Sharon to set up the the e-transfer info and password:

☎ 905.951.8499

✉ ccfatoronto@ympatico.ca



RESIST & FIGHT BACK



By Janine Solanki

Mobilization Against War and Occupation -MAWO

Now more than ever – end U.S. wars, occupations & sanctions!
In Vancouver, Canada, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) came out to the streets to demand an end to U.S.-led wars, occupations and criminal sanctions. On February 21, MAWO organized a monthly rally and petition campaign, also at a time when mass demonstrations in Iraq and Iran were demanding an end to U.S. intervention in their countries. Passersby couldn't miss the banners demanding "No War with Iran! U.S./Canada/ NATO/All Troops Out of Iraq!" and many stopped at the information table to sign petitions and talk to organizers. This action also demanded "Hands Off Venezuela" and "Canada Out of the Lima Group!" in response to a recent meeting hosted in Canada of the Lima Group, which is bent on promoting foreign intervention and sanctions against Venezuela.
On March 13, MAWO's monthly antiwar rally and petition drive was part of the new Sanctions Kill campaign, joining in action with cities worldwide. Activists held picket signs reading "Sanctions are War! Sanctions Kill!" just two days after Covid-19 was declared a global pandemic, the announcement reminded us that U.S. led wars, occupations, and sanctions had put oppressed nations in greater danger of Coronavirus crisis. This action also marked the grim milestone of 5 years of U.S./Saudi-led war on Yemen and 17 years of the U.S.-led war on Iraq and was reflected in Yemeni news media. From the streets to online, MAWO continues to organize, educate and mobilize against the new era of war and occupation. Now more than ever, the U.S. and their imperialist allies must end their war drive and their destructive and deadly sanctions!

Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade - Vancouver

NOW MORE THAN EVER – LIFT THE U.S. BLOCKADE ON CUBA!
On February 17, supporters of Cuba joined together in front of the U.S. Consulate in downtown Vancouver to protest the U.S. blockade of Cuba. This monthly action in Vancouver to demand an end to the U.S. blockade is in coordination with activists in Ottawa and Montreal, Canada, as well as Kiev, Ukraine. Activists in Vancouver held protest signs high and chanted "Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!" during rounds of picketing, before gathering to hear from speakers. Alongside local speakers, the crowd listened to a greeting from Ottawa Cuba Connections. They shared a message of solidarity from their coordinated action. Before wrapping up, protesters gathered for a group photo in front of the U.S. Consulate sign, holding signs, banners, and the Cuban flag in defiance of the U.S. blockade.
A few days before the March 17 monthly action, Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade - FCAB made the difficult decision not to hold the monthly action at the U.S. Consulate due to Covid-19 related restrictions. Online, however, activists shared tweets and social media posts demanding an end to the U.S. blockade!
By April 17, Cuba solidarity activists had, like much of the world, found a way to continue online. Ottawa Cuba Connections and a table de concentration de solidarité Québec-Cuba both organized online meetings with speakers and discussion, which FCAB supported and participated in.
Whether online or on the streets, Cuba solidarity activists are demanding an end to the U.S. blockade on Cuba, now more than ever! To find out about the next action visit www.vancouverblockade.org or follow on Facebook or Twitter @NoBloqueoVan

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba-VCSC

CUBAS EXAMPLE INSPIRES SOLIDARITY
On February 28, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba -VCSC organized an info night about the 27th Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba! This trip is a unique way to experience Cuba firsthand, alongside brigadistas from across Canada and beyond. The two-week program encompasses volunteer work, cultural activities, visiting health and educational institutions, historical sites, as well as workshops, dance classes and more! The event started out with videos about Cuba and past Che Guevara Brigades, which was an exciting view of what travelling to Cuba is like! Janine Solanki, who is the national coordinator of the Che Guevara Brigade, then shared a slideshow from previous brigades, gave details on the 2020 trip and answered questions. To bring the event to a close, Coast Salish elder and activist Kelly White shared her own connection to Cuba before bringing everyone together with drumming and song. Since the event, the Che Guevara Brigade has now been rescheduled to November 15 – 30, 2020. More details are at www.canadiannetworkcuba.ca/brigade
The following week, on March 6, VCSC held a celebration of International Women's Day and the revolutionary women of Cuba, Venezuela, and the world. The evening started out with Indigenous elders Kelly White and Vivian Sandy who shared a welcoming drumming and song, Tamara Hansen, the coordinator of VCSC, then spoke about the history of International Women's Day and the leading role that women in Cuba and Venezuela are taking today. Find out about upcoming Cuba solidarity events, including online webinars, at www.vancouvercuba.org or follow on Facebook @vancouvercuba or Twitter @VanCuba_VCSC

Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign

The U.S. and Canada Cry Crocodile Tears for the People of Venezuela - Demand! U.S./Canada Hands Off!
"We gather today to discuss the challenges the Venezuelan crisis represents for all of us and how we, the Lima Group, can bring the world community together to re-establish democracy in that country," – Philippe Champagne, Foreign Minister of Canada, February 20, 2020.
The above quote is an excerpt of the opening remarks by Foreign Minister Champagne at a meeting of the so-called Lima Group held in Gatineau, Quebec. Under the guise of "democracy" and "human rights" this meeting was yet another round of planning and discussion about how the "international community" can assist the United States-led campaign to bring about the overthrow of the democratically elected President of Venezuela Nicolás Maduro. This is, in fact, the sole purpose of the Lima Group, which includes representatives from the government of Canada and 11 right-wing governments in Latin America.
The truly brutal face of the U.S. government and Lima Groups interventions in Venezuela are further exposed in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. The United States government's deployment of warships, military aircraft, and soldiers to the Caribbean surrounding Venezuela, announced in March, is not to bring the people of Venezuela "democracy," – just as the increase of brutal and crippling sanctions against Venezuela, throughout the first four months of 2020 is certainly not in the interest of "human rights."
As peace-loving people living in the United States and Canada we have the responsibility to think critically about the sanctions and war being imposed

Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 & Bill C-59

Who is really violating our privacy?
Repeal Bill C-51 and C-59!
While Prime Minister Trudeau promised that he would "fix" Bill C-51, the passage of Bill C-59 not only doesn't address many of the fundamental human rights concerns in Bill C-51, it also creates an even worse cyber surveillance regime. It continues to allow the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to have the chilling and undefined powers of "disruption" and to be able to violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As we can see with the recent actions of CSIS to enable collecting databases of our information, this is just the beginning.
In 2015, the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 was formed in Vancouver to fight back in defence of our rights. The group continues to organize bi-weekly actions across Metro Vancouver transit stations, although as of this report, the public protests are temporarily suspended due to Covid-19.
Looking back to the last actions, on February 3 the 23rd bi-weekly action demanding "Cancel Bill C-51 and C-59" was held at Main Street Skytrain Station in Vancouver. Many people transiting through this busy area stopped at the info table under the big colourful banner reading "Repeal Bill C-51 and C-59!". On February 25, the 32nd action was held at Surrey Central Skytrain Station, where passersby stopped to sign on to a petition against Bill C-51 and C-59. On March 2, the 23rd action was held at Joyce Collingwood Skytrain station in Burnaby. This was another great opportunity to hand out information and talk to those passing through.
While the challenging situation regarding Covid-19 has kept these actions from hitting the streets, the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 will be organizing activities soon – check Twitter @StopBillC51 or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RepealBillC51 or www.RepealBillC51.org

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DOCTORS, NOT BOMBS

Fidel:

MÉDICOS Y NO BOMBAS

Excerpts of speech by Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro, in Buenos Aires, in May of 2003.

Since I am an optimist, I think this world can be saved, in spite of the mistakes made, in spite of the immense, hegemonic powers that have been created, because I believe ideas prevail over force....

Our country does not drop bombs on other peoples, nor does it send thousands of planes to bomb cities; our country does not possess nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, or biological weapons. Our country's tens of thousands of scientists and doctors have been educated in the idea of saving lives. It would absolutely contradict this concept to put a scientist or a doctor to work to produce substances, bacteria or viruses to kill other human beings.

Allegations that Cuba is doing research on biological weapons have even been made. In our country, research is conducted to cure diseases as severe as meningococcal meningitis and hepatitis, to produce vaccines with genetic engineering techniques, or, something of great importance, to discover vaccines or therapeutic formulas through molecular immunology; some of which can prevent and others cure. We are moving forward along this path. This is the pride of our doctors and our research centers.

Tens of thousands of Cuban doctors have provided internationalist services in the most remote and inhospitable places. I once said that we could not and would never carry out preventive or surprise attacks against any dark corner of the world; but rather that our country could send needed doctors to the darkest corners of the world. Doctors, not bombs. Doctors, not smart weapons.

Fragments of the speech pronounced by the Comandante en Jefe, in Buenos Aires, in May of 2003.

Pienso —porque soy optimista— que este mundo puede salvarse, a pesar de los errores cometidos, a pesar de los poderes inmensos y unilaterales que se han creado, porque creo en la preminencia de las ideas sobre la fuerza. (...)

Nuestro país no lanza bombas contra otros pueblos, ni manda miles de aviones a bombardear ciudades; nuestro país no posee armas nucleares, ni armas químicas, ni armas biológicas. Las decenas de miles de científicos y médicos con que cuenta nuestro país han sido educados en la idea de salvar vidas. Estaría en absoluta contradicción con su concepción poner a un científico o a un médico a producir sustancias, bacterias o virus capaces de producir la muerte a otros seres humanos.

No faltaron, incluso, las denuncias de que Cuba estaba haciendo investigaciones sobre armas biológicas. En nuestro país se hacen investigaciones para curar enfermedades tan duras como la meningitis meningocócica, la hepatitis, a través de vacunas que produce por técnicas de ingeniería genética, o, algo de suma importancia, la búsqueda de vacunas o de fórmulas terapéuticas a través de la inmunología molecular; y lo mismo unas pueden prever y otras pueden, incluso, curar, y avanzamos por esos caminos. Ese es el orgullo de nuestros médicos y de nuestros centros de investigación.

Decenas de miles de médicos cubanos han prestado servicios internacionalistas en los lugares más apartados e inhóspitos. Un día dije que nosotros no podíamos ni realizaríamos nunca ataques preventivos y sorpresivos contra ningún oscuro rincón del mundo; pero que, en cambio, nuestro país era capaz de enviar los médicos que se necesiten a los más oscuros rincones del mundo. Médicos y no bombas, médicos y no armas inteligentes.



And Resistance Continues!

By Azza Rojbi

As the world fights the Covid-19 global pandemic, the people of Yemen face this threat under the Saudi-led bombing and blockade. According to data collected by The Yemen Data Project: "February [2020] saw the highest number of air raids in a single month since December 2018 and one of the deadliest air raids for children since the coalition's air campaign began in 2015. 155 Saudi-led coalition bombings in the month resulted in 58 civilian casualties, 43 of them children - the highest number of casualties in a single month since August 2019."

"Saudi coalition air raids escalated for the

third consecutive month in March [2020] rising to 227 bombings, a 46% rise from February". Today, despite Saudi Arabia's announcement of a ceasefire in Yemen, The Yemen Data Project continues to record air raids by the Saudi-led coalition. The continuous bombing worsens an already dire humanitarian situation in the country.

An outbreak of Covid-19 would be devastating for Yemen. The Saudi-led war destroyed the healthcare infrastructure of the country. Already Yemen has been grappling with high rates of the spread of diseases like malaria, diphtheria, cholera and also acute malnutrition. Less than 50 percent of healthcare facilities in Yemen are functioning.

Those that are still operational deal with lack of medical staff, equipment and medicine. According to the United Nations an estimated 19.7 million people in Yemen lack access to basic healthcare."

5 Years of Saudi-led War, What Has Been Achieved?

March 26, 2020 marked five years since the start of the U.S. backed Saudi-led war on Yemen. What did the Saudi-led coalition achieve in Yemen except for death and destruction? Where are the Saudi promises of bringing back peace and stability to Yemen?

Yemen today is home to the world's worst

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**SYSTEM CHANGE!
NOT CLIMATE CHANGE!**



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humanitarian crisis. Five years of war and bombing by the Saudi-led coalition destroyed the life and future of the Yemeni people. According to the U.S.-based research group Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), over 100,000 people have been killed in Yemen since 2015. In addition to the tragic human loss, the Saudi-led coalition bombing targets and destroys homes, schools, hospitals, mosques, markets, factories and many other vital infrastructures. Over 24 million people, 80% of Yemen's population, are in dire need of humanitarian aid and 14 million are on the brink of famine, according to the United Nations.

In the midst of this humanitarian crisis and the ongoing global Covid-19 pandemic, the Saudi-led coalition continues its bombing campaign in Yemen. In addition to the destruction and killings, Saudi Arabia has been imposing a sea, land and air blockade on Yemen. The blockade continues to cause shortages of fuel, food and much needed medicine.

Who's Behind the Crisis?

The Saudi-led coalition supported by the United States intervened in Yemen under the guise of defending legitimacy and stability. Nevertheless, the main Saudi Arabia motivation was to restore to power their exiled puppet former President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Saudi Arabia and the United States could not afford the possibility of the formation of an independent Yemeni government that would not bow to their orders and interests. As the war enters its 6th year, it becomes clear that the Saudi-led intervention and war on Yemen has only destroyed life in Yemen and devastated what was already the poorest country in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Saudi Arabia and its close ally the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are seen as the face of the war on Yemen, but they would have not been able to carry it out without the military, logistical and political support of the United States and its imperialist allies such as Canada, France, Germany and England.

According to the report released in March 2020 by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on the "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2019":

"Saudi Arabia was the world's largest arms importer in 2015–19. Its imports of major arms increased by 130 per cent compared with the previous five-year period and it accounted for 12 per cent of global arms imports in 2015–19. Despite the wide-ranging concerns in the USA and the United Kingdom about Saudi Arabia's military intervention in Yemen, both the USA and the UK continued to export arms to Saudi Arabia in 2015–19. A total of 73 per cent of Saudi Arabia's arms imports came from the USA and 13 per cent from the UK."

In addition to the United States and the UK, Canada, France, Germany and other European countries have sold weapons and

for 2019 but it won't be surprising to see Saudi Arabia again as one of the top export destinations for Canadian weapons and military goods.

The Canadian government has also moved ahead with a controversial \$15 billion arms deals to supply Saudi Arabia with light-armored vehicles (LAV) equipped with heavy guns and cannon despite Saudi Arabia's horrific track record!

Hands Off Yemen!

Imperialist countries make billions selling weapons to Saudi Arabia and the UAE and have fueled the war against the people of Yemen. They never cared about the life and future of the Yemeni people, their main interest was always to further expand their hegemony and control over countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

The war has brought death and destruction over Yemen and further fractured and destabilized the country and region. There cannot be peace in Yemen without the full withdrawal of all foreign troops and mercenaries and a full lifting of the Saudi blockade on the country.

Yemen is one of the oldest cradles of civilization in the world. The proud Yemeni people deserve a future of peace and prosperity in a sovereign and independent country. A future involving Yemeni

voices without any foreign intervention or meddling.

In this time of the Covid-19 pandemic it is crucial to demand an immediate end to the war on Yemen and the full lifting of the Saudi blockade and sanctions against Yemen to allow for critical goods, medicine and humanitarian aid to reach people in need.

Imperialists/Saudi Arabia Hands off Yemen!
End the Blockade of Yemen!

Follow Azza Rojbi on Twitter: @Azza_R14



Children protest against the Saudi-led coalition outside the U.N. offices in Sanaa, Yemen November 20, 2017.

provided technical training to Saudi Arabia and the UAE since the start of the war in 2015.

Canada exported over \$2 billion of military goods to Saudi Arabia between 2015–2018 according to Canada's annual "Report on the Export of Military Goods." Saudi Arabia has been the largest non-US buyer of Canadian military goods for three consecutive years: 2016, 2017, and 2018. The Trudeau Liberal government has not yet released their report

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By Azza Rojbi

Azza Rojbi is a Tunisian anti-war and social justice organizer based in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. She is an executive member of Vancouver's anti-war coalition Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) and a member of the Editorial Board of the *Fire This Time* Newspaper.



Escalating U.S. War and Sanctions on Venezuela During the Covid-19 Pandemic

By Alison Bodine



On April 1, 2020, U.S. President Trump dedicated time during the Covid-19 daily update press conference to announce an escalation in U.S. military threats against Venezuela. In the midst of a pandemic threatening to kill hundreds of thousands of people in the United States, under cover of a so-called counter-narcotics operation, Trump called for one of the largest deployments of the U.S. military into the Caribbean since the U.S. invasion and occupation of Panama in 1989.

"Today, the United States is launching enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western hemisphere to protect the American people from the deadly scourge of illegal narcotics...We are deploying additional Navy destroyers, combat ships, aircraft and helicopters, Coast Guard cutters, and Air Force surveillance aircraft, doubling our capabilities in the region." – U.S. President Trump

President Trump further justified this dangerous and provocative military escalation with the statement that, "As governments and nations focus on the coronavirus, there is a growing threat that cartels, criminals, terrorists and other malign actors will try to exploit the situation for their own gain." In fact, it is the United States government that is attempting to exploit the Covid-19 pandemic for its own "regime change" agenda in Venezuela.

This outrageous announcement was the pinnacle of a week of growing attempts by the United States government to sow fear and chaos within Venezuelan society, a component of their campaign to overthrow the democratically elected government of President Nicolás Maduro. Within seven days, the U.S. government:

- Indicted President Maduro and other government officials for "narco-trafficking" and announced a bounty on President Maduro's head – a \$15 million award for his arrest, and lesser amounts for the arrest of other members of the government;

- Announced a the "Democratic Transition Framework for Venezuela," which outlines measures defined by the government of the United States, clearly meant to coerce the people of Venezuela to into overthrowing the democratically elected government of President Maduro, including that the U.S. government is offering to lift certain sanctions against Venezuela if the "transition plan" is followed; and

- Announced that they would be deploying U.S. Navy warships, surveillance aircraft, and special forces to the waters surrounding Venezuela, doubling their military presence in the Caribbean.

As U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo arrogantly said on March 31, 2020, "Nicolás Maduro must go" – and the United States and their imperialist allies are not about to let the health and well-being, or even the lives of people in Venezuela get in their way.

U.S. Escalates Blockade & Sanctions Against Venezuela

The callousness of the U.S. government in the face of COVID-19 can be seen not only in its intentionally negligent refusal to protect people in the United States from the virus, but also in their continuing murderous sanctions against countries such as Iran, Cuba, and Venezuela. Not only have sanctions remained firmly in place, but they have been increased throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Jeffrey Sachs, professor and director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, explained in a March 18, 2020 press release from the Center for Economic Policy Research, "The Trump administration is using sanctions against Iran and Venezuela to pressure those governments by

inducing widespread suffering. This policy is unconscionable and flagrantly against international law. Yet worse, it is now feeding the coronavirus epidemic."

Since 2014, the United States has imposed 47 rounds of sanctions against Venezuela. Although the most recent escalation in sanctions has come through President Trump's executive orders, U.S. sanctions against Venezuela are supported by both the Democrat and Republican parties. These sanctions have been turned into law through the U.S. Congress, which uses the same rhetoric against the independent and sovereign government of President Nicolás Maduro as the Trump administration.

The "unilateral coercive measures," as they are referred to in international law, which constitute the blockade, have been reinforced by further sanctions on Venezuela by Canada, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Panama, and Switzerland. These criminal measures mean that the government of Venezuela is effectively cut-off from international trade and banking.

According to estimates by the government of Venezuela, sanctions have cost the economy of Venezuela at least \$116 billion in the last five years. On top of this, the government of Venezuela has had nearly \$6 billion frozen in U.S. and European banks – 12% of which was frozen during transactions for the purchase of vaccines from the Pan American Health Organization in 2019.

In February 2020, Alfred de Zayas, a former U.N. Rapporteur on Human Rights, spoke at an international United Nations forum in Geneva, Switzerland, for economists and human rights experts. As he reported, "It can be said that to date more than 100,000 Venezuelans have died as a result of unilateral coercive measures, tens of thousands of Venezuelans have died



Cuban medical team arrives in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in a plane of the Venezuelan airline Conviasa, to help fight against Covid-19

due to not having access to medicines.”

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic began, U.S. sanctions against Venezuela had already put a deadly strain on Venezuela’s free and universal healthcare system. Doctors Tanya L Zakrisson and Carles Muntaner summarized some of these impacts in a “Correspondence” article published in the Lancet Medical Journal in June 2019, “The impact of the U.S. sanctions on the Venezuelan population cannot be overstated. More than 300 000 Venezuelans are at risk due to a lack of lifesaving medications and treatment. An estimated 80 000 HIV positive patients have had no antiretroviral therapy since 2017.

Access to medication such as insulin has been curtailed because U.S. banks refuse to handle Venezuelan payments for this. Thousands to millions of people have been without access to dialysis, cancer treatment, or therapy for hypertension and diabetes. Particular to children has been the delay of vaccination campaigns or lack of access to antirejection medications after solid organ transplants in Argentina. Children with leukemia awaiting bone marrow transplants abroad are now dying. Funds for such health assistance programs come from the PDVSA state oil company. Those funds are now frozen.”

In the time of Covid-19, this blockade has the potential to be devastating for the health of the people of Venezuela.

Despite this, since the pandemic began, the United States government, supported by its allies, including the government of Canada, has directed new sanctions against the people of Venezuela. This cruelty demonstrates just how far imperialist countries are prepared to go in order to try to bring about the overthrow of the democratically elected President of Venezuela Nicolás Maduro and reverse the gains of the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

The U.S. Congress passed legislation

that codified many U.S. sanctions imposed through executive orders in December 2019. The new laws included, “those prohibiting the Maduro government’s ability to trade gold, finance debt, or use cryptocurrencies to avoid U.S. sanctions,” as summarized by the Congressional Research Service.

In February 2020, the U.S. government implemented sanctions against Conviasa, Venezuela’s national airline. This is the airline that the government of Venezuela uses to carry out critical social programs, including “Mission Milagro,” or Miracle Mission in English. This mission provides free eye surgeries for people with cataracts throughout Venezuela and neighbouring countries. Most recently, it is Conviasa airplanes that are transporting Cuban doctors to fight COVID-19 in countries throughout the Caribbean.

Then in March, in fact, one day before the first coronavirus case was declared in Venezuela, the United States further tightened its grip on Venezuela’s oil sales, the primary source of income for the country. Through an executive order, the U.S. government sanctioned the Switzerland based Russian company Rosneft, which has been exporting 70% of Venezuelan oil.

This is yet another escalation of attacks on Venezuela’s oil sector, which first had imposed sanctions against it in August 2019. Among other measures calculated to strangle Venezuela’s economy, the PDVSA, Venezuela’s nationalized oil company, is currently unable to export oil to the United States or receive

payments for exports. On top of this, the U.S. government is continuously imposing new measures that prevent or discourage non-U.S. based companies and foreign governments from trade with Venezuela, especially in the oil sector.

The brutal U.S. sanctions regime is one component of the war against Venezuela – one which the people of Venezuela are resisting every day.

Imperialism Continues to Fail in Venezuela

“Brothers and sisters of the world, you can be absolutely sure that Venezuela will stand firm in its fight for peace and that, under any circumstances, it will prevail. No imperialist aggression, however ferocious it may be, will divert us from the sovereign and independent path that we have forged for 200 years, nor will it distance us from the sacred obligation to preserve the life and health of our people in the face of the frightening global pandemic of COVID-19.” – Nicolás Maduro, President of Venezuela, March 29, 2020

Over one year ago, the United States was attempting to install a puppet government in Venezuela in the form of Juan Guaidó – who declared himself “interim President of Venezuela,” at the end of January 2019. However, even with the support of the United States government, the government of Canada, and other Latin American right-wing allies, Guaidó has completely failed in his coup attempt.

Far from becoming “interim President” of Venezuela, Guaidó has spent much of the new year roaming through Europe and North America meeting up with his imperialist masters such as U.S. President Trump and the Prime Minister of Canada Trudeau. When he finally returned to Venezuela, he wasn’t greeted with open



U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman announcing “narco-trafficking” charges against President Maduro and other members of government

arms, but instead faced ridicule and insults at the airport from people in Venezuela he claims to represent.

During the Covid-19 crisis, Guaidó has continued to carry out the orders of his friends in the White House and call for increasing U.S. intervention in Venezuela. Continuing to pretend that he has any political power or control in Venezuela, Guaidó presented a “plan” for responding to the pandemic, which included establishing a “National Emergency Government.” This is an extraordinarily cynical and pointless maneuver. The democratically elected government of President Maduro responded quickly and effectively to the pandemic threat – including immediately establishing a government commission to respond to the pandemic. The so-called plan of Guaidó is nothing but an echo of the “democratic transition” plan presented by the U.S. government.

Despite sanctions, war, and continuous meddling in Venezuela by the U.S. government and their allies, including Canada, the people of Venezuela continue to defend their democratically elected government and the Bolivarian revolutionary process. The leader of the Bolivarian revolution and President of Venezuela from 1999-2013, Hugo Chavez, began this process over 20 years ago. The people of Venezuela have not lost their conviction to struggle with escalating U.S. war and continuous U.S.-backed counter-revolutionary violence and sabotage during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The People of Venezuela Fight Back!

As of May, 2020, 1370 people in Venezuela have confirmed cases of Covid-19, and 14 people have died from the virus. Like so many other countries around the world, these numbers are expected to rise. However, the revolutionary government of Venezuela quickly implemented essential measures to protect the health and the well-being of poor, working, and oppressed people. Despite the public health challenges caused by the U.S. blockade and Covid-19, the Bolivarian revolution has continued to march forward during these difficult times.

A Presidential Commission for the prevention of Covid-19, led by the Vice-President of Venezuela Delcy Rodriguez,

was launched to coordinate Venezuela's response to the pandemic. This commission has organized for the shipment of Covid-19 related medical supplies and tests, which have come from China, Russia, the World Health Organization, and the Red Cross. The commission also plans the government response to the pandemic, which has followed the mass-

the time of Covid-19, we must continue our fight to lift the sanctions on Venezuela. Not only to provide much-needed relief during the time of the pandemic, but to put an end to the cruel U.S.-led blockade once and for all.

The pandemic has intensified the sharp contrast between the inhuman policies of the U.S. government and their allies, and the pro-human and internationalist actions of revolutionary governments such as Venezuela and Cuba. There is a great opportunity that we have as peace-loving people to appeal to the humanity of poor, working and oppressed people from all walks of life throughout the U.S. and Canada, and ask them to join with us to end the U.S.-led war on Venezuela.



Venezuelans participating in a massive march against U.S. sanctions and threats on their country, March 10, 2020

testing method that China used to defeat the pandemic successfully.

There has also been an increase in the number of Cuban doctors in the country, which has enforced the “Barrio Adentro,” free neighbourhood medical clinics, and provided additional support in public hospitals. In addition, medicines developed in Cuba, such as interferon Aplha2b, are also being used in the country as part of treating Covid-19. The Bolivarian revolutionary process brought free and universal healthcare to people in Venezuela. This is no different during Covid-19 – where testing and treatment are provided for free.

Build Solidarity with Venezuela!

For over 20 years, the Bolivarian revolution has come under constant attack by the U.S. government and its allies. The people of Venezuela are prepared to continue fighting. They stand defiant in the face of crippling U.S.-led sanctions and a cruel blockade that prevents Venezuela from importing essential goods such as food and medicine. This will of the Venezuelan people to not bow to imperialist pressure continues to make them the target of the U.S. war, threats, and hostilities.

As people in the United States and Canada, it is our responsibility to stand with the people of Venezuela, in defense of their sovereignty and self-determination. During

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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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The Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice – Venezuela Solidarity Campaign in Vancouver, Canada condemns the attempted violent attacks on Venezuela by U.S.-backed mercenaries, which began in the early morning of May 3, 2020. In one week, 31 mercenaries have been arrested by the government of Venezuela. This includes two former U.S. army special forces, Luke Denman and Airan Berry, who have implicated the U.S. government and their right-wing puppets in the foiled para-military operation.

U.S. President Trump is denying any knowledge of the thwarted attempted coup d'état against the democratically elected President of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, but the murderous fingerprints of the U.S. government are everywhere. To start, the entire criminal operation to “remove the current Regime, and install the recognized Venezuelan President Juan Guaidó,” began with an \$213 million contract between U.S. puppet Guaidó and Silvercorp, a security firm ran by former U.S. Green Beret Jordan Goudreau. Since declaring himself “interim President” in January 2019, the government of the United States has handed Guaidó tens of millions of dollars from Venezuelan government assets seized in the United States. He and his counter-revolutionary lackies do not operate without the support, guidance, and permission of their U.S. government puppet-masters.

Therefore, this failed plot, now dubbed “Operation Gedeon” was hatched in the United States and launched from Colombia, which is also where the training of the counter-revolutionary mercenaries took place over the last few months. The United States government and military have a close relationship with the right-wing government of Colombia. The U.S. military has had a constant presence in Colombia for decades under the pretext

of fighting the “war on drugs,” which includes access to Colombian military bases. In 2018, Colombia also became the first Latin-American “Global Partner,” of the U.S.-led NATO military alliance.

Since 2020 began, the United States government and their allies, including the government of Canada have been

the indictment of President Maduro by the government of the U.S. on charges of “narco-terrorism” and the announcement by the U.S. State Department of a \$15 million award for the arrest of President Maduro.

The Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice – Venezuela Solidarity Campaign

salutes the bravery and determination of the people of Venezuela. They have defeated these latest mercenary attacks and dealt another

blow to the U.S.-sponsored campaign to overthrow of the democratically elected government of President Nicolás Maduro and reverse the gains made by poor, working and oppressed Venezuelans in the Bolivarian revolution.

The people of Venezuela every day demonstrate their commitment to defend their sovereignty, self-determination, and the democratically elected government of President Maduro. It is our responsibility to elevate the voices of poor, working and oppressed people, including

the voices of the humble fisherman Chuao, who aided in the capture of some of the armed U.S. mercenaries off their coastline.

As people living in the U.S. and Canada, we have the responsibility to hold the government's of the United States and Canada accountable for their support for Venezuela's violent counter-revolutionary opposition and their puppet Juan Guaidó. We must work to build a more united and stronger movement in solidarity with Venezuela, to stop military provocations and interventions in Venezuela. We demand with millions of the people around the world, no to sanctions and blockade.

U.S. and Canada Hands Off Venezuela!

May 11, 2020
Vancouver, Canada

CONDEMN THE U.S. SPONSORED MERCENARY MILITARY ATTACK AND ATTEMPTED COUP ON VENEZUELA!



U.S./CANADA HANDS OFF VENEZUELA! NO REGIME CHANGE IN VENEZUELA!

relentless in their escalation of blockade and sanctions against Venezuela. Despite the deadly threat of the Covid-19, the United States government has imposed further sanctions on Venezuela that continue to severely limit Venezuela's access to food, medicine and medical equipment needed to combat the pandemic. These sanctions have cost the economy of Venezuela at least \$116 billion in the last 5 years and killed an estimated 100,000 people in Venezuela, according to Alfred de Zayas, a former UN Rapporteur on Human Rights.

Dangerously, at the same time the United States government has also escalated military threats against Venezuela. In March, U.S. President Trump announced the largest U.S. military deployment to the waters of the Caribbean surrounding Venezuela since the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989. This threat followed

¡CONDENEMOS EL ATAQUE MILITAR MERCENARIO E INTENTO DE GOLPE DE ESTADO EN VENEZUELA RESPALDADO POR EE.UU.!

**EE.UU./CANADÁ ¡FUERA DE VENEZUELA!
¡NO AL CAMBIO DE RÉGIMEN EN VENEZUELA!**

*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

La Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela del Movimiento por Justicia Social “Fire This Time” en Vancouver, Canadá, condena el intento de violentos ataques en Venezuela de parte de mercenarios respaldados por EE.UU. que comenzaron durante las primeras horas del 3 de mayo de 2020. En una semana, 31 mercenarios han sido arrestados por el gobierno de Venezuela. Entre ellos, dos ex miembros de las fuerzas especiales del ejército estadounidense, Luke Denman y Airan Berry, quienes implicaron al gobierno de EE.UU. y sus marionetas de derechas en la fallida operación paramilitar.

El presidente de EE.UU. Donald Trump niega todo conocimiento del frustrado intento de golpe de Estado en contra del presidente de Venezuela electo democráticamente, Nicolás Maduro, pero las numerosas huellas del gobierno estadounidense están por todas partes. En primer lugar, toda la operación criminal para “derrocar el régimen actual e instalar al presidente de Venezuela reconocido, Juan Guaidó” comenzó con un contrato de \$213 millones entre la marioneta de EE.UU. Guaidó y Silvercorp, una empresa de seguridad privada dirigida por el ex boina verde estadounidense Jordan Goudreau. Desde autodeclararse “presidente interino” en enero de 2019, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos entregó a Guaidó decenas de millones de dólares de los bienes de Venezuela embargados en EE.UU. Guaidó y sus lacayos contrarrevolucionarios no operan sin el apoyo, la guía y el beneplácito de quien tira de sus hilos, el gobierno de EE.UU.

Por ende, este complot fallido, ahora conocido como la “Operación Gedeon”, fue concebido en los Estados Unidos y lanzado desde Colombia, donde también tuvo lugar el entrenamiento de los mercenarios contrarrevolucionarios durante los últimos meses. El gobierno y las fuerzas militares de los Estados Unidos tienen una estrecha relación con el gobierno de derecha colombiano. El ejército de los Estados Unidos ha tenido una presencia constante

en Colombia durante décadas con el pretexto de estar luchando en la “guerra contra las drogas”, lo que incluye acceso a bases militares colombianas. En 2018, Colombia también se convirtió en el primer “socio global” latinoamericano de la alianza militar OTAN liderada por los EE.UU.

Desde que comenzó el 2020, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos y sus aliados, incluyendo al gobierno de Canadá, no han cesado en la escalada de bloqueo y sanciones en contra de Venezuela. A pesar de la amenaza fatal del Covid-19, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos ha impuesto sanciones adicionales contra Venezuela, agravando de manera crítica las restricciones que impiden el acceso a los alimentos, los medicamentos y el equipamiento médico necesario para combatir la pandemia. Según el ex relator especial de Derechos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas, Alfred de Zayas, estas sanciones le han costado a la economía venezolana al menos \$116 miles de millones en los últimos 5 años y han causado un estimado de 100.000 muertes en Venezuela.

Más grave aún, al mismo tiempo el gobierno de los Estados Unidos también ha escalado las amenazas militares contra Venezuela. En marzo, el presidente de EE.UU. Trump anunció el mayor despliegue militar estadounidense sobre las aguas del Caribe que rodean a Venezuela desde su invasión a Panamá en 1989. Esta amenaza es posterior a la acusación al Presidente Maduro de parte del gobierno estadounidense bajo cargos de “narco-terrorismo” y el anuncio del Departamento de Estado de EE.UU. de una recompensa de \$15 millones por la captura del Presidente Maduro.

La Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela del Movimiento por Justicia Social



“Fire This Time” aplaude el coraje y la determinación del pueblo venezolano. Este pueblo ha derrotado los últimos ataques mercenarios y asestado otro golpe a la campaña patrocinada por EE.UU. para derrocar el gobierno elegido democráticamente del Presidente Nicolás Maduro y revertir las conquistas obtenidas por el pueblo pobre, trabajador y oprimido de Venezuela durante la revolución Bolivariana.

El pueblo de Venezuela demuestra todos los días su compromiso en la defensa de su soberanía, su autodeterminación y el gobierno democráticamente electo del Presidente Maduro. Es nuestra responsabilidad potenciar las voces del pueblo pobre, trabajador y oprimido, incluyendo la voz del humilde pescador Chuao, quien colaboró en la captura en la costa de algunos de los mercenarios estadounidenses armados.

Como personas que vivimos en Estados Unidos y Canadá, tenemos la responsabilidad de exigir la rendición de cuentas de estos gobiernos por su apoyo a la oposición violenta y contrarrevolucionaria de Venezuela y a su marioneta Juan Guaidó. Debemos trabajar para construir un movimiento más fuerte y unido en solidaridad con Venezuela, para detener las provocaciones e intervenciones militares en Venezuela. Junto con millones de personas en todo el mundo, exigimos el cese de las sanciones y el bloqueo.

EE.UU. y Canadá, ¡Fuera de Venezuela!

11 de mayo de 2020
Vancouver, Canadá



Lenin is One of Those Truly Exceptional Cases

Excerpts from speeches by Comandante Fidel Castro in 1970, 1981, 1992 & 2001

Rarely in any process, perhaps never in a political process, has a thought, a mind, an intellect been able to make such a significant contribution. Lenin was a tireless investigator and worker. It can be said that after acquiring political consciousness, he did not rest a single moment during his lifetime.

He did not cease to investigate, to study, and to work on charting the revolution's course.

There has been no gladiator who fought more ideological battles than Lenin. It is surprising how many he fought in the ideological arena. His history cannot be compared to that of other men who accomplished extraordinary feats, in terms of personal merit.

Lenin is one of those truly exceptional cases. A simple reading of his life and his work, the most objective analysis of the way his thought and activity developed throughout his life, shows him to be a truly, I repeat, exceptional man in the eyes of all human beings.

Lenin had the possibility to not only develop theory but to find a concrete field of action and the opportunity to implement his theory.

We honor Lenin with emotion, but when his work and life are studied, when his thought and doctrines are studied, peoples can acquire a true treasure from the political point of view.

When a better, superior evaluation is made history's personalities, Lenin, along with Marx, will stand out among the most transcendental thoughts, intellects, efforts in the history of humankind

We recall how, in the months preceding July 26, 1953, most of the small group of compañeros working on those tasks were always carrying the works of Marx and Lenin, and we remember how some of Lenin's books, because they were Lenin's books, fell into the hands of the police during searches made after the Moncada attack.

We remember how, during the Moncada trial, a politically motivated prosecutor included among his most serious accusations against us, among his most capricious questions, whether it was true that we had books by Lenin and whether they were ours.

Lenin from the very outset was not only a political theoretician, a political philosopher, but a man of action, a permanent, tireless revolutionary.

He had the opportunity to develop a doctrine and apply it under difficult conditions, really impossible to imagine any worse.

We drew decisive conclusions from Lenin's works. Of course, when I talk about Leninism, I am talking about Marxism, about the essential ideas of Marx developed by Lenin, and one very specific idea of Lenin's, State and Revolution, which clarified so many concepts for us, which enlightened us so much when the time came to develop our revolutionary strategy, the struggle for the conquest of revolutionary power. It was very decisive to the preparation of our strategy.

At a time when luminaries of revolutionary thought in Europe did not take into account Russian revolutionaries at all, when they looked with a certain disdain at these revolutionaries, when many of them would not have even deigned to consider Lenin's thought at all, or even the possibility of a Marxist revolution in that Russia of the czars, Lenin was undertaking his long pilgrimage, his long, protracted struggle to carry out a Marxist revolution in the conditions of that country.

But a truly objective study of history does not admit any possible comparison, no possible comparison is admissible, putting any other thought on the par with Lenin's is not admissible, because Lenin's thought stands out from the beginning to the end, and was the backbone, the soul of the process.

And it is precisely in the bosom of that country, in the bosom of the empire of the czars, that this brilliant, truly brilliant man emerged, and developed Marxist doctrine there and applied it there, with extraordinarily creativity.

He defended Marx's ideas against all mystifications, distortions and deformations. He defended it and showed how right he was. Historical facts showed how all those currents in different European countries, against which Lenin fought, contributed to the crisis of the revolutionary movement, to the failure of the revolutionary movement, to the betrayal of the revolutionary movement.

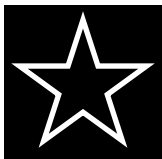
Lenin said that a revolution was real when it was capable of defending itself. To tell the truth, our Revolution has shown that it is capable of defending itself. And it defends itself with powerful instruments.

We will not stop admiring Lenin, and every day we will admire him more. How we miss him!

Not even they could ever imagine that such a small country, so close to the monster, on its own - without the slightest help, not a penny, not a weapon, not anything, on the basis of our own conclusions - could have made such a radical, profound social revolution, as we did in our country, inspired by the traditional patriotic ideas of our people and our great heroes, by Martí, but also by Marx, Lenin, Engels and others who gave us - at least me - an idea of what society and the world were!

It must be said that Lenin was not only one of the most creative, most combative and most brilliant men, but one of the most courageous, morally courageous men. Courage that he demonstrated in very difficult trials, in very difficult decisions, throughout his life and throughout the revolutionary process.

Source: www.granma.cu



Lenin es de esos casos humanos realmente excepcionales

**Fragmentos de discursos del Comandante en Jefe
Fidel Castro Ruz en los años 1970, 1981, 1992 y 2001**

Pocas veces en ningún proceso –y tal vez nunca en un proceso político– un pensamiento, una mente, una inteligencia haya sido capaz de hacer un aporte tan grande. Y es que Lenin fue un infatigable investigador, un incansable trabajador. Y puede decirse que desde que tuvo conciencia política no descansó un solo instante a lo largo de su vida, no descansó un solo instante de investigar, de estudiar y de trabajar en el camino de la revolución.

No ha habido gladiador que haya librado más combates ideológicos que los que libró Lenin. Es asombrosa la cantidad de batallas en el campo ideológico libradas por él. Y su historia no es en este caso comparable con la historia de otros hombres que hicieron hechos extraordinarios como méritos personales.

Lenin es de esos casos humanos realmente excepcionales. La simple lectura de su vida, de su historia y de su obra, el análisis más objetivo de la forma en que se desarrolló su pensamiento y su actividad a lo largo de su vida, lo hacen en realidad ante los ojos de todos los humanos un hombre verdaderamente –repito– excepcional.

A Lenin le tocó la posibilidad no solo de desarrollar la teoría, sino encontró el campo de acción concreto y la oportunidad de llevarla a la práctica.

El homenaje a Lenin se le puede brindar con el sentimiento. Pero cuando se estudia su obra y su vida, cuando se estudia su pensamiento y su doctrina, los pueblos adquieren lo que pudiera llamarse un verdadero tesoro desde el punto de vista político.

Cuando se haga una evaluación superior de las personalidades –repito– de la historia, Lenin, junto con Marx, descolarán entre los hombres, los pensamientos, las inteligencias, las conductas que mayor trascendencia habrán tenido en la historia de la humanidad.

Recordamos cuando por aquellos meses que precedieron al 26 de julio de 1953, la mayor parte del pequeño grupo de compañeros que estábamos dedicados a aquellas tareas andábamos siempre con los libros de Marx y de Lenin. Y recordamos que algunos de esos libros de Lenin –porque fueron los de Lenin– cayeron en manos de la policía, en los registros que hicieron después del Moncada. Y recordamos cómo en el proceso del Moncada, un fiscal paniaguado, entre sus más graves

acusaciones, entre sus más –digamos– capciosas preguntas, hizo la pregunta de si era verdad que nosotros teníamos aquellos libros de Lenin y si eran nuestros aquellos libros de Lenin.

Lenin fue desde el primer instante no solo un teórico de la política, un filósofo de la política, sino un hombre de acción, un hombre de práctica revolucionaria constante e incesante, y le correspondió desarrollar aquella doctrina y aplicar aquella doctrina en condiciones tan difíciles, que resulta verdaderamente imposible imaginársela en situaciones peores.

De las obras de Lenin nosotros sacamos conclusiones que fueron decisivas –desde luego, cuando hablo del leninismo hablo del marxismo, de las ideas esenciales de Marx desarrolladas por Lenin–, y una muy específicamente de Lenin, que fue El Estado y la Revolución, que nos esclareció tantos conceptos, que nos dio tanta luz a la hora de elaborar la estrategia revolucionaria, la lucha por la conquista del poder revolucionario, y que tan decisiva fue para poder elaborar esa estrategia.

Cuando las lumbreras del pensamiento revolucionario de Europa no tomaban para nada en cuenta a los revolucionarios rusos, cuando miraban con cierto desdén incluso a aquellos revolucionarios, cuando muchos de ellos no se habrían ni siquiera dignado a tomar en cuenta para nada el pensamiento de Lenin e incluso la posibilidad de una revolución marxista en aquella Rusia de los zares, emprendía Lenin su largo peregrinar, su largo y prolongado combate por llevar adelante la revolución marxista en las condiciones de aquel país.

Pero es que un estudio realmente objetivo de la historia no admite comparación posible, ¡no admite comparación posible!, no admite poner al lado de Lenin ningún otro pensamiento, porque el pensamiento de Lenin descuella desde el principio hasta el final y es la espina dorsal, el alma de ese proceso.

Y es precisamente en el seno de ese país, en el seno del imperio de los zares, donde surge este hombre genial, verdaderamente genial, y desarrolla allí y aplica allí, con un sentido extraordinariamente creador, la doctrina marxista.



Defendió la doctrina de Marx frente a todas las mistificaciones, tergiversaciones y deformaciones. La defendió y demostró cuánta razón tenía. Los hechos históricos demostraron cómo todas aquellas corrientes contra las cuales combatió Lenin condujeron, en los distintos países de Europa, a la crisis del movimiento revolucionario, al fracaso del movimiento revolucionario, a la traición al movimiento revolucionario.

Lenin dijo que una revolución valía cuando era capaz de defenderse. A decir verdad, nuestra Revolución ha demostrado que es capaz de defenderse. Y se defiende con poderosos instrumentos.

No dejaremos de admirar a Lenin, y cada día lo admiraremos más. ¡Cómo le echamos de menos!

¡Ni ellos se podían imaginar jamás que un país tan pequeño aquí, al lado del monstruo y por su propia cuenta, sin la mayor ayuda, ni un centavo, ni un arma, ni nada, sino por nuestras propias conclusiones, hubiese hecho una Revolución social tan radical y tan profunda como la que hicimos en nuestro país, inspirados en las ideas patrióticas tradicionales de nuestro pueblo y de nuestros grandes próceres, en Martí, pero también en Marx, Lenin, Engels y los demás que nos hicieron –a mí por lo menos– tener una idea de lo que era la sociedad y el mundo!».

Hay que decir que no solo ha sido Lenin uno de los hombres más creadores, más luchadores y más geniales, sino uno de los hombres más valientes, moralmente valiente. Valentía que demostró en pruebas difícilísimas, en decisiones difícilísimas, a lo largo de su vida y a lo largo del proceso revolucionario.

Desde: www.granma.cu



CLIMATE JUSTICE ORGANIZING IN THE TIME OF COVID 19

By Alison Bodine

The Covid-19 pandemic has further exposed that Canada's government places the interests of pipelines before the interests of people. Despite the threat to public health, and especially to the health and safety of Indigenous people in Canada, both federal and provincial governments continue to give the green light to the construction of climate killing resource extraction mega-projects and their billionaire backers during the pandemic.

In British Columbia alone, the construction of the Site-C dam, Coastal GasLink natural gas pipeline (CGL), and the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion (TMX) has proceeded to put the lives and safety of workers and the surrounding communities at risk.

While people in Canada were being told to "stay at home" for public health, the number of workers at the Site-C dam increased in March to nearly 1,000 people, sleeping, eating, and working in close quarters. This recklessness did not go unnoticed, as Fort St. John city councillor Byron Stewart explained to media, "It is not an emergency service. It is not a front-line service. I personally would like the province to come in, shut it down, and send everybody home." However, his pleas and the demands of the surrounding community and of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs to halt construction of the Site-C dam were not met by the provincial government.

Further North in BC, Wet'suwet'en Nation members have repeatedly spoken out against the continued construction work preparing the way for the CGL pipeline on their territory. Not only is this work being carried out without the approval of the Wet'suwet'en people, but it is also threatening their health and safety. They have reported CGL contractors on-site delivering pipe and clearing forests, increasing the risk of a Covid-19 outbreak in an area of BC that already faces severe healthcare shortages.

This gross negligence of health during the time of Covid-19 has continued in the urban center of Burnaby. There, construction work at the Burnaby Mountain tank farm has continued preparing the way for the TMX

pipeline expansion project. The violations of social-distancing protocols have been thoroughly documented by concerned members of community organizations; the Mountain Protectors and BROKE. Despite this evidence, construction work has been allowed to continue.

The Covid-19 pandemic has further exposed that Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier John Horgan are both unwilling to act on the environmental, health, and safety concerns of people in Canada.

The Trudeau Liberal government also continues to funnel taxpayer money into oil and gas. This includes the \$4.5 billion purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline and the expansion project, which is now projected to cost over \$12.6 billion in public funds according to Trans Mountain CEO, Ian Anderson. As one striking example, at the end of April, EDC, the export credit agency of the government of Canada, also signed a loan agreement for between \$250-500 million for the Coastal GasLink pipeline.

On February 29, the grassroots climate justice coalition, Climate Convergence worked together with the local Climate Strike organization, the Sustainability teens on a fundraiser for the Unist'ot'en Camp, which is leading the resistance to the Coastal GasLink Pipeline on Wet'suwet'en territory. This dynamic fundraiser, which packed the Burnaby Neighborhood House hall at a time when it was still safe to do so, had something for everyone to contribute and a way for all to donate. There were live music and poetry, a bake sale, delicious homemade soup by donation, a book sale, and a silent art auction. The artists who donated their time and talent included Tawahum, Nitesun, Kaya Ko, Dae Nneka, Rupert Common, and Estea Elements.

Fast-forward only two weeks and gathering in large groups for climate justice actions was no longer possible due to Covid-19. Adapting to this change, on April 15, Climate Convergence organized its first webinar, an online forum titled "Protect

the Planet, Not Profits! Save People, Not Pipelines! Climate Justice Organizing in the Time of Covid-19." This webinar brought together over 120 people from across the Lower Mainland, BC, as well as throughout the U.S. in Colorado and California to begin the important discussion about how we can unite for our mother earth to confront the challenges of environmental crisis and the current health crisis.

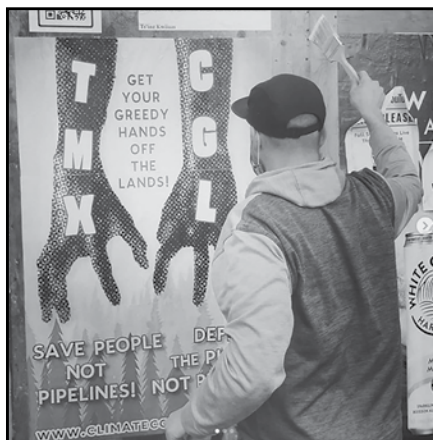
Presentations at the webinar included Dr. Chris Carlsten, Head of Respiratory Medicine Department at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Carlsten spoke about the direct correlations between the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and pre-existing health conditions brought upon humanity by climate change and air pollution. Next was Brandon Gosnell of the Mountain Protectors. He reported on their essential work exposing the ongoing Trans Mountain tank farm construction on Burnaby Mountain, which is regularly violating social

distancing measures and putting the surrounding community at risk. Climate Convergence organizer Alison Bodine closed off the panel by examining the failures of capitalist countries to protect human lives during the Covid-19 pandemic. This explains how the capitalist system is even more unprepared and unable to preserve humanity in the face of the climate crisis.

Climate Convergence is continuing to support and organize online

actions that demand that the climate-destroying mega-projects in Canada be stopped immediately and the billions in Covid-19 bailouts go directly to workers and communities in need, not the corporations. Climate Convergence organizers have also been bringing new art to Vancouver's boarded-up streets, in the form of large, climate justice posters that call on Canada's government to "Save People, Not Pipelines" and "TMX and CGL: Get Your Dirty Hands Off the Lands!"

To join the bi-weekly online meetings, and get involved in Climate Convergence, visit www.climateconvergence.ca, on Twitter: @cliamte604 and Instagram: @climateconvergence.



Thomas Davies, Climate Convergence organizer putting up a poster in Vancouver

Continued from page 11

of gender equality into all state policies, we do not seek at any time the supremacy of women over man, but gender equality. In this way, non-discrimination has also become one of our main struggles.

FTT: The Bolivarian revolutionary process has brought Indigenous rights and the inclusion of Indigenous people in the social, political, and economic front as an important and irreversible process. We see today in Venezuela that tens of thousands of Indigenous people have been educated and have earned prominent positions in Venezuelan society. How would you describe the current status of Indigenous women in Venezuela?

CP: Indigenous peoples and Indigenous women, specifically, are a source of pride. Previously they told you when they were called an Indian, it felt like an insult. We have been working to dismantle the history of Venezuela, the history written by the colonizers, from the perspective of the class that they represented. Through the revolution, we are being taught to rediscover our history and our ancestors through the strength of the Indigenous population.

The Indigenous woman today is, in the first place, a woman who recognizes herself, as I would say, as a gold mine of history, knowledge, and strength for the rest of society. An Indigenous woman is a woman who lives according to her culture, her norms, her laws, which are respected in Venezuela today.

If you examine the constitution of our National Constituent Assembly and other areas, you will see that Indigenous people choose their spokespeople according to their norms because they do not necessarily have to use the direct vote.

Additionally, in large part of the Indigenous population, their family line is matriarchal. Therefore, in Venezuela, we are writing our own feminist theory, while learning from and respecting earlier Indigenous ideas and also inclusive of the Eurocentric vision of feminism. We are raising the flags of struggle that were raised by previous generations. Still, we also recognize that

native peoples have a feminism that must be recognized, discovered, and integrated. So, we have talked about writing what we would call Bolivarian feminism, which is nothing but feminism that is drawn from our roots.

Indigenous people in Venezuela have a Ministry for the recognition and care of Indigenous peoples, which is an important gain for Indigenous women, but that is not all. There are Indigenous women in the national leadership of the PSUV; there are Indigenous women in Parliament; there are Indigenous women in the Ministry of Popular Power for Women and Gender Equality.

Through all of these efforts, we have been working to recognize the various aspects of the women's movement to advance a unified platform for women, developing our class consciousness and national consciousness. Because without



Logo of Venezuela's National Union of Women (UnaMujer)

if we lose our homeland, we all lose. Having a consciousness of ones homeland and class consciousness is an advance for the collective construction of gender consciousness and then also to ethnic consciousness. But we are clear that there are different historical moments for the struggle and that the fundamental thing in any of those moments is to be united and to recognize each other. That is part of the sisterhood between women in Venezuela.

FTT: Do you have a message for women in Canada?

Carolys: Yes, I invite women in Canada to raise the flag of feminism with us. Do not rest. Do not let yourselves be invisible. Do not let yourselves be violated. As we fight for the society that will bring the highest happiness – among other things – write, build, and be motivated by the love that moves us. Looking to the South as an example will make it possible for Canadian society to transform little by little with your own characteristics, your ways of fighting.

I hug you in the name of all Venezuelan women and I invite you to continue fighting, and not to wait on the sidelines.

FTT: Thank you very much for your time.

Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette

OUR HERITAGE



Clara Zetkin

German Marxist theorist, leader, activist, and organizer of the first International Women's Day in 1911

"The rising cost of living intensified by profiteering and high taxes tear the piece of dry bread from her mouth. Her earnings or those of the husband are decreasing and no skilfulness, no ability protects her from unemployment. The working day is growing longer, the burden, the torture and the danger of work is increasing. The employers, insolent and challenging under the protection of the state, are destroying the poor beginnings of legal protection for the wage-earning proletarian woman, for the children, the half-fledged sons and daughters of the producing class.

The exploiting capitalist wants to hold his own on the market and demands bigger profits. Unfeelingly he tramples under foot all consideration of the fact that the woman who is continuously employed, the housewife of the factory worker, of the civil service worker, of the hand worker and the small farmer, is a wife, a mother and a person. And, under this sacred gold hunger of the individual capitalist there stands today the consciousness of the whole capitalist class that the existence of its exploiting and ruling power is at stake."

Excerpt from: The International Women's Day (February 1922)

Continued from page 4

Statistics Canada also reports, “In 2018, there were six more Indigenous female victims of homicide than in 2017, marking a second consecutive annual increase.”

According to the CBC News, “It is still not known how many Indigenous women and girls have been murdered or have gone missing in Canada. Some estimates have suggested approximately 4,000 Indigenous women have been killed or have disappeared over the past few decades, but the inquiry said an exact number might never be known.” Adding to this, we do know from the national inquiry that Indigenous women and girls are 16 times more likely to be murdered or to go missing than white women.

So while the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is consistently in news headlines, one might think the situation is improving, however reading beyond the headlines we see that Canada is still a very dangerous place to be an Indigenous woman or girl. This also does not consider other inequalities Indigenous women and girls face, such as lower life expectancy, higher prison incarceration rates, unequal access to education, healthcare, and social services, etc. This is but a small snapshot focused on the murdered and the missing.

We cannot wait for change

On top of all of this, nearly a year after the NIMMIWG published its report and findings, the government of Canada continues to stall on implementing the “Calls for Justice.” The Trudeau administration recently announced a delay in issuing their action plan on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. This official government response to the 231 “Calls for Justice” was expected to arrive before the June 3, 2020 anniversary of the report. Former chief commissioner of the NIMMIWG, Marion Buller, told CBC News, “Using COVID-19 as an excuse for delaying a national action plan — to me — is really like saying, well, the dog ate my homework.”

Despite the government of Canada’s continued stalling and inaction of the 231 “Calls for Justice,” Indigenous women and their allies are not waiting. They are continuing to mobilize for their rights and against this ongoing genocide. On February 14, 2020, thousands of people came together in Vancouver’s Downtown East Side for the 29th annual Women’s Memorial March. This march has brought together people in British Columbia for dozens of years, demanding justice for the missing and murdered. While the National Inquiry is seen by many as an



important step, the fact that thousands came to the streets again this year, demonstrates that those in struggle understand their fight is not over. In many ways, after 29 years, it is finally beginning to get the attention it deserves.

May 5 has also been declared a National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in both the U.S. and Canada. While the global pandemic meant that many rallies and events were not organized in the streets, Indigenous women and girls continued to create spaces of resistance online. From the red dress campaign, to webinars, to articles, to TikTok videos — Indigenous women and girls celebrated their strength and resilience while continuing to demand justice.

Women unite!

In Canada, looking at the level of comfort and quality of life enjoyed by many, people often ask the same question that was asked to Alexandra Kollontai and the women’s movement in 1913, “What is ‘Women’s Day’? Is it really necessary?”

But through this small window highlighting just the work of the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, life continues to supply “a clear and eloquent answer.”

The reason women have the right to vote is because women struggled. The reason women have the right to abortion in Canada is because women struggled. The reason same-sex marriage is legal in Canada is because the LGBTQ+ community struggled. The reason Canada had a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, is because Indigenous women struggled. Society has never gifted women with their rights, they have always had to unite and fight — this is the importance and legacy of International Women’s Day.

Follow Tamara on Twitter: @THans01

MOTHER OF ALL STRUGGLES!

Indigenous struggle against colonialism



Autumn Peltier

is Anishinaabe-kwe and a member of the Wikwemikong First Nation. Autumn is a 15-year-old climate activist, an advocate for clean drinking water in First Nations communities and chief water commissioner for the Anishinabek First Nation.

“I will be 23-years old in 2028. In my mind I have taken a photo of where we are today, where we are at with various issues surrounding our water. My snapshot doesn’t feel good in terms of pollution, climate change, pipelines breaking, recycling, sanitation, poverty, hunger and illnesses related to these issues.

Our water should not be for sale, we all have a right to this water as we need it. Not just rich people, all people. No one should have to worry if the water is clean or if they will run out of water. No child should grow up not knowing what clean water is or never knowing what running water is.

Now is the time to warrior up and empower each other to take a stand for our planet. We need to sustain the little we have and develop ways not to pollute the environment and sustain relationships with mother earth and save what we have left.

Let’s not let water and mother earth down.”

Excerpt from Autumn’s speech at the UN General Assembly — March 22, 2018

Continued from page 12

fuel industry has sown baseless doubts about the fact that human industrial activity is disrupting our climate system. This is part of the reason why climate activists like us are compelled to spend time rejecting irrational proposals, like the one the authors advance: that we should shovel even more public funds at unviable companies to help them exploit more of our common property while paying us a relative pittance in royalties. As a further reward for our generosity, they'll continue to sow death and destruction worldwide and keep us on course for an uninhabitable planet. All this to keep a relatively small number of Canadians employed in the existing paradigm for a few more years.

We find this frustrating. We'd much rather talk about plans for a sustainable future with well-paid employment than to re-hash, for the umpteenth time, that because climate change is a serious, immediate threat, it's necessary to phase carbon-intensive industries out of existence and stop building new fossil fuel infrastructure.

The science is clear and well-established, and as multiple levels of Canadian government have recognized, climate change is an emergency. The world's leading authorities on the topic at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have called for radical changes to the structure of our society over the next decade in order to avoid its worst impacts.

When the transport and shipping infrastructure that dominates our world was first designed and built (mostly with public funding and initiative), the seriousness of the threat of climate change was not well understood. Governments and societies were operating on the assumption that fossil fuels could be burned indefinitely, without serious ill effects. Today, we know that assumption was false, and public policy interventions are again needed to redesign those systems to reflect our present understanding.

To leave the kind of legacy to our children we can all take pride in, we'll need to mobilize the expertise and know-how of our entire society, including workers like you. Instead of advocating for policies that will bring limited benefit and considerable harm, as the authors of the letter do, we invite

you to join us in fighting for a future that works for everyone, including you and your family. The first and most obvious step is to reject further infusions of public resources into the corporate suites of the climate-destroying fossil fuel industry.

Like the Great Depression of the 1930s, Covid-19 has inflicted both humanitarian and economic distress across the country and around the world. Now is an ideal time for all of us to come together to demand justice and build a greener, brighter, better world for all humanity.

Sincerely,

Climate Convergence Metro Vancouver
www.climateconvergence.ca
April 23, 2020

Photos of Before and After Alberta Tar Sands



JUSTIN TRUDEAU MUST LIFT CANADA'S SANCTIONS NOW!



The Hamilton Coalition To Stop The War and the Mouvement Québécois pour la paix/Quebec Movement for Peace today are forwarding to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau an open letter from one hundred prominent Canadians, asking the PM to suspend Canada's economic sanctions against the twenty countries against which it currently maintains these "coercive economic measures". The purpose of the request to Mr. Trudeau is to enable the sanctioned countries, and indeed the entire world, to cope better with the Covid-19 pandemic. This request echoes the appeal by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to G-20 countries on March 23, 2020, for those countries "to waive sanctions imposed on countries to ensure access to food, essential health supplies, and COVID-19 medical support."

For further information, please contact Ken Stone in Hamilton, Ontario, at 905-383-7693 (cell 289-382-9008) or kenstone@cogeco.ca, and/or Pierre Jasmin in Montreal, Quebec, at 819-847-1332 or jasmin.pierre@uqam.ca.

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
April 13, 2020

Prime Minister of Canada

Dear Sir:

In his March 23, 2020, letter to the leaders of the G20 countries, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres declared, "I am encouraging the waiving of sanctions imposed on countries to ensure access to food, essential health supplies, and COVID-19 medical support. This is the time for solidarity not exclusion... Let us remember that we are only as strong as the weakest health system in our interconnected world."¹ At the same time, ambassadors of eight countries currently affected by economic sanctions, namely, Cuba, Iran, Venezuela, Syria, Nicaragua, China, Russia, and North Korea, petitioned the secretary-general for "the immediate and complete lifting of those (coercive economic) measures to enable nations to respond to the coronavirus pandemic."² Furthermore, in

his Easter message, Pope Francis echoed Mr. Guterres's call to suspend economic sanctions now.

Following upon Mr. Guterres's appeal, we, the undersigned, call upon your government to set a bold example for the G-20 and the world by suspending all of the economic sanctions regimes which Canada currently maintains against twenty sovereign states and/or their citizens, half of which are located in Africa.

Applying economic sanctions is a warlike act, and often kills more people than actual weapons. That's why the power to level economic sanctions is restricted exclusively to the United Nations Security Council. Moreover, these sanctions hurt the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of society by causing

hunger,
disease, and

unemployment.

They are explicitly designed to do so. Officials of the US government, which routinely levels sanctions against governments it doesn't like, have spoken openly about using suffering to try and spur ordinary civilians in targeted countries to rebel against their national authorities. The US government has also forced other countries to obey its sanctions regime against targeted states through the use of extraterritoriality, that is, by penalizing foreign corporations that dare to trade with countries which the USA has sanctioned. Humanitarian goods such as medical supplies, which are exempted from economic sanctions under international law, have consistently been denied to countries such as Iran and Venezuela, despite the crises that those two countries face. That the US government would actually increase the sanctions against

those two countries during a pandemic is simply barbaric.

We note that your government has also levelled unilateral, i.e., illegal sanctions. Only in the cases of Iran and North Korea has the UN Security Council authorized multilateral sanctions and, regarding Iran, those sanctions were to have been lifted in 2015 in accordance with the signing of the JCPOA and its ratification in UN resolution 2231. In response to the global pandemic, we believe that Canada's economic sanctions, whether unilateral or multilateral (excluding those sanctions relating to the arms trade) should be suspended in accordance with the wishes of UN Secretary-General Guterres.

Finally, we note that, on April 10, your government publicized its full support for Mr. Guterres's call for a temporary global ceasefire,⁴ but announced it would give the green light to new Canadian arms sales to Saudi Arabia.⁵ We find these two actions contradictory. We applaud the former and oppose the latter, at least until the government of Saudi Arabia ends its illegal war on the people of Yemen. We further call upon your government to follow action for divestment and disarmament mandated by the United Nations and to adhere to the climate objectives stated in the (COP21) Paris Climate Agreement.

In view of the urgency created by the pandemic, we look forward to your earliest possible reply.

**#NOSANCTIONS
#SANCTIONS KILL**

SCAN TO SIGN
THE PETITION! →

OR VISIT:

<https://www.change.org/p/right-honourable-justin-trudeau-suspend-canada-s-economic-sanctions-now>



Puerto Rican freedom fighter ¡Rafael Cancel Miranda, presente!

**Message of The Committee in
Solidarity with Cuba in Puerto Rico**

**Celebration of The Life of
Don Rafael Cancel Miranda**

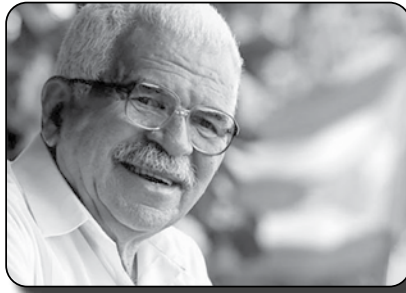
Translated by Frank Velgara

This past March 2, a little after nine in the evening, a hero born in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, but acclaimed for his actions as a hero of our entire homeland, decided to pass on to the plane of immortality. He did not choose a day before nor a day later: he had decided that we would have for another year the joy of celebrating with him his most honored action, carried out with another three valiant patriots, on March 1, 1954, in the imperial Congress of the United States. That slap in the face of that monster has never been emulated . . . nor forgotten.

From his youth in his native Mayaguez, Don Rafael Cancel Miranda always carried on his shoulders, as Martí would say, "the decorum of many men". His complete dedication to the defense of the independence of his homeland and his determination to free the countries of our América from the imperialist oppression that for more than a century had bled our Latin American peoples, led him to broaden his struggle and to raise a vibrant voice in favor of Cuba, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Mexico and other Latin American nations.

Don Rafa, as many of us call him, always collaborated with our Committee in Solidarity with Cuba that I am honored to lead. He always lent his unconditional support for all the activities of the Solidarity Committee. I cannot forget that he was the first that took up the banner of our Brigade in 1993 and that he was always present in all of our activities. He always provided his most decided and enthusiastic support to the Brigades and our annual Solidarity dinners, as he did with all activities in solidarity with Cuba and other peoples in struggle. Don Rafa also accompanied us in several international events.

Don Rafa deserves that we dedicate the trip of the Juan Ruis Rivera Brigade to Cuba in



its' 30th Anniversary trip in 2021. Don Rafa shares the same noble blood that coursed through the veins of Bolívar, Betances, Hostos, San Martín, Rius Rivera, Cespedes, Maceo, Maximo Gónez, Lolita Lebrón, Carmin Pérez, Blanca Canales, Doris Torresola, Pedro Albizu Campos, Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, Jorge Farinacci Garica, Avelino González Claudio, Hugo Chávez Frías, Fidel Castro Ruz and all the heroes and heroines that have given their lives in the struggle in solidarity with the independence and liberation of our Latin American countries. These men and women as Martí would say in his work, Three Heroes, "are the ones that rebel ferociously against those that rob our peoples of liberty, that is to role our men of their decorum. In these men are thousands of men, entire nations and the dignity of all humanity. Their lives are sacred" . . . and I add . . . and those of women are sacred.

This past March 2nd, a little after nine in the evening, Rafael Cancel Miranda, took his place with the women and men that have raised high our flag to wave it with strength in the illuminated space where his presence already resides alongside his heroic peers.

That day he also decided to give the ultimate slap in the face of the empire in order to make clear before our people that March 2 is not the day that U.S. citizenship was imposed upon our people, but the day that our RAFAEL CANCEL MIRANDA, continued his struggle from the realms of immortality.

Eternal glory to our heroes and heroines!
Eternal glory to Rafael Cancel Miranda!
Long Live the Solidarity of the Peoples of Our America and the World!
Long Live A Free and Socialist Puerto Rico!

Milagros Rivera Pérez, President
Committee in Solidarity with Cuba, Puerto Rico

March 6, 2020
Bar Association of Puerto Rico

*Frank Velgara is a Puerto Rican revolutionary
activist of the Socialist Front, living in
New York City.*



Continued from page 17

on people in Venezuela. We must question how it is that these governments can claim they support the people of Venezuela, when their financial and commercial blockade killed an estimated 40,000 Venezuelans from 2017-2018 alone? (As reported by the Centre for Economic Policy Research). And why is it that the mainstream media echoes U.S. President Trump and Prime Minister Trudeau when they call for "new elections" in Venezuela, but then doesn't say a word when on March 8, 2020 counter-revolutionaries destroyed 49,408 electronic voting machines and other voting devices by burning a warehouse to the ground in Caracas?

Each month, the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice Venezuela Solidarity Campaign takes to the streets with supporters of Venezuela in Vancouver for two solidarity actions – a picket action at the U.S. Consulate and information tabling at the Vancouver Art Gallery. At these dynamic actions, participants raise their voices against the cruel U.S. and Canada sanctions and war on Venezuela and hear speeches from people from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences in support of Venezuela's sovereignty and self-determination.

The February 7, 2020 protest action and information tabling in Vancouver took place three days after the U.S. President rhetorically declared that "Maduro's grip on tyranny will be smashed and broken," during his State of the Union address. Trump's war-mongering rhetoric gave the chants of "Trump Hands Off Venezuela!" an extra boost as picketers marched at the steps of the U.S. Consulate. Recent U.S. increased sanctions against Venezuela, and a meeting between the self-declared "interim President" of Venezuela Guaidó and Prime Minister Trudeau were important topics of discussion with passers-by.

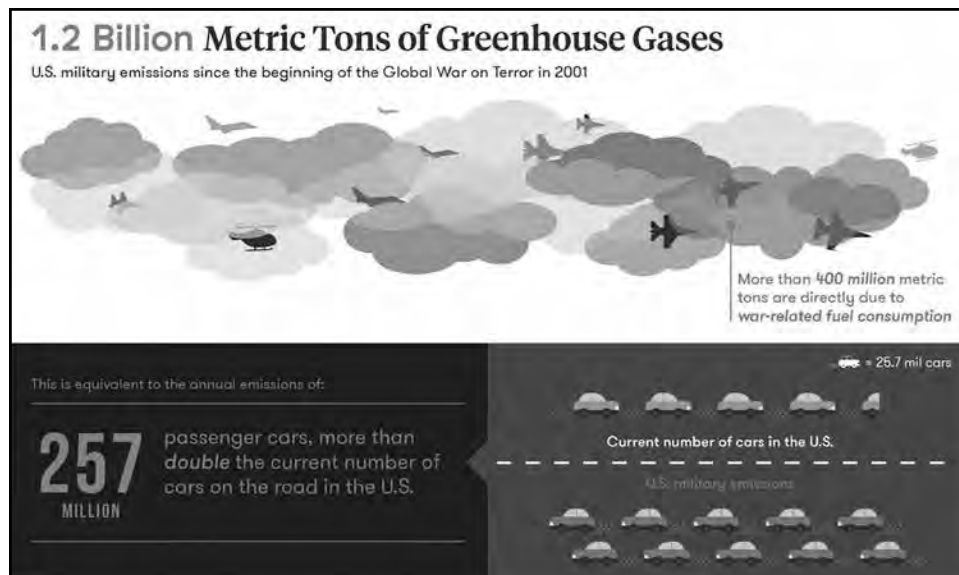
On March 5, 2020, the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign's actions also marked the 7th anniversary of the passing of Comandante Hugo Chávez, the leader of the Bolivarian revolution and President of Venezuela from 1999 until his untimely death in 2013. As participants in the actions chanted at the front steps of the U.S. Consulate in downtown Vancouver, they were inspired by the eternal example of Hugo Chávez, and especially by his fierce defense of Venezuela's sovereignty and self-determination in the face of U.S. imperialist attacks.

The people of Venezuela are determined to defend their democratically elected government, and their rights that they have gained through the Bolivarian revolution - rights to housing, healthcare, education, nutritional food, and many more. They do so not only as they face COVID-19, which now threatens nearly every country on the planet, but murderous U.S. blockade and war.

As Comandante Hugo Chávez said, "In Venezuela, they don't command us from the Pentagon, the White House or the United States Embassy. We are free and we will never be slaves, at all costs."

From the U.S. and Canada, we, as poor, working and oppressed people, must amplify the voice of the people of Venezuela, and work to build a more united and stronger movement in defense of Venezuela's sovereignty and self-determination.

To find out about the next FTT Venezuela Solidarity Campaign action, including on-line actions, visit www.firethistime.net, or follow on Facebook, on Twitter @FTT_np and on Instagram @ftt.venezuela



Infographic from Watson Institute

Canada is often claiming that they are not participating in U.S.-led wars, but then refueling all the jets that are dropping the bombs. The Canadian military provided 65 million pounds of fuel to refuel aircraft used in the bombing of Iraq and Syria between 2014 and 2019. This is incomparable, of course, to the fuel consumption of the vehicles that any of us here in this room drive.

The Department of Defense in the United States is the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels. In Canada, the Department of National Defence is the largest consumer of petroleum and Canada's largest landholder.

This is added to the continued environmental and human impact of chemical and radioactive weapons such as Agent Orange and depleted uranium. Also, the military bases of the United States and its allies around the world persist in poisoning and in polluting.

Another topic to talk about that is important to the discussion about environment and war is military emissions, because specific sources of greenhouse gases are excluded from federal reduction targets due to their important role in "ensuring the national safety and security of all Canadians" – as Canada's previous environment minister, Catherine McKenna, justified why the declared emissions of the Department of National Defence in Canada has never been counted in Canada's emission reduction targets.

Military emissions are explicitly stated as excluded in the targets set by the 2015 United Nations Paris agreements. Under

these agreements, countries are "required," as much as the Paris agreements can "require" anything, to report on their military emissions. Still, countries are not obligated or encouraged to do anything to reduce them. In the international climate agreements that proceeded with the Paris agreement, the Kyoto Accords, military emissions were not even part of the discussion. Military emissions continue to be considered a so-called necessary expense for our planet.

Then, there is the issue of military budgets. For example, the world's biggest military budget ever has been passed yet again in the United States recently. Instead of being spent on human and environmental destruction, this money could go towards climate justice, meaning health care, education, jobs, public transit, and more.

As Martin Luther King Junior said, and I think this is a good quote for us to use when talking about the environment and war, "Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men."

So, where is the technology that we need to save our planet earth now?

The War at Home: Wet'suwet'en & the Struggle for Indigenous Rights

The wars abroad by imperialist

countries such as the U.S. and Canada are also carried out against people at home. And I think every once in a while, there are these escalated times when that reality can shake oppressed people and their very foundations. And that has happened with Indigenous people in Canada over the past few weeks.

There is a war against Indigenous people in Canada. There has been since the colonisation of Indigenous land. The Canadian state has the same roots as the United States of genocide, residential schools, and reservation systems. This history and the current reality of colonization are reflected in the mobilization of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in solidarity with Wet'suwet'en today.

It is important to understand that one year ago, the RCMP –the Canadian national police– first invaded the territory of the Wet'suwet'en people, and they kept a detachment there for an entire year. Then this January is when things escalated again because the RCMP moved further into the territory and cleared people off of a road to make way for the development of the Coastal GasLink pipeline, which is in violation of the demands of the Wet'suwet'en people. British Columbia is an unceded territory. No treaties, in 92 percent of the land, were ever signed. So hereditary chiefs and their system of governance are law in those uncaded territories.

The Japanese city Nagasaki before and after it was flattened by the United States' atomic bomb, August 9, 1945



The Coastal GasLink pipeline is fracked gas. There has been a lot of talk, specifically in the Province of British Columbia about how the Coastal GasLink pipeline is going to “replace coal for the world,” and at the same time, not have a big impact on greenhouse gas emissions. However, the impact of “natural gas” emissions can only be considered minor when you ignore the methane and poisons that are released when it is extracted and considering that when it is burned, Canada does not have to count those emissions targets.

It is Time to Unite the Antiwar and Climate Justice Movement

That brings me to my final point, which is about bringing together the anti-war movement with the climate justice movement. One way to do this is by making sure “self-determination for oppressed nations, including Indigenous nations!” is always part

of our demands. This has always been part of our demands within Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) and MAWO has consistently brought this demand to the cross-border movement that we would like to strengthen and build together, including with this conference.

I think there are four strategies and demands that we need to bring into our antiwar, anti-pollution, and anti-imperialist movement. The first is that we must build a movement that is against imperialist war and occupation. Today, we live in what we in MAWO call “the new era of war and occupation,” which is the never-ending wars that started in 2001, that we are all coming together to organize against. This era is characterized by a campaign to regain hegemony in the Middle East, North Africa, and Latin America by capitalist countries that are facing a grave economic crisis and a rapid falling rate of profit. These countries are on the war path to gain new markets and resources, which means more killing of our planet.

Secondly, self-determination for oppressed nations, as I said, must be part of our work, from Indigenous and Black people, to oppressed countries under attack and occupation. This important demand calls on us to have strategic unity against any occupation, domestic or international.

We cannot just be talking about the U.S. occupying other countries but also what it means when there are oppressed nations within the U.S. and Canada borders.

Thirdly, we need to fight for a world without NATO and U.S. military bases, because of the environmental pollution and also because of the way that the United



Protesters in canoes demonstrate against the construction of a runway into the sea for a U.S. military base in Okinawa, Japan, December 14, 2018

States uses these bases to increase their wars and occupations and consequently further ecological degradation.

Lastly, I think the environmental struggle ties into the movement against sanctions and blockades, which are war. These attacks do not allow countries to develop their economies or to use their resources for the good of their people. Sanctions and blockades enforce the hegemony of the world’s biggest corporations, which are also the world’s biggest polluters.

If we combine these four pillars, which bring together the war at home and abroad, this is how we can build an anti-imperialist movement, how we can move from just being against war to also being against imperialism. I think we cannot build an effective anti-war movement without centralizing and emphasizing the slogan of self-determination for all oppressed nations.

I will say that I think this slogan of self-determination for all oppressed nations is as important as “Workers of the world unite,” from Marx and Engels.

People of oppressed nations face war and occupation and the denial of self-determination, which unites them in the fight against imperialism. The common struggle that unites workers is their

exploitation by the capitalist class and the denial of their rights.

Within the antiwar and the climate justice movement, we must also emphasize that we are building an international movement, one that is also internationalist in character. The struggles of people against massive resource extraction projects are similar in Standing Rock in North Dakota or the Amazon rainforest in Brazil. The struggle for a sustainable world requires international cooperation between oppressed people. It requires solidarity and, more importantly, unity across borders to become powerful and effective.

There are many opportunities for antiwar activists to bring the antiwar movement to the climate justice movement. There were massive protests around the world in September 2019; over 9 million

people participated in global climate strike actions. And I think we need to continue to take advantage of that mobilization on the streets. We need to strategically bring the antiwar movement and the environmental movement together. Fighting against war is fighting against the degradation of the environment and fighting for climate justice is fighting against war and occupation. We are in an era of history that these two causes have become two struggles for one purpose, to save our lives and the planet.

I think we are now facing the opportunity to build a better and sustainable world. We must not feel inactive or depressed about the climate crisis or endless wars and occupations around us. In the face of this devastation, we have no choice but to take up the call and fight back.

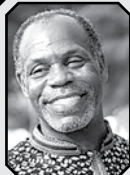
People marching on the streets today against climate change can also be very capable of understanding that it is not just a clean planet we are fighting for. It will not matter if we have a clean planet if the earth is still full of poverty and human suffering and wars and occupations. The antiwar and climate justice movement now more than ever has one cause: Save the planet.

United we will win!

Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette



UPCOMING SOCIAL JUSTICE WEBINARS



TUESDAY JUNE 16 5pm PT, 8pm ET
Actor Danny Glover talks "Covid, Cuba & Saving Lives" with Cuban Ambassador to the U.S. Jose Ramon Cabañas
 Learn more: savinglives.us-cubanormalization.org



WEDNESDAY JUNE 17 4pm PT, 7pm ET
Virtual Picket Against the U.S. Blockade on Cuba! #SanctionsKill #UnBlockCuba
 Featuring speakers across Canada & around the world!
 Learn more: canadiannetworkoncuba.ca



THURSDAY JUNE 25 5pm PT, 8pm ET
U.S. / Canada Hands Off Venezuela!
 Featuring speakers from Venezuela, Canada & the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign
 Learn more: firethistime.net



TUESDAY JUNE 30 5pm PT, 8pm ET
Cuba's Internationalism Leading the Way
 Co-organized by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba & Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade - Vancouver
 Learn more: vancubasolidarity.com
vancubavsblockade.org



Petition to Government of Canada against the U.S. Blockade and against U.S. threat of military intervention against Venezuela

SIGN AT:

<https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-2586>



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 by contacting firethistimecanada@yandex.com fax, or
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LET'S GO TO CUBA ON THE CHE GUEVARA VOLUNTEER WORK BRIGADE!

Why travel to Cuba?

Cuba is famous for many things around the world, from its exemplary healthcare and education systems to Cuban salsa dancing and music. Over 1 million people from Canada visit Cuba each year for its extraordinary beaches, resorts and sun. However there is another way to visit this dynamic island - The Ernesto Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade!

What is the Che Guevara Brigade?

The Che Brigade is a unique opportunity to experience the Cuban Revolution and its accomplishments. There is no better way to get to know the Cuban people than working alongside them, sharing meals and leisure time - including going to the beach! The Brigade's vibrant program also includes exchanges with Cuban organizations, visiting healthcare and educational institutions, touring historical sites, participating in workshops and of course experiencing Cuba's rich culture!

Recently you may have heard how Cuba is showing their international solidarity - Cuba has sent over 2000 medical professionals to 24 countries to assist in the fight against Covid-19! On the Che Brigade, brigadistas will have the opportunity to show their solidarity with Cuba and learn more about Cuba's inspiring example of international solidarity!

This Volunteer Work Brigade is open to everyone of all physical abilities and ages. There have been Brigadistas from 7 to 86 years old! The Che Brigade has been visiting Cuba since 1993 and is a project of the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) and the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP).

What's the latest news on the 2020 Che Brigade?

The 27th Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade is scheduled for November 15-30, 2020. The Che Guevara Brigade will be joining an international volunteer work brigade, made up of people from around the world. This brigade is named "The International Brigade for the 60th Anniversary of ICAP" in honour of our host organization, the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) who will be celebrating this milestone anniversary! Within the International Brigade, the Che Guevara Brigade will retain its own coordination. Most importantly, brigadistas will have the unique opportunity to not only experience Cuba but also connect with people from around the world!

This year the Che Brigade will participate in an International Youth Meeting, hosted by the Union of Young Communists (UJC). This will be an interesting experience for brigadistas of all ages!

How do I find out more?

Join the online webinar on June 14! This online event, held on the birthday of Ernesto Che Guevara, will commemorate the life and legacy of this revolutionary hero who the brigade is named for. The event will also be a chance to learn more about the Che Guevara Brigade, from both Cuban speakers and former brigadistas!

You can register for the June 14th webinar, and get more information on the Che Brigade, at: www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade

An updated program and cost for the Che Brigade will be released soon - you can check back on the brigade website or contact Che Brigade coordinator Janine Solanki at chevolbrigade@gmail.com or 778-881-6156 to be updated or to ask any other questions.

Ready to join the Che Guevara Brigade?

Registration is open and online at www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade/register1.html - Let's go to Cuba!

The Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade COMMEMORATES THE LIFE & LEGACY OF ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

ONLINE WEBINAR

- ★ Learn about Che Guevara's ideas and his legacy today!
- ★ Hear from Cuban speakers and former brigadistas
- ★ Find out how you can travel to Cuba on the 27th Che Guevara Brigade to Cuba, November 15-30, 2020!

SUNDAY June 14
Che Guevara's Birthday
4pm PT / 5pm MT / 6pm CT / 7pm ET

Link to join via Zoom at
www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade

Che Guevara Brigade is a project of the Canadian Network on Cuba

34 CUBAN HENRY REEVE INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL BRIGADES FIGHT COVID-19 IN 27 COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD



Mural in Turin, Italy to thank the Cuban doctors helping the Italian people to fight the Covid-19 pandemic



Angola



Belize



Dominica



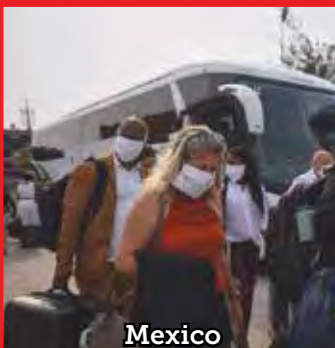
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