

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



Fire This Time!

CLIMATE JUSTICE NOW!



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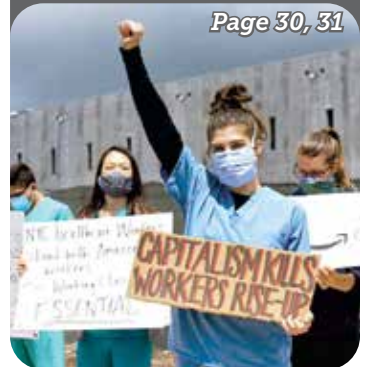
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**#STOPPOLICEBRUTALITY
#BLACKLIVESMATTER**



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BACK TO SCHOOL DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC?

PEOPLES' NEEDS BEFORE CAPITALIST PROFIT

WHY WE NEED UNIVERSAL MANDATORY TESTING TO COMBAT COVID-19

By Tamara Hansen

As the new 2020/21 school year is set to begin, many are wondering what our public education system will look like during the ongoing Covid-19 global pandemic. In British Columbia, Canada the Covid-19 response led by Premier John Horgan and Provincial Health Officer (PHO) Dr. Bonnie Henry, has been praised by many politicians and status quo British Columbians, as B.C. has kept its infection rates relatively low. However, as the new school year nears, the public's confidence is waning as the BC government has announced an unrealistic back-to-school plan that is counterintuitive to all of the guidelines set up thus far in the province. Added to this, over the summer, the numbers of confirmed Covid-19 cases in the province have been rising and breaking records.

Parents, students, educators, administrators, and wider community members are rightfully skeptical about where this plan comes from and why it seems science is taking a back seat to restarting the economy. Many are wondering, does the B.C. government have the health and safety of the public as its top priority? Of course, the situation is not limited to the province of British Columbia. Alarm bells are being sounded across Canada and the United States, where millions of working and marginalized people are being forced to go back to school and work in unsafe conditions.

Dangerous pushing: Back-to-school in B.C.

On July 29, 2020, the B.C. Minister of Education, Rob Fleming, announced that B.C. public schools would be back to face-to-face

instruction in the fall, explaining schools would open on Sept 8, "with full-time in-class learning." Meaning no online classes for those wishing to keep their kids at home.

Within the B.C. government's plan, educators and students will be organized into "learning groups" made up of a maximum of 60 people in elementary school and 120 in high school. Mask wearing and physical distancing will be recommended, but not required within these large "learning groups." Indeed, due to the number of students expected to return and the size of most B.C. classrooms (due to the lack of viable online options), physical distancing will be impossible.

The response to this plan (and the lack of at-home learning options it offered) was strong and visceral from parents, students, and teachers alike. Within weeks over 40,000 people signed a Change.org petition demanding the return to in-school classes be voluntary due to the ongoing pandemic. The B.C. Teachers' Federation (BCTF) started

a letter writing campaign to local MLAs at www.supportbcteachers.ca to demand: 1) Smaller class sizes and reduced school density to allow for physical distancing. 2) Stronger mask regulations for when physical distancing isn't possible. 3) Options for remote learning for students who need it. 4) Funding to improve cleaning and ventilation. On August 27, the union announced that over 20,000 people had participated in this campaign.

On all recent social media, news websites, YouTube videos, advertisements, and press conferences from Dr. Bonnie Henry and provincial Health Minister Adrian Dix, one can find a barrage of comments critical of what they continue to tout as 'science' supporting their back-to-school plan. Socially distanced protests were even organized by parent groups.

Confusing message: Investing in safe schools!

Over a month later, on August 31, B.C.'s Health Minister Adrian Dix and Dr. Bonnie Henry gave their regularly scheduled Covid-19 press briefing. There they announced that the province of 5.1 million residents had 1,107 active cases of Covid-19, a new record high for the province, only a week before schools were set to open.

Many were expecting a change of course. Surely all of this means that the plan for "learning groups" of 60-120 non-mask wearing/non-physically distanced in-class learning would be canceled? However, as the new school year approaches, the B.C. government has continued to double down on its plans. The only hint of change was promising some online options for families, but these are too little and



Teachers protest the back to school plan on August 3, 2020 in Worcester, Massachusetts.

come with limitations.

Here are some quotations showing the hypocrisy of what teachers and students are expected to engage in at school (learning groups of 60-120 people, no required masks or physical distancing) versus what Dr. Bonnie Henry asked B.C. residents to do in their personal lives. Dr. Henry advised: “keeping our groups small,” “avoiding face-to-face contacts,” “we need to rethink gatherings, particularly ones we are going to have indoors,” and “if you live in a small apartment, then large parties with even 10 or 15 people is not safe for you or for your guests.” Classrooms are definitely smaller than most apartments!

Everyone paying attention, including seasoned journalists who traditionally mock teachers and their union the BCTF, were left scratching their heads in bewilderment. In fact, the Langley Advance Times Newspaper editorial board published a piece titled, “Our View: Clash over back to school was avoidable.” In the article, they question the back-to-school plan, “For the last six months, we’ve heard nothing but the steady drumbeat of physical distancing, physical distancing, physical distancing. Then the very people leading that chant, including provincial health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, said it’s okay to send kids back into classrooms, many of them unmasked, gathering in cohorts of between 60 and 120. So the province expected us to simultaneously adhere to strict physical distancing guidelines, and to send kids straight back into situations that violate those guidelines. Somehow, the province thought that all parents would be able to swallow this cognitive dissonance.”

How is the B.C. government justifying its plan? It is calling schools and the “learning group” a “controlled environment.” As students are only in school about 7 hours out of 24 in a day, and only 5 days a week, no one is clear what that means!

BC government neglects the health and safety of the public

The Covid-19 pandemic is a class issue - grocery store clerks, major chain department store workers, construction workers, bus drivers, nurses, hospital custodial staff, etc. have all been asked to work with limited safety/distancing measures in place throughout this pandemic. These workers come into contact

with hundreds of people each day. While some of these workers are unionized and others are not, there has been minimal effort from government and companies to give working people the tools they need to earn a living, pay rent, and stay healthy and safe throughout the spread of this deadly virus.

Toronto Public Health released data exposing how Covid-19 particularly harms working and oppressed people. Toronto Public Health’s Dr. Eileen de Villa held a press conference on July 30, a Global News article explains, “Those with lower incomes are overrepresented in COVID-19 cases. De Villa said 51 per cent of those with COVID-19 are considered lower-income, which is compared to 30 per cent

limits our understanding of how this virus is spreading, who it is affecting, and how to stop it.

The suggestion for B.C. to collect this data was discussed by Dr. Henry five months ago in a press conference but was never implemented. Instead they created a voluntary survey for residents of B.C. to complete, which is less scientific as it is voluntary. Dr. Bonnie Henry discussed the survey results with the media on August 13. As CBC reported, “About 395,000 British Columbians completed the survey, which asked questions about the financial and societal impact the pandemic had taken on them. ‘There was a differential impact on racialized populations in British Columbia,’

Henry said. ‘Not a surprise to us, but it is something that we need to pay attention to.’” If this is an area you know you “need to pay attention to” why aren’t you collecting the data from your patients? This is willful and blind ignorance, and really should be considered a blatant attack on working and oppressed people!

Why we need universal mandatory testing to combat Covid-19

One of the clearest solutions not being proposed by the government in B.C. or Canada is universal mandatory testing for both

people with symptoms and those who are asymptomatic. What if every two weeks everyone in BC was tested for Covid-19? What if everyone in Canada had access to free daily home testing?

It seems obvious that if a virus can be spread by people who show no signs or symptoms, that to stop the spread, we must test those without symptoms. Yet in B.C. to get a Covid-19 test you must say that you have symptoms, they will not test you otherwise. This leaves no choice for concerned people but to lie to get tested.

In a U.S. study on universal testing by John Hopkins Medicine, they carried out two types of testing in 11 long-term care facilities in Maryland. The initial “target testing” of those with symptoms in the long-term care facilities, found that 17% were positive with Covid-19. On the other hand, when the second round of universal testing was implemented and all 893 people living in the 11 facilities were tested, it revealed that in fact 40% had the deadly virus. Indeed, the report found that even within the elderly, considered a more vulnerable group,

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Line up at a Covid-19 testing site in Ottawa, Canada September 2020.

of the city’s population who meet the same definition.” We know that many working people are being put in harm’s way, so the statistics seem to reflect something obvious.”

Of course, working and low-income people are not the only group being disproportionately affected. We know that Black, Indigenous, and people of colour are being hit hardest by this pandemic too. According to the same Global News article, the Toronto Public Health data further shows, “83 per cent of people who have contracted COVID-19 in Toronto are racialized. However, Toronto’s racialized communities make up 52 per cent of the city’s population.” This is a serious overrepresentation of people of colour testing positive for Covid-19.

At the same time, it is important to know that B.C. is not collecting data on the racial or economic background of those who test positive for Covid-19. While we often hear about the age-cohort victims of this virus belong to or what health region they are from, not collecting information on their class, gender, and racial/ethnic group seriously



PEOPLE OF THE WORLD SAY TO U.S. IMPERIALISM "WE CAN'T BREATHE"

BRING ALL U.S. TROOPS HOME NOW! NO OCCUPATION, NO MILITARY BASES, NO NATO!

By Janine Solanki

"I can't breathe" were the dying words of George Floyd, repeated more than 20 times while a white police officer pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes. During this whole time, Floyd, a 46-year old black man, was already handcuffed and pinned facedown on the ground by four police officers. George Floyd's last words uttered on May 25, 2020 into the pavement of a Minneapolis street, are not unique, making this killing even more tragic. According to a report by the New York Times, the phrase "I can't breathe" has been used by over 70 people who died in police custody. In the recent months following Floyd's killing, "I Can't Breathe" has been painted on protest signs and chanted by the millions of protesters in Black Lives Matter rallies and protests against police brutality, now the most massive protest movement in U.S. history.

Police brutality not a symptom but a fundamental institution of capitalism

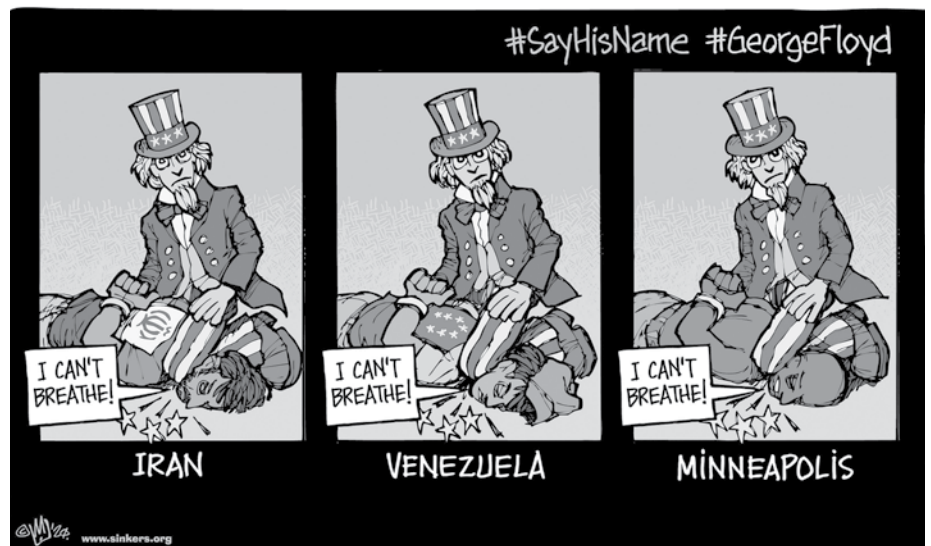
"I can't breathe" as a protest slogan is not only a response to the killing of George Floyd but to the approximately 1000 people killed each year by law enforcement officers in the United States. "I can't breathe" refers to the suffocation Black people in the U.S. feel knowing they are 3.5 times more likely to be killed by

police than a white person, according to the American Journal of Public Health. Statistics also put other people of colour, primarily Latino and Indigenous people, at higher rates of being killed at police hands than white people. They also face targeting, brutality, and discrimination from the police.

Racism in the U.S. is systemic, and a life and death matter. The U.S. system is based on class divisions, and the ruling class knows that the age-old saying "divide and conquer" holds true. Division based on

race, gender, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation is fostered to keep poor, working, and oppressed communities from coming together as a united force to defend their rights under attack.

It is even more clear that the police, acting on the orders of the U.S. government and ruling class, are a tool of state suppression when you see their response to people of diverse backgrounds uniting together in widespread protests against police brutality. Peaceful protesters have been met with violent suppression from police



forces and even the national guard. The police have attacked protesters with tear gas, pepper spray, flash-bangs, fists and boots, tasers, and lethal rubber bullets. Protestors have been beaten by police batons, buzzed by low-flying military helicopters, and run over by police cars. This response to peaceful protest tells you just how dangerous the unity of oppressed people is to the police, suppressive institutions, and those they get their orders from.

U.S. government: Police at home, police abroad

It is not only people in the U.S. who are coming together against police brutality but also people around the world who have shown their solidarity with U.S. protests. In many countries, it is not only solidarity but understanding. One example is in Palestine, where Taqi Spateen, a Palestinian artist, painted a huge mural of George Floyd on the Israeli apartheid wall in West Bank, the wall itself a cruel feature of U.S.-backed Israeli occupation of Palestine. Spateen explained his motivation behind the mural, "I want the people in America who see this mural to know that we in Palestine are standing with them because we know what it's like to be strangled every day... George Floyd was killed because they practically strangled him and cut off his breathing... And every day, this wall strangles us and makes it hard for us to breathe."

From Palestine and throughout the Middle East, across Africa and Latin America, these sentiments are echoed by oppressed nations suffocating under U.S. imperialism. At the same time the police are used as a tool of suppression within the borders of the U.S.; on the international stage, the U.S. military acts as the world police. While the U.S. police kill civilians with impunity, the U.S. military too kills innocent people around the world, claiming "collateral damage" or attaching

the label of "terrorist" whenever convenient. Often the U.S. government's excuse for intervention is claiming failed states and dictatorial regimes while championing "the peoples" aspirations for regime change in whatever country is targeted by the U.S. government. What hypocrisy! If the U.S. government cared so much for the well-being of people facing state suppression, they had a better look at home first. Instead, the U.S. government claims to have the authority to dictate other countries' policies, impose crippling sanctions as punishment for not following their orders, and intervene militarily through drone strikes, mercenary forces, the fomentation of civil wars and coups, and even direct wars and occupations.

To carry out this world-wide stranglehold, the U.S. has built a global network of foreign military bases. According to the U.S. Department of Defense website, the U.S. military operates in more than 160 countries, on all seven continents, with approximately 4,800 military sites. According to Business Insider, an estimated 800 to 1000 of these sites are foreign bases, with about 450,000 soldiers stationed overseas. These bases are eyes on the ground to surveil the whole world and springboards to carry out military actions. U.S. foreign military bases are also denying the self-determination of many nations whose people oppose these bases and have often been displaced and negatively impacted by the U.S. military's presence on their lands.

Foreign U.S. military bases are nothing new and have been built up over decades. In 1945 the U.S. military attacked and



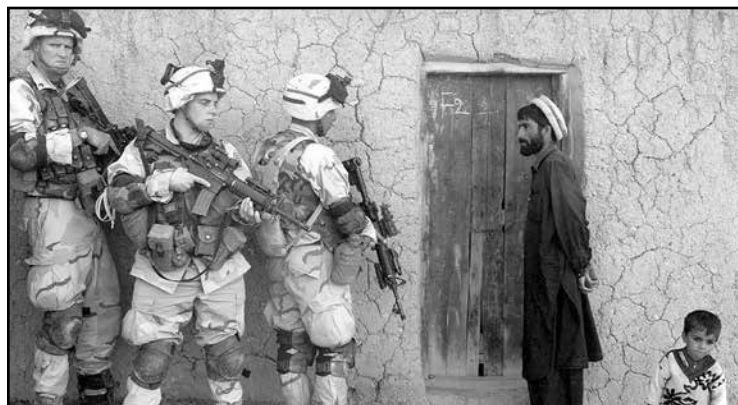
Palestinian artist Takieddine Sabatin paints a mural of the martyr Iyad Al-Hallaq on the Apartheid Wall in Bethlehem.

Okinawa is burdened with 73.9% percent of the total number of U.S. bases in Japan (more than 30). This is despite decades of protests and opposition of the Okinawan people. In South Korea, U.S. troops also never left after the 1950-53 war. In 2018 the largest foreign U.S. military base in the world was completed in Pyeongtaek, which covers 14.7 million square meters and holds the majority of the 28,500 U.S. troops in South Korea. Throughout the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, and Latin America, the list goes on, including the oldest U.S. foreign military base which has occupied Cuba's Guantanamo Bay since 1903.

U.S. war machine suffocating the world

While the U.S. war machine has been active for many years, today, we face an intensified and accelerated period of U.S. wars and occupations. This new era of war and occupation began with the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, both still under the U.S. military boot. Country after country has faced war, occupation, and sanctions throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Libya was destroyed and left in chaos after the 2011 U.S./NATO bombing campaign. Syria has undergone a U.S.-fomented civil war, U.S. funded, trained, and armed mercenary forces which led to the creation of Daesh (ISIS), and direct U.S.-led military intervention. Yemen has become the world's worst humanitarian crisis after six years of U.S.-backed, Saudi-led bombing, and war.

The U.S. government, and their imperialist allies including Canada, have not stopped their war drive in the Middle East and North Africa. Their imperialist reach extends throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America and involves crippling and destructive sanctions and blockades. The U.S. has imposed a blockade on Cuba for over 60 years, and today, during a global pandemic, when sanctions are more



U.S. soliders prepare to sweep the home of this Afghan man and his son, November 7, 2002.

occupied Okinawa, Japan, during one of World War II's bloodiest battles. Seventy-five years later, the U.S. military still hasn't left Okinawa! Today there are 50,000 U.S. soldiers in Japan, and

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In defense of
Mother Earth



The Capitalist System is as dysfunctional at dealing with Climate Change as it is with Covid-19

By Alison Bodine

On June 5, 2020, Alison Bodine spoke on behalf of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice at an international climate justice Webinar hosted by the Venezuela Ecology Movement (MEVEN) and Misión Nevado, a Social Mission in Venezuela dedicated to the protection of animals. The Webinar was entitled, "The Struggle for the Climate Continues in the Time of the Pandemic," and it discussed the impact of the coronavirus on our planet and the importance of building a movement to protect humanity and the environment. Below is an excerpt from Alison's presentation, which was originally given in Spanish.

Thank you to MEVEN and Misión Nevado for inviting me to this important panel on World Environment Day. Thank you as well to the people that have spoken before me. I have learned a lot and hope that this is the beginning of us working together to struggle for a better world. I bring greetings and solidarity to everyone from the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice in Vancouver, Canada.

The devastating impact of the destruction of the environment by capitalism has shown us clearly that climate change will impact everyone around the world – and so our movement to stop climate change must also be international. No one country, no one group, will be able to solve the climate crisis by itself. By its nature, the struggle for a sustainable world requires international cooperation, solidarity, and, more importantly, unity across borders to become a powerful and effective force.

The global Coronavirus pandemic has exposed how unprepared the governments of imperialist countries such as the United States and Canada are for any emergency. These governments, especially the United

States government, where over 100,000 people have needlessly died of Covid-19, have put the interests of profits above that of people. This current health crisis is mainly the result of mismanagement and dysfunctionality of the capitalist order. The climate crisis will be tens of thousands of times worse.

people in Canada, the significant impacts of the climate crisis can be exported.

However, in many places around the world, the reality of these shifts in climate due to economic greed is impossible to ignore – as the storms become unbearable, rising oceans threaten to swallow entire islands, and growing deserts make lands unliveable, forcing migration, famines and a struggle for the necessities of life.

The Coronavirus pandemic cannot be separated from the climate crisis

Rising global temperatures, deforestation, and other forms of destruction of the natural environment under the capitalist system have brought humans closer to wildlife – increasing chances for diseases to spread. As the destruction of the planet continues, there will be more pandemics.

In Canada, as in the United States, the government has taken advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic to pass laws that provide financial relief to polluting corporations but further increase environmental destruction. These governments are not enforcing environmental regulations during Covid-19 and are also ending their funding of clean-up projects. Large

mining and resource extraction projects have also been allowed to continue their destruction, putting workers and communities at risk for contracting Covid-19 and especially putting pressure on underfunded rural health systems.

As in imperialist countries around the world, in Canada, Covid-19 has had a greater impact on poor, working, and Indigenous people. The Covid-19, the hardest hits people that already experience environmental racism. For example, in Louisiana in the Southern United States, there is an area called "Cancer Alley." The Business Insider and ProPublica have both published recent articles on this devastated area. As the report, the



Poster in spanish for the webinar "The Struggle for the Climate Continues in the Time of the Pandemic"

The capitalist system that we live under in Canada and the United States is as unprepared for climate change as it is for Covid-19

From here in most parts of Canada or the United States, it can be understandingly difficult even to grasp the profound changes that the climate and mother earth have already gone through and will continue to face due to the climate crisis. In Canada, for example, the pollution created by the manufacturer of the clothes we wear destroys in the air in Haiti, and the garbage produced by the mountains of consumer goods we consume is shipped off to the Philippines. Thus, for most

“Cancer Alley” has experienced very high rates of Covid-19. Of course, it is not a coincidence that the rate of cancer is 50 times higher than average in this area. This community in Louisiana has a very high concentration of petrochemical plants and factories – and this has destroyed people’s health. In general, Black people in the United States are 75 percent more likely to live near industrial facilities – while at the same time, Black people have the highest death rates from Covid-19. In Canada, there are over 100 reservations that do not have running water on any given day. Access to quality nutrition and health facilities is also severely limited for Indigenous people. Because of this, Indigenous communities are at the greatest risk for Covid-19.

Environmental destruction and imperialist wars and occupations

Living in the United States and Canada, it is also fundamental to our organizing for our mother earth that we work to end imperialist wars and occupations. Chemical weapons, especially depleted uranium, have significantly increased cancers in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East. Conventional weapons that have been massively deployed against people in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Mali, Ukraine destroy all aspects of life and pollute the land with toxins. The United States-led wars and occupations have destroyed entire countries since 2001. With them, an unknowable amount of animal and plant diversity lost, and millions of people were killed.

The U.S. Department of Defense is the world’s largest polluter. In Canada, the Department of National Defence also makes a considerable contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Over 1,000 U.S. military bases around the world also introduce massive amounts of pollution and environmental destruction.

Developed countries like Canada outsource their environmental impact. This means that people in the U.S. and Canada enjoy relatively pollution-free environments, clean water (not counting Indigenous reserves in Canada; or Flint, Michigan, and Pittsburgh in the U.S.), and breathable air. Meanwhile, millions of people around the world that live where

goods are produced, from clothing to electronics and more, which people in the U.S. and Canada buy, live surrounded by contaminants and poisons.

The government of Canada promotes environmental destruction

Multiple news and scientific reports have reported widely how the world’s wealthiest



countries, including Canada, are far from reaching the 2015 UN Paris Agreement climate targets. These countries have the greatest resources to fight climate change at their disposal. Yet, they are even further away from reaching what is required to keep the planet from warming above 1.5 degrees Celsius. Scientists around the world have agreed that it is critical to avoid devastating and irreversible impacts on humanity from climate catastrophe.

Canada is, per-person, the highest GHG emitter in the world. Canada’s transportation sector and buildings produce emissions that are four times the G20 average. Each person in Canada produces 22 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year, three times the G20 average. Canada may have a relatively small population and a large landmass, but its climate-impact is great.

In the Province of British Columbia, there are two major resource extraction projects that are being pushed ahead by the federal and provincial governments, the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion and the Coastal GasLink pipeline. Both

of these projects are heavily subsidized with tax-payers money. Canada’s government bought the existing Trans Mountain pipeline for \$4.5 billion after the multi-national corporation Kinder Morgan decided it was no longer a good financial decision continue to operate with the existing pipeline or to proceed with the expansion. The costs of the pipeline expansion, which will be funded by taxpayers, are calculated at more than \$12 billion by the government of Canada itself.

The Coastal GasLink pipeline is located on the Wet’suwet’en Indigenous people’s territorial lands in Northern British Columbia. The Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs who have rights over the territory have not permitted to have the Coastal GasLink built. However, before and throughout the pandemic, the government of British Columbia has allowed the project to proceed and sent the RCMP police force to Wet’suwet’en territory to impose the pipeline construction through intimidation, brutality and arrests.

Building a more united and stronger climate justice movement

We in Canada must fight for a government in Canada that invests in healthcare, education, and sustainable energy development. We must fight for Indigenous rights and the right to self-determination for Indigenous people and all oppressed nations.

We demand a climate justice government that will no longer line the pockets of corporate oil executives in exchange for our future. We believe in a future for humanity on this planet, and to win that future, we must organize for system change, not climate change, in Canada and capitalist countries around the world.

The world-wide struggle for our planet also must be tied to the anti-war movement. Imperialist wars, occupations, sanctions, and blockades destroy the environment and human life wherever they are unleashed. The imperialist war machine also prevents countries from developing their economies or using their resources



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DEFEATING THE TMX PIPELINE WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT VICTORY FOR THE POOR

 **System Change,
Not Climate Change!**

*In defense of
Mother Earth*

By Thomas Davies

On June 10, 2020, Thomas Davies, a central organizer with Climate Convergence Metro Vancouver and member of the Fire This Time Editorial Board gave this talk during the webinar "What's Next in the Fight to Stop the TMX Pipeline?"

I want to thank everybody who logged on tonight, and everybody who's been standing up for oppressed people, standing up against racism, standing up against police brutality, and everybody who's been standing up for over ten years in this fight against the Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) Pipeline.

Recently, we got the news about the Federal approval of the 13 foot by 3.6km pipe tunnel that they're planning on boring through Burnaby Mountain. I, like many others I spoke to, felt a different sense of frustration about this.

The reason we felt this decision more sharply was that usually leading up to those kinds of decisions, we are aware of the timeline, and we're organizing public actions to respond to them. So that each time the National Energy Board, now named Canada Energy Regulator, rubber stamps different approvals for the TMX pipeline, we've usually had a protest in front of their office. We've usually been organizing and connected with other people - and that's a really powerful thing. I think that's really helped sustain the movement, and we weren't able to do that in the same way at this time.

So coming together like this, I think, is especially important. But in those feelings, when we're in our own homes feeling a bit isolated, I think it's useful to go back to what the context is and realize what the bigger picture is. We can gain a lot of strength from that. I want everybody to remember that pre-coronavirus that we had seen some of the most massive coordinated international protests in history led by young people, and the Climate Strike protests, and movement was growing around the world.

I want everybody to think back to all the Wet'suwet'en solidarity actions that were happening across Canada and around the world, and how quickly they spread and how energetic and defiant they were - how steadfast they were and can continue to be. They were Indigenous-led but gained a lot of solidarity and support from non-Indigenous people standing up in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en Nation standing up against the Coastal GasLink Pipeline. That power was seen around the world, and I think we really

felt it.

During the pandemic, not only is capitalism unable to take care of people's needs, but it also created this disgusting effort we've seen to take advantage of the situation and make mega-profits - even while unemployment in Canada is the highest it has been ever recorded. Unemployment was 13.7 % last month, which was higher than the previous highest record in 1982. Three million people lost their jobs in March and April, and 2.5 million more had their hours slashed. Meanwhile, we saw billionaires expand their profits massively.

They took advantage of making more money, but we saw the United States suspend environmental review and energy project regulations. Then we saw the Alberta government do the exact same thing. I'm not sure if people noticed, but the Canadian government just suspended environmental reviews for offshore drilling on May 4th. So they're using this as an opportunity to get ahead and to give polluters an upper hand. That's precisely the opposite of what we should be doing.

Importantly, we also saw a fallout in the oil prices, with at one time, a barrel of Alberta oil was worth literally nothing. We saw many layoffs in Alberta, and that came back to the local Parkland oil refinery.

And as the situation develops in Alberta and as the oil crisis unfolds, I think we have more opportunities for talking to oil and gas workers. We in Climate Convergence responded publicly to an "open letter" published in the Financial Post. It was called "An Open Letter to Canadians from Oil and Gas Workers." When you looked at the letter, it was written by oil drilling company CEOs. They were calling for strange things like for the government to buy their accounts receivable. They had nothing in there about protecting workers, and they didn't even bother to try and talk to workers about what they were asking for. So we responded to that with our Open Letter from Climate Justice Organizers to Oil and Gas Workers - to point out that we in the climate justice movement have much more in common with oil and gas workers than oil and gas workers will ever have with oil and gas CEOs.

We can see that these corporations are continuing to push construction even during times when it's obvious that they are putting workers' health in jeopardy and creating huge health risks for the communities surrounding these construction projects. We've seen the



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

work that the Mountain Protectors have done on Burnaby Mountain. Documenting time and time again how impossible it is to practice the government's social distancing guidelines on those construction projects.

Right now, our job is to continue to expose the contradictions between what politicians say and what they do, especially with someone like Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He says he stands for climate justice. He says he stands for Indigenous rights. He says he is anti-racist. Yet time and time again, in so many ways, he shows that to be a complete lie.

So, a lot is going on, and I think it's fair to ask, "Why is the TMX pipeline fight important in all of this? Why should we be focusing on this when there is everything else going on?" I think there are several reasons. The first is strong and straightforward: We simply can't add that Tar Sands capacity and the associated CO2 emissions in any sort of sustainable modeling for the planet's future. It doesn't add up to the Canadian government's pretty lackluster climate plan, and it would never add up to any of the real scientific analysis.

The most important, though, is that defeating the TMX pipeline would be an important victory for poor, working, and oppressed people.

It's been over a ten-year struggle, and I think it's become symbolic of the fight for climate justice and Indigenous rights. Even more broadly, it's a symbol of those who are trying to build a better and sustainable world confronting those who are trying to squeeze every last drop of profits, regardless of human and planetary consequences, out of the old ways. So winning this struggle will put all poor, working, and oppressed people in a better position to fight back. We need to start more public and coordinated campaigns against TMX, considering current safety concerns.

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3 Significant Victories for the Climate Justice Movement

We Must Keep Up the Struggle for Our Mother Earth

By Alison Bodine

Alberta's energy minister Sonya Savage was more than misguided when on May 20, 2020 she suggested, "Now is a great time to be building a pipeline because you can't have protests of more than 15 people," and "Let's get it built." Not only were these remarks cold and callous at a time when millions of people in Canada were suffering in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, but they were also greatly mistaken.

Less than three weeks later, three of North America's largest pipeline projects were either canceled or delayed indefinitely: the Atlantic Coast pipeline, the Keystone XL pipeline, and the Dakota Access pipeline.

3 Steps Forward for Climate Justice

The cancellation of the Atlantic Coast pipeline was announced first. This \$8 billion, 970-kilometer natural gas pipeline was supposed to run across West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina. However, Dominion Energy and Duke Energy, canceled the project on July 5, even after it won a legal battle in June, would have allowed its construction to proceed.

The next day, a U.S. District Court ruling reversed the U.S. Army Corp's federal approval of



the Dakota Access pipeline. This decision required that the shale-oil pipeline, which had been in operation for three years, be emptied in 30 days. One month later, a U.S. Court of Appeals ruling extended the deadline. However, the extension is only temporary, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that gave the pipeline a Federal approval must now complete additional environmental reviews.

The final victory for the climate justice movement that week came in as the U.S. Supreme Court announced its ruling in favor of a lower-court decision to block a required permit for the Keystone XL pipeline. This 1900-kilometer pipeline is supposed to carry 35 million gallons a day of dirty tar sands oil from Alberta to refineries in Nebraska for export through the Gulf of Mexico. Its construction in the United States has been halted due to concerns over its endangerment to vital water sources.

These cancellations and indefinite delays are not a coincidence. All three pipeline projects have faced broad and ongoing opposition, through court battles in defense of Indigenous rights and environment, and most importantly, on the streets. When the Atlantic Coast pipeline cancellation was

announced, Dan Brouillette, the Energy Secretary in the United States, "blamed the pipeline's cancellation on 'activists,'" as reported by CNN. The Standing Rock protests against the Dakota Access pipeline brought over 15,000 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together in a united and powerful struggle that first brought international attention to this climate destroying project. The resistance of people at Standing Rock in 2016 is why court challenges against it have continued to this day.

Capitalism, Covid-19 Pandemic, and Climate Crisis

Every time a major capitalist resource extraction project that is set to make the rich richer and further destroy the planet is delayed

or canceled, it is a step forward for the climate justice movement. Major fossil fuel extraction companies and their henchmen in the government of the United States and Canada will do everything in their capacity to protect their destructive projects to make more profit. No matter how big or small, each step forward sends a message to the climate justice movement to fight harder for humanity's future on this planet.

The signs that we must fight harder in defense of mother earth are everywhere.

In July, temperatures in the Arctic circle rose above 100°F (38 °C) for the first time since records began in 1885. In Baghdad, Iraq, people faced scorching 120°F (49 °C) heat four days in a row – an almost uninhabitable temperature for human beings, especially people who live without air conditioners. At the same time, unprecedented floods raged

*Continued
on page 35*

Cuba's two pandemics: The coronavirus & the U.S. Blockade



By Josefina Vidal Ferreiro

As soon as the first cases of COVID-19 were detected in Cuba, our country mobilised all its resources to contain the spread of the virus.

Our healthcare workers go door to door checking people for possible symptoms. Those with symptoms are transferred to specially designated centres to receive treatment, mostly with medication developed by Cuba's own pharmaceutical and biotech industry. The medical examinations and treatments are all provided free of charge.

As of June 20, 85 people have died of COVID-19 in Cuba. Our mortality rate of 3.9 percent is very low compared to the rest of the world. We reached the peak of the disease on April 24, but we are still encouraging people to respect physical distancing, isolation and sanitary measures.

Internationally, Cuba has responded to requests for collaboration from more than 20 countries, mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean, but also in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Cuba has a long history and tradition of international solidarity with other countries in the health sector that dates back to the 1960s, when we started sending healthcare workers to help other countries. From then on, more than 400,000 Cuban doctors and health professionals have provided services in 164 countries. We have helped strengthen local healthcare systems, provided services in remote areas and trained doctors.

Based on this long experience, in 2005 Cuba decided to create the Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade to respond to natural disasters and serious epidemics across the world. Since then, this brigade of over 7,000 doctors, nurses and other health specialists has provided services in more than 20 countries.

We sent doctors and nurses to staff 32 field hospitals after the 2005 earthquake

in Pakistan. We sent a medical team to Indonesia in 2006 after the devastating tsunami. We sent more than 1,700 health workers to Haiti in 2010 after the catastrophic earthquake and the ensuing cholera epidemic. In 2014, we sent brigades to Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone to combat Ebola.

Even Samantha Power, former US President Barack Obama's UN Ambassador, praised Cuba for its outstanding role in the fight against Ebola.

We even had brigades ready to assist Louisiana after New Orleans was hit by Hurricane Katrina but the US government rejected our cooperation.

Assisting others has always been part of who we are as a country and part of the ethical training Cuban doctors and health professionals receive.

In response to the current pandemic, Cuba has dispatched 28 contingents of the Henry Reeve Brigade to help 26 countries. This is in addition to the more than 28,000 Cuban doctors, nurses and health professionals who were already overseas before the pandemic.

Unfortunately, Cuban doctors and the Henry Reeve Brigade, in particular, have come under increasing attacks by the Trump administration, which has gone so far as to falsely accuse Cuba of human trafficking through its doctor programme.

It is a shame that the United States government has been trying to discredit Cuba's international assistance, including using pressure and threats against countries to force them to cancel these medical cooperation agreements.

They have even tried to pressure governments to reject Cuba's help during the coronavirus pandemic. They claim the Cuban government is exploiting these doctors because in the case of countries that can afford to provide monetary compensation, a portion of it is kept by the Cuban government.

However, working overseas is completely voluntary, and the portion the Cuban



Cuban children hold signs against the U.S. Blockade on Cuba.

government keeps goes to pay for Cuba's universal health system. It goes to purchasing medical supplies, equipment and medication for Cuba's 11 million people, including for the families of the doctors who are providing their services abroad. This is how we are able to provide free, high-quality healthcare for the Cuban people.

Instead of exacerbating conflict during a pandemic, our countries need to work together to find solutions. For years, Cuba has been developing pharmaceuticals and vaccines to treat different diseases, from psoriasis and cancer to heart attacks. Now we are helping patients recover from COVID-19 with Interferon Alfa2b Recombinant, one of 19 medications being developed or under clinical trial in Cuba by our biotech and pharmaceutical industries to treat different stages of COVID-19. Globally, we have received more than 70

requests for pharmaceuticals developed by Cuba.

This would be a clear avenue for Cuba-US cooperation but unfortunately, the Trump administration is wasting this opportunity by dismantling the limited progress made by Cuba and the US during the Obama administration.

President Trump strengthened the 60-year US blockade against my country, implementing 90 economic measures against Cuba between January 2019 and March 2020 alone. These measures have targeted the main sectors of the Cuban economy, including our financial transactions, tourism industry, energy sector, foreign investments – which are key for the development of the Cuban economy – and the medical cooperation programmes with other countries.

These unilateral coercive measures are unprecedented in their level of aggression and scope. They are deliberately trying to deprive Cuba of resources, sources of revenue and income needed for the development of the Cuban economy. The effects of these measures are being felt in Cuba, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The blockade is stopping Cuba from getting much-needed medical supplies. For example, if more than 10 percent of the components in the medical equipment or medications we want to buy are of US origin, then Cuba is not allowed to purchase them.

In addition, the US has imposed restrictions

on banks, airlines and shipping companies to stop Cuba from receiving materials that other countries are donating or sending to Cuba.

In April, the Alibaba Foundation of China tried to donate masks, rapid diagnostic kits and ventilators to Cuba, but the airline contracted by Alibaba to transport those items to Cuba refused to take the goods because they were afraid the US would sanction them.

A ship recently arrived in Cuba with raw materials to produce medications but it decided not to unload because the bank involved in the transaction decided not to make the payment out of fear it would be sanctioned by the US government.

So this is why we say we are suffering from two pandemics: COVID-19 and the US blockade. For that reason, it is so important that people of goodwill around the world continue to raise the demand to end the blockade of Cuba and to forcefully assert that these are times for solidarity and cooperation, not sanctions and blockades. In the meantime, Cuba,

as a country that understands the value of solidarity, will continue to do our best to stop the spread of coronavirus at home and globally.

Reprinted from: www.aljazeera.com June 21, 2020.



*Follow Josefina Vidal Ferreiro on Twitter:
@JosefinaVidalF*

Josefina Vidal Ferreiro is the Cuban Ambassador to Canada. She chaired the Cuban delegation during the talks to restore formal ties with the US under President Obama.



Cubans greet health professionals from the Henry Reeve contingent returning home after supporting the Covid-19 battle in Lombardia, Italy, June 22, 2020.

THE HENRY REEVE INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL BRIGADE DESERVES THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IN 2021!

The mission of the Cuba Nobel Prize Campaign is to promote the nomination of the Cuban International Medical Brigade (called the Henry Reeve Brigade) for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize. It is also to educate people about how a small, poor country has demonstrated to a world reeling from COVID-19 what global solidarity looks like.

The campaign also plans to expose US attempts to discredit Cuba's internationalist healthcare program, from labelling it as a form of human trafficking to pushing governments not to accept Cuba's aid, and to build opposition to such crass and mean-spirited sabotage.

Cuba's example inspires those of us in other countries to promote policies and actions that are more compassionate and generous in not only combatting pandemics but building a more just, peaceful and verdant world.

Join the campaign asking the Nobel Committee to award Cuba's Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade a Nobel Peace Prize!

Vist the website of the campaign below to sign the petition & get involved!

CUBANOBEL.ORG

 **#CUBANOBEL** 



Left: Tamara Hansen co-MCs event in Vancouver with Her Excellency Josefina Vidal, Cuban Ambassador to Canada, May 4, 2019.



Right: Tamara Hansen chanting at the monthly picket against the blockade on Cuba in Vancouver, February 17, 2020.

DESPITE COVID-19 CUBA SOLIDARITY CONTINUES IN CANADA

By Nuria Barbosa León

“An example for the world,” is how the Canadian activist Tamara Hansen describes Cuba’s socialist process. Tamara is the coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, author of the book: “Five Decades of the Cuban Revolution: the Challenges of an Unwavering Leadership” (Battle of Ideas Press, 2010), and executive member of the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC).

Since 2004, she has been involved in solidarity work with Cuba which centers on campaigns to denounce the cruel blockade imposed by the United States; and organizing groups that travel to the largest island in the Greater Antilles, to learn first-hand the true Cuban reality. This includes the Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigades, the Calixto García Brigade and the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba.

Another solidarity activity has been to collect monetary donations after natural disasters that have occurred in the Caribbean Island, or to finance social projects. Today, there is a CNC solidarity campaign to collect funds to contribute to the work carried out by the Henry Reeve Cuban medical brigades around the world fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.

“So far, we have raised over \$31,000 CAD towards this project. This is very important as the economic situation for many working people in Canada today is challenging because of the pandemic. So, their generosity towards Cuba and the important work of Cuban medical professionals around the world is significant,” says Tamara who is also a teacher of English, social studies and French, at a secondary school in Vancouver.

In addition, the organization’s Tamara works with maintain several virtual and printed publications, principally the Fire

A PESAR DE LA COVID-19 LA SOLIDARIDAD CON CUBA SE MANTIENE EN CANADÁ

** EN ESPAÑOL **

Por Nuria Barbosa León

De ejemplo para el mundo, califica el proceso social cubano la activista canadiense Tamara Hansen, coordinadora de las Comunidades de Vancouver en Solidaridad con Cuba, autora del libro: “Cinco décadas de la Revolución cubana: los desafíos de un liderazgo inquebrantable” (Battle of Ideas Press, 2010), y miembro ejecutivo de la Red Canadiense en Solidaridad con Cuba.

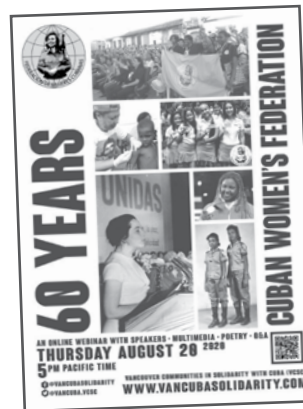
Ella se involucró desde el 2004 en este trabajo solidario que ha tenido como ejes principales las campañas para denunciar el cruel bloqueo impuesto por Estados Unidos; y armar grupos que viajan a la Mayor de las Antillas, con el propósito de conocer de primera mano la verdadera realidad cubana. Ello incluye las Brigadas de Trabajo Voluntario Che Guevara, Calixto García y la Caravana de Pastores por la Paz.

Otra de las acciones ha sido recaudar donativos monetarios ante catástrofes ocurridas en la Isla caribeña o para financiar proyectos sociales. Hoy lo hacen para aportar al trabajo que realiza el contingente de médicos cubanos Henry Reeve en el mundo en el enfrentamiento a la pandemia por Covid 19.

«Hasta ahora, hemos recaudado más de \$ 31 000 CAD para este proyecto. Esto es muy positivo ya que la situación económica para muchos trabajadores en Canadá es un desafío debido a la pandemia. Por lo tanto, su generosidad hacia Cuba y el importante trabajo de los médicos cubanos en todo el mundo es significativo», afirma la también profesora de inglés, estudios sociales y francés, en una escuela secundaria en Vancouver.

Además, la organización mantiene varias publicaciones de manera virtual e impresa, principalmente el periódico Fire

A selection of posters for the many virtual events organized by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba & the Canadian Network on Cuba in June, July & August 2020.



This Time newspaper, with the objective of refuting media campaigns that seek to slander the Cuban Revolution and to share about the advances of Cuba in the fields of human rights, the environment, science, agriculture, medicine, sports, culture, and other fields.

As a consistent action, they carry out mobilizations on the 17th of each month in front of the U.S. Consulate to demand the lifting of interventionist U.S. policies against Cuba: "Groups in Ottawa and Montreal, Canada, as well as Kiev, Ukraine also protest in front of their embassies and consulates. During this pandemic, street protests have not been possible, so we have begun to organize ourselves online. On May 17th the Canadian Network on Cuba organized a "virtual picket" with guests from Australia, the U.S., Ukraine, Britain, Cuba, and across Canada to demand an end to the genocidal U.S. blockade on Cuba. We had over 120 people participate and hundreds that have watched the video on Facebook since the event. It was very powerful to come together online and raise our voices against the blockade on Cuba. We are planning to organize another action for June 17th."

In March 2020, an International Conference on Normalization of US-Cuba Relations at Fordham University School of Law in New York City was planned. Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, the conference was rescheduled for November 2020. Organizations and individuals involved in planning the conference include Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, the National Network on Cuba in the U.S., the Canadian Network on Cuba, and La Table de Concertation de Solidarité Quebec-Cuba and many others, through online exchanges as part of a new campaign called the SavingLives Campaign.

In this campaign, they share the stories of altruism carried out by the doctors of the largest island in the Caribbean: "The U.S. imperialist government truly sees this work as a threat to their global hegemony, all the U.S. has to offer is military-might and endless war. While Cuba is demonstrating the powerful example of free healthcare, solidarity, and revolutionary internationalism."

Tamara Hansen concluded her remarks by stating: "My dedication to Cuba solidarity began over 15 years ago. While this work is always voluntary and never paid, I continue along with my amazing compañeras and compañeros in Vancouver, across Canada, and worldwide – because I believe that once humanity understands what the Cuban people and their revolutionary government stand for, they will see an important example we can all learn from and follow."

Reprinted from: www.granma.cu May 30, 2020

This Time con el propósito de desmentir campañas mediáticas que pretenden desprestigiar la Revolución cubana y para ello divulgan los avances obtenidos en materia de derechos humanos, medio ambiente, ciencia, agricultura, medicina, deporte, cultura, y otros temas.

Como actividad frecuente realizan movilizaciones los días 17 de cada mes frente al Consulado de los EE.UU. para exigir el levantamiento de las políticas injerencistas contra Cuba: «Participan grupos de Ottawa y Montreal, así como de Kiev, en Ucrania. Durante esta pandemia, las protestas callejeras no han sido posibles, por lo que hemos comenzado a organizarnos en línea. El 17 de mayo, la Red Canadiense en Solidaridad con Cuba organizó un piquete virtual con invitados de Australia, Estados Unidos, Ucrania, Gran Bretaña, y otros para exigir un fin al bloqueo genocida. Participaron más de 120 personas en vivo y cientos vieron el video en Facebook después del evento. Estamos planeando organizar otra acción para el 17 de junio».

En marzo de 2020, planificaron una Conferencia Internacional sobre Normalización de relaciones entre EE. UU.-Cuba en la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de Fordham en la ciudad de Nueva York. Debido al estallido de Covid-19, la conferencia se reprogramó para noviembre de 2020 y para concretar la acción trabajan unidos las organizaciones: Comunidades de Vancouver en Solidaridad con Cuba, la Red Nacional Sobre Cuba en los Estados Unidos, la Red Canadiense en Solidaridad con Cuba, y La Table de Concertation de Solidarité Quebec-Cuba y muchos otros, a través de intercambios en líneas en una nueva campaña denominada Salva Vidas.

En este aspecto divulgan las historias de altruismo realizadas por los doctores de la Mayor Isla del Caribe: «El gobierno imperialista de los EE.UU. realmente ve este trabajo como una amenaza a su hegemonía global; porque todo lo que tiene para ofrecer es poder militar y guerras, mientras que Cuba está demostrando el poderoso ejemplo de atención médica gratuita, solidaridad y el internacionalismo revolucionario».

Tamara Hansen concluye sus palabras aseverando: «Mi dedicación a la solidaridad con Cuba comenzó hace más de 15 años. Siempre ha sido un trabajo voluntario y sin paga, pero con gusto continué junto con mis increíbles compañeras y compañeros en Vancouver, Canadá, y en todo el mundo. Quiero que la humanidad comprenda lo que representan el pueblo cubano y su gobierno. Es un ejemplo importante del que todos podemos aprender y al cual seguir».

Reimpreso por: www.granma.cu 30 de mayo de 2020

From Canada & U.S. to Venezuela, Peru & Puerto Rico, to Italy & Ukraine, to Korea & Australia, activists say: THE U.S. BLOCKADE ON CUBA IS CRIMINAL AND ILLEGAL

By Janine Solanki

Cuba solidarity activists have learned from Cuba to make the best of every situation and find opportunities in the face of difficulty – with this in mind, and the real need to combat the blockade, the picket actions against the U.S. blockade of Cuba have now moved online and are bigger and broader than ever! They have now been unified under the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC), a network of Cuba solidarity organizations across Canada, including VCSC and FCAB-Van, and have brought together people across Canada, the U.S., Cuba as well as Ukraine and other countries!

May 13

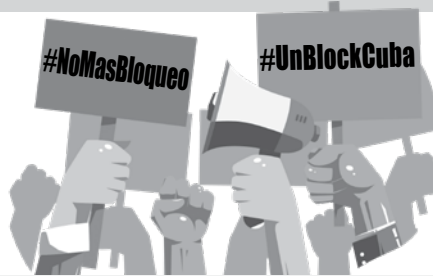
On May 13, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba organizer and Fire This Time editorial board member Alison Bodine spoke at a Cuba solidarity webinar held by the Gateway Green Alliance and St. Louis Green Party in Missouri.

May 17

The CNC held its first virtual picket action against the U.S. blockade of Cuba on May 17. The picket was chaired by two executive committee members of the CNC, Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, and Julio Fonseca, President of the Juan Gualberto Gomez Association of Cuban Residents in Toronto. The program included many international speakers, including Vinnie Molina, president of the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society, Western Australian Branch; Gail Walker, director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace; Rob Miller, director of Cuba Solidarity Campaign – Britain; and Manuel Lopez from the Ukrainian Committee “Stop the Blockade of Cuba.” The program also featured greetings from CNC member groups and la Table de concertation et de solidarité Québec – Cuba. The last part of the program was the “virtual picket,” where all were invited to share their video, many holding their homemade signs demanding an end to the blockade!

June 17

The next virtual picket action on June 17 was chaired by Maricarmen Guevara from



Ottawa, Cuba Connections, and Azza Rojbi, coordinator of Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade. The program featured speakers from Venezuela, Jamaica, Ukraine, the U.S., and across Canada! This included: Yhonny Garcia, leader of Venezuela's National Movement of Friendship and Mutual Solidarity Venezuela-Cuba; Trevor Brown, president of the Jamaica Cuba Friendship Association and the Jamaica Peace Council; Cikiah Thomas, co-chair of the Global Afrikan Congress; Colette Lavergne from la Table de concertation et de solidarité Québec – Cuba; Cheryl Labash, co-chair of the National Network on Cuba in the U.S.; and Viashleslav Karpenko from The Ukrainian Committee “Stop the blockade of Cuba.”

June 30

On June 30, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba and Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver held an online webinar titled, “Despite U.S. Blockade Cuba's Internationalism Leading the Way.” The event started with Azza Rojbi, coordinator of Friends of Cuba Against the

U.S. Blockade – Vancouver, who welcomed everyone to the event. The first speaker, Tania López Larroque, the Consul General of the Cuban Consulate in Toronto, spoke on Cuba's fight against Covid-19 and Cuba's concept of internationalism in action today. The next speaker was Arnold August, who is the

author of many articles and books, mostly focused on democracy in Cuba and U.S.-Cuba relations. The final speaker was Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, executive member of the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC), and author of the book “5 Decades of the Cuban Revolution: The Challenges of an Unwavering Leadership” (Battle of Ideas Press, 2010). Tamara's talk can read in this issue of Fire This Time on page 23.

July 17

On July 17th, the monthly virtual picket again brought people across Canada, the U.S., and the world together against the U.S. blockade on Cuba. This event was chaired by CNC executive members Tamara Hansen and Bronwyn Cragg. Speakers at the webinar represented the global participation, including Medea Benjamin, co-founder of the peace group CODEPINK; Luis Fidel Escalante from the Committee in Solidarity with Cuba – Puerto Rico; Marco Papacci, Vice President of the Italy-Cuba Association, Jaehn Choi from Imagination for International Solidarity in Seoul, South Korea and other speakers joining from the U.S., Canada and as far as Australia! After greetings were shared from Cuba solidarity groups, the “virtual picket” took place with participants sharing their video and homemade signs against the criminal U.S. blockade on Cuba.

Join Us!

This pandemic has shown us that the world needs Cuba's example more than ever. Cuba also needs the solidarity of activists and supporters around the world against the criminal U.S. blockade. Stay tuned for upcoming events and actions online at: vancubasolidarity.com or vancubavsblockade.org and find VCSC on Facebook @VanCubaSolidarity or Twitter and Instagram @VanCuba_VCSC, and FCAB-Van on Facebook and Twitter at @NoBloqueoVan

End the blockade on Cuba! Cuban Doctors Save Lives Around the World

By Janine Solanki

For people looking towards and fighting for a better world, Cuba has long been a beacon of hope. In today's uncertain times, while a global pandemic is being mishandled by the governments of the U.S., Canada, and other capitalist countries, Cuba again stands as an example and a leader. For many years Cuba has built a world-renowned healthcare system that puts people's health and well-being over profits. As Covid-19 spread, Cuba quickly began sending medical brigades to countries in need. Months later, Cuba has over 3000 medical professionals in 27 countries around the world.

As Cuba solidarity activists know well, when Cuba extends assistance beyond their borders it is not because they have an excess of resources – it is because Cuba operates on a principle of revolutionary internationalism and considers it their duty to help others in need. It is times like these where we can imagine how much more Cuba would be capable of without the U.S. blockade, which has intensified and targeted much needed shipments of medical supplies in recent months. With this in mind, in late March, the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) launched the Campaign to Support Cuba's Contribution to the World's Fight Against COVID-19. This has been both a fundraising campaign and a campaign to spread solidarity

with Cuba and awareness of Cuba's incredible contribution to the fight against Covid-19.

On May 9, the CNC organized an online webinar titled "Shining the Light on Cuba's Medical Solidarity." The event was chaired by two executive members of the CNC, Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, and Liz Hill, president of the Canadian Cuban Friendship Association – Toronto. The speakers included: her Excellency Josefina Vidal, the Cuban Ambassador to Canada; Niki Ashton, NDP member of Parliament for Churchill-Keewatinook Aski, Manitoba; Dr. John Kirk, Cuban researcher, and Professor, Dalhousie University; Dr. Isaac Saney, co-chair of the CNC and Professor, Dalhousie University; and Dr. Keith Ellis, chair of the CNC fundraising campaign and Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto. This great event boosted the CNC fundraising campaign's efforts, which has raised \$55,000 as of September 1, 2020 to support Cuba's global efforts to fight Covid-19.

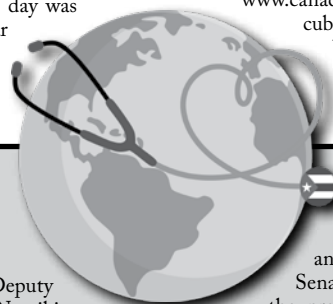
July 26 is celebrated as Cuba's National Rebellion Day, and here in Canada, this day was also marked by a webinar organized by the CNC. An event was co-hosted by two CNC executive members,



Moncada day online celebration with speakers & a cultural program, July 26, 2020.

Tamara Hansen and Julio Fonseca, who was also representing the Association of Cuban Residents of Canada. Speakers included her Excellency Ambassador Josefina Vidal; Luis Morlote, Cuban Parliamentarian and President of the Cuban Union of Writers and Artists (UNEAC); Mimut Ra Re Nuhu, co-chair for the National Network on Cuba (NNOC) in the U.S.; and Colette Lavergne, spokesperson of la Table de concertation et de solidarité Québec – Cuba. The event also featured cultural performances by Augusto Enriquez, world-renowned Cuban singer and composer; El Jones, who shared her powerful poetry; Kelly White, a Coast Salish Elder, activist, and organizer; and Sangre Morena, a dynamic musical duo.

For upcoming events and actions by the CNC and other Cuba solidarity groups in Canada please visit www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca or www.van-cubasolidarity.com or follow on Facebook @CanadianNetworkOnCuba or Twitter & Instagram @cdntwrkconcuba



The World Needs More Cuba! Online Global Audience to Discuss Cuba's Example

By Janine Solanki

2020 is becoming an infamous year, but this year has exposed how inhuman, brutal, racist, and profit-driven the United States capitalist system is. The U.S. government's response to Covid-19 has been more focused on running their economy than saving lives, and the U.S. quickly became the country with the most cases and deaths due to Covid-19.

When the world is struggling for justice and humanity, Cuba stands out brightly as an example for us all. Since the Coronavirus pandemic started, the U.S./Cuba Normalization Committee has hosted online webinars about Cuba and its revolutionary example. This has involved many organizations and individuals who came together to organize the International Conference for the Normalization of U.S./Cuba Relations in March 2020, which has been postponed to mid-November 2020.

May 19

On May 19, the webinar "Cuba, African and the Caribbean" was held, marking the birthday of revolutionary black liberation leader Malcolm X. This webinar included activists from grassroots groups, organizations, and struggles in the U.S. and Canada concerning the black community, academics and authors. International guests included: Ana Silvia Rodriguez, Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations;

Julia Imene-Chanduru, Deputy Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations; Fernando Gonzalez Llort, President of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), Cuban internationalist fighter in Angola, and one of the Cuban Five heroes; and Chris "Che" Mathhako, Second Deputy General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, and leading member of Friends of Cuba in South Africa (FOCUS).

June 16

On June 16, the US/Cuba Normalization Committee held a fascinating online discussion between Danny Glover, the famous American actor, film director, and social justice activist, and Cuban Ambassador to the U.S. José Ramón Cabañas. These two notable figures discussed Covid-19, Cuba, and the Saving Lives campaign, which calls for U.S.-Cuba-Canada collaboration in fighting Covid-19. As a follow-up to this conversation, the next webinar on June 24 was titled "Cuba contains Covid-19 - Saving lives at home and around the world". This was an interactive event with activists, medical professionals, and elected officials who are building the campaign for medical collaboration with Cuba, intending to save lives in this global pandemic. Presentations included: Dr. Abraham Vela, California graduate of the Latin American Medical School in Havana, Cuba; Dr. Andy Coates, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Psychiatry, Albany Medical College and critical care hospitalist on the Covid-19 team; Niki Ashton,

NDP member of Canadian parliament from Manitoba; and Sandy Pappas, Democrat State Senator from Minnesota. Following the presentations, participants broke off into action-focused groups to further discuss the topics of building support for medical collaboration among health and science professionals, passing action resolutions with elected officials, and media and digital outreach.

July 7

On July 7 the webinar posed the question, "Why are there no George Floyds in Cuba." This webinar explored the dynamics of the Cuban Revolution and anti-police brutality protests in the U.S., drawing examples from how Cuba has systematically and fundamentally countered racism. The program featured U.S.-based speakers, including participants in anti-police brutality and Black Lives Matter protests. Speakers from Cuba included the Third Secretary Yanet Pumariega Pérez and Counselor Rodney A. Gonzalez Maestrey from the Cuban Embassy in Washington DC. The webinar also had a dynamic question and answer period from participants joining in from North America and around the world.

These online webinars continue as a great forum to bring Cuba solidarity online to an international audience. For more information on upcoming webinars or the U.S./Cuba Normalization Conference please visit: www.us-cubanormalization.org or www.firethetime.net

19 YEARS OF U.S. WAR & OCCUPATION IN AFGHANISTAN

THE NEW TRUMP DEAL IS A SHAM

U.S. Colonial Ambitions Are Inhuman, Criminal & Illegal

By Alison Bodine

“The open lies of the Americans and their atrocities in Afghanistan every day has left us with a hole in our hearts, we’ve lost everything,” Masih Ur-Rahman, who lost his wife and seven children to a U.S. airstrike in Wardak, Afghanistan, in September 2019.

In October 2001, with the thin excuse of fighting a “war on terror,” one month after 9/11, the United States government and their allies, including Canada’s government, unleashed a brutal war and occupation on the people of Afghanistan. At least 160,000 Afghans have been killed, though this number is widely acknowledged as a conservative estimate (Brown University Costs of War). Over the last 19 years, the lives of people in Afghanistan have deteriorated across all basic indicators – and today, in 2020, Afghanistan has the world’s lowest life expectancy and highest infant mortality rate.

U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff announced in late February 2020 that a “deal” had been signed between the United States and the Taliban. The Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Zalmay Khalilzad, the United States Special Envoy for Afghanistan Reconciliation, have met multiple times with representatives from the Taliban – in an attempt to bring about an “inter-Afghan dialogue,” between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban.

After nearly two decades of war and occupation of Afghanistan, the Trump Administration is maneuvering to gain pre-election bonus points for a bogus

foreign policy deal. Simultaneously, the U.S. administration continues to build on its strategy to maintain a permanent U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. There is a lot of speculation about whether the various “sides” will ever uphold a deal. However, it must be asked what does this U.S. brokered “peace process” mean for the people of Afghanistan?

“Peace Process,” or Buying Time for Longer Occupation

The sham “deal” announced in February 2020, and the current “intra-Afghan” talks with the Taliban, like other negotiations that have been going on secretly and publicly for the last ten years, will go nowhere. With the United States pulling strings in the talks, and through their ongoing occupation, there continues to be no end in sight to the chaos and destruction in Afghanistan.

The people of Afghanistan have no reason to put any confidence in the government of the United States. After two decades of constant night-raids, bombings, firefights, sexual violence, and other forms of

state-terrorism, all packaged in the rhetoric of “fighting terrorism,” “bringing democracy” or “defending women’s rights,” the U.S. has no ground to stand on.

With a strategy designed to fail, the United States never even fulfilled its stated primary objective of overthrowing the Taliban. The presence of terrorist and extremist organizations has been steadily rising in the last 19 years of the country’s occupation by the U.S. and NATO. In 2020, the Taliban controls at least 20% of the country, while Afghanistan’s government controls 30%, and the rest, 50%, remains “uncontrolled” by either the Taliban or the U.S. puppet government.

Although there is a lot of discussion on the surface about a “timeline for withdrawal,” there is no evidence that the United States will ever do so. On August 14, 2020 the U.S.-backed President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani wrote a Washington Post editorial.



Protest in Kabul against the occupation of Afghanistan, October 6, 2017.



Afghan children look at a US soldier in the mountains of Nuristan Province, Afghanistan, December 19, 2009.

He wrote, “We thank the United States and our international partners for their continued support of our security forces, which will be critical as we move forward with the peace process.” The U.S. or NATO forces will not be “fully withdrawing” anytime soon.

As of September 2020, there are 8,600 U.S. troops in Afghanistan and around 8,000 NATO troops from other countries. The U.S. government has announced plans for a further reduction of troops in the coming month, as per the agreement with the Taliban in February 2020. However, this does not represent the total of foreign forces in Afghanistan – far from it. In 2018, there were 26,922 U.S. Department of Defense contractors operating in Afghanistan, and the withdrawal of these unnamed forces is not part of any U.S.-Taliban negotiations.

As investigative reporter Azmat Khan describes in her March 2 interview on Democracy Now, “[private contractors] allow the U.S. to continue the war while reducing its overt troop levels and sustaining that war with a sort of invisible army.” Paid mercenaries have been contracted for airstrikes and intelligence operations. The CIA sponsors some of these contract mercenaries. They have been accused of horrendous night-raids and murders and face no consequences for these war crimes. As Human Rights Watch reported in late October 2019, 14 times the “CIA-backed Afghan strike forces committed serious abuses between late 2017 and mid-2019.”

By August 2020, the number of U.S. troops is down to what it was when President Trump took office in 2017. However, over the last three years, a reduction in U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan has meant more, not less, war and occupation for Afghanistan. As the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan has decreased since 2017, the number of deadly airstrikes and drone bombing has escalated. There have been nearly 8,000 airstrikes in 2019 – the most recorded since the U.S./Canada/NATO invasion in 2001 (Bureau of Investigative Reporting).

Though the latest version of a U.S.-Taliban “deal” may make claims about withdrawing the U.S. and foreign forces or closing military

bases, this does not represent a change in the United States’ strategy in Afghanistan. Even if there is some drawdown to troops in the coming months, it is only a change of tactics. Maneuvers such as this are a dog and pony show directed at the people of the United States. It is a public relations campaign for the Trump Administration. When the Taliban, the Afghan government, and the United States sit down at the same table, President Trump will claim a foreign policy victory – and try to make it a significant accomplishment for the coming election on November 3, 2020.

“War on Terror” or War of Terror?

President Trump does not attempt to conceal his disdain for Afghanistan’s people and those killed through U.S. drones, airstrikes, and night raids. In his speech on U.S. strategy in Afghanistan in 2017, he said, “We are not nation-building again; we are killing terrorists.” Twelve years earlier, Canadian Forces General Rick Hillier said very similar words explaining, “We are the Canadian Forces, and our job is to be able to kill people,” and describing Afghan people as “detestable murderers and scumbags.”

Based on nearly two decades of war and occupation, it seems as though anyone in Afghanistan could be considered a “terrorist” and a “detestable murderer.” In Nangarhar Province of Afghanistan, thirty people were killed by a U.S. drone bombing while harvesting pine nuts on September 19, 2019. A few days later, in Helmand Province, at least forty people were killed in a brutal raid at a wedding, carried out by the U.S. supported Afghan forces. These are only two horrific examples of thousands that show the sheer terror that people in Afghanistan have lived under for almost twenty years.

Statistics from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) demonstrate just how difficult life has become

for people in Afghanistan – and how it continues to worsen, especially for women and children, who are the most vulnerable in society. Out of 37 million people, 14 million need immediate humanitarian assistance, compared to 9.4 million people in 2019. 2.4 million people face food insecurity at a “crisis” or “emergency” level. In 2001, at the time of the U.S. invasion, 30% of people in Afghanistan lived below the poverty line; by 2017, this number was 54.5% (World Fact Book).

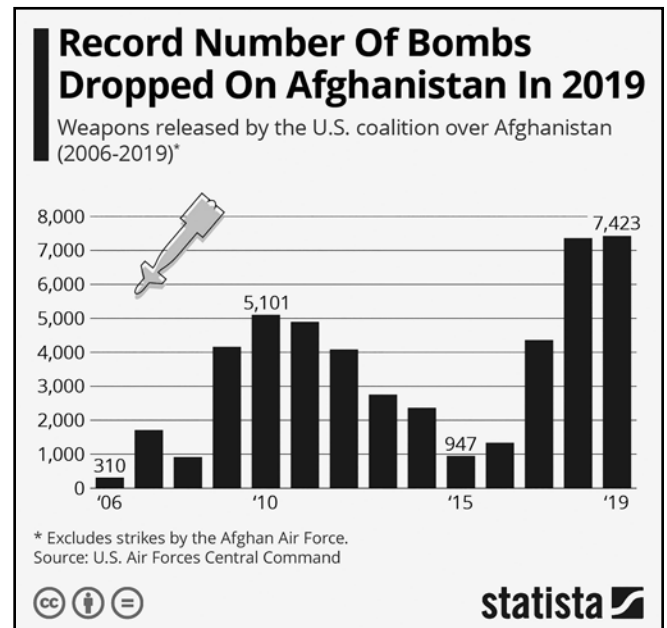
Afghanistan now produces 82% of the world’s opium – in 2001, opium production was nearly eradicated under the Taliban. Opium farmers in Afghanistan report that they have taken up farming opium to pay for basic needs, food, medical expenses, and debt. (UNODC and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Afghanistan Opium Survey 2017). All of this is proof that the lives of people in Afghanistan are deteriorating.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also hit Afghanistan and brought the further crisis to a healthcare system wrecked by 19 years of U.S./NATO war. Due to the pandemic, Save the Children estimated that 7.3 million Afghan children will face food shortages. The most recent report from the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) stated, “that an additional eight million people will fall into poverty, pushing the poverty rate from 55 percent to 80 percent.”

This devastation is what the U.S./NATO war and occupation has brought to the people of Afghanistan.

Turning Afghanistan into a Permanent Military Base

Every honest rational person understands that from every aspect the occupation of



Afghanistan occupation is negative and gloomy. So, if the United States and its allies, including Canada, did not invade and occupy Afghanistan to fight terrorists, overthrow the Taliban, or improve people's lives, explicitly women and children, in Afghanistan, why is the United States there?

In 2020 the Washington Post released a collection of documents known as the Afghanistan Papers. They consist of previously classified memos and reports related to the work of SIGAR – the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. These papers paint one general picture of the U.S. invasion, war, and occupation of Afghanistan – that the U.S. government has been lying about their actions and intentions in Afghanistan the entire time.

For example, the United States government claimed that they were in Afghanistan fighting the Taliban for harbouring terrorists. However, as summarized by the Washington Post, “The Lessons Learned interviews [from the Afghanistan Papers] also reveal how U.S. military commanders struggled to articulate who they were fighting, let alone why.

Was al-Qaeda the enemy, or the Taliban? Was Pakistan a friend or an adversary? What about the Islamic State and the bewildering array of foreign jihadists, let alone the warlords on the CIA's payroll? According to the documents, the U.S. government never settled on an answer.”

As the Afghanistan papers demonstrate, the United States never intended to defeat the Taliban, only to destabilize Afghanistan to justify their continued presence. In short, there was never an apparent “enemy” for the U.S. government to defeat in Afghanistan because that is not the objective of their continued occupation.

The U.S. strategy for Afghanistan is permanent war, occupation, and chaos, which allows the U.S. government to turn Afghanistan into a permanent military base to hold a strategic presence and advantage in the region of South and Central Asia against Russia, China, and Iran.

The New Era of War and Occupation

For almost the last two decades, the people of Afghanistan, as with the people of Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and other countries facing the U.S. war machine, have been paying a horrible price for the deepening capitalist crisis in the United States and other imperialist countries. Faced with economic crashes and a falling average rate of profit, countries such as the United States and Canada are forced

to find new markets, resources, and labour. The decaying capitalist-imperialist countries are in confrontation with other growing world powers, mainly Russia and China. The strategic location of Afghanistan makes it the perfect battleground, politically and economically against adversaries.

On top of Afghanistan's rich mineral and gas resources and access to new trade markets, the United States, above all, is looking to maintain control in Afghanistan as one of the steps towards regaining hegemony in Central Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. Because not only is Afghanistan situated between the



Over 40 civilians were killed at a wedding during a raid by Afghan special forces and supported by U.S. air strikes in Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province, on September 23, 2019.

Middle East and the Asian continent, it also shares a border with Iran.

In 1979, the Iranian people overthrew the U.S.-backed Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and kicked Western imperialist interests out of the country. Since then, Iran has been an example of resistance and independence from the United States for people throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Therefore, it is the main obstacle to U.S. hegemony in the region. Thus, bringing Afghanistan to the submission brings the United States one step closer to destroying its ultimate target in the Middle East and North Africa – the independent, defiant, and resilient people of Iran and its government.

This economic and political necessity has driven the United States on their murderous warpath for the last 19 years – and fuels the new era of war and occupation, which began with the U.S./Canada/NATO invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

U.S./NATO Out of Afghanistan Now! End the Occupation Now!

October 7, 2020 will mark the 19 years since the U.S./Canada/NATO invasion of Afghanistan. Since then, untold misery has been unleashed upon the people of Afghanistan. Three million people have fled Afghanistan in search of a better life, many only to find further hardships in refugee

camps in surrounding countries or inhuman camps on European islands. As one refugee said brilliantly and truthfully in a 2015 interview with Al Jazeera News, “I AM NOT INTERESTED TO GO TO EUROPE, EUROPE IS NOT BETTER FOR ME. AFGHANISTAN IS BETTER FOR ME, BUT THEY TOOK AFGHANISTAN AWAY FROM ME. THEY DO NOT LET ME BE IN AFGHANISTAN.”

However, the people of Afghanistan have not given in to U.S. forces in the country. They continue to resist under U.S. occupation. For centuries Afghanistan has been known as the “graveyard of empires” for their powerful history of resistance. As people living in the United States and Canada, we owe the Afghan people our active support and struggle against this brutal and unjust war.

The war in Afghanistan has cost the U.S. an estimated 2 trillion dollars (Brown University Cost of War Project). There is no question that the taxpayer money should have been used not for war, but for healthcare, education, housing in the United States – as the devastation caused by capitalist mismanagement of the pandemic in the United States has cruelly exposed. In total, more than 775,000 U.S. troops have been deployed to Afghanistan, fighting in a brutal war that the United States government never intends on ending. On top of the deep psychological trauma experienced, 2,300 U.S. soldiers were killed and nearly 21,000 wounded. (U.S. Department of Defense). 158 soldiers from Canada also lost their lives – all for war and occupation that has destroyed the lives of millions of people in Afghanistan.

The people of Afghanistan do not need a useless Trump “deal.” The poor, working, and oppressed people in the United States do not need one either. The people of Afghanistan have a right to determine their own future, without the interference of the United States, Canada, or any other imperialist country. This is a fundamental right of all nations, self-determination. They also have a right to be given reparations by the United States, NATO, and Canada for the destruction that this terrible war and occupation has caused.

From the United States and Canada, it is our responsibility and human duty to build an effective anti war movement to bring the US, Canada, and all imperialist troops home now, whether in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria or anywhere around the world. At the same time, we must also unite, organize, and build a movement to shut down all U.S. bases, not only in Afghanistan but also in the whole Middle East and North Africa, and around the world.

Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette

Over five years ago, a Saudi-led coalition, with the support of the United States and other imperialist countries such as England, France, and Germany, started a brutal bombing campaign and a military intervention against Yemen. The goal of this criminal and unholy coalition was to reinstate the puppet leader, deposed Yemeni president Mansour Hadi. Thus, an internal dispute in Yemen became an international military intervention.

Today as the world fights against the Covid-19 global pandemic, the Saudi-led coalition continues its bombing and military campaign on Yemen. On Wednesday, July 15, 2020, a small wedding gathering at a home in Yemen became the scene of another gruesome massacre by the Saudi-led coalition. According to MintPress News, "At least 31 women and children were killed, and dozens were injured when at least one Saudi warplane dropped a bomb on the Marei family home in the Almasaeifeh District, situated in the Al-Hazm Directorate of the rich-oil province of Al-Jawf. Marzuq Marei told reporters that the wedding was publicly announced, and they specifically informed the Saudi Coalition of the time and place of the ceremony to avoid an attack."

War Devastated Yemen

Since the start of the war in March 2015, the people of Yemen have been living under constant bombing and airstrikes. Yemen's quality of life has quickly deteriorated into what the United Nations (UN) calls "the world's worst humanitarian crisis." A UN-commissioned study on Yemen in 2019, conducted by the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver, gave a grim image of the worsening humanitarian situation in the country:

"The impacts of conflict in Yemen are devastating—with nearly a quarter of a million people killed directly by fighting and indirectly through lack of access to food, health services, and infrastructure. Of the dead, 60 percent are children under the age of five. The long-term impacts of conflict are vast and place it among the most destructive conflicts since the end of the Cold War ended. The conflict has already set back human development by 21 years."

The war on Yemen has destroyed houses, schools, roads, markets, hospitals, water tanks, sanitation facilities, mosques, and other vital infrastructure in the country. According to a press release by the international charity Oxfam on August 18, 2020, "Medical and water infrastructure in Yemen has been hit during air raids almost 200 times since the conflict started more than five years ago."

The continuation of Yemen is aggravating healthcare system. Yemen's hospitals clinics have been of the war. Those that

the Saudi war on an already collapsed Over half of and healthcare destroyed as a result remain open have

CANADA HANDS OFF YEMEN!



STOP ARMING SAUDI ARABIA!

extremely limited doctors, nurses, medicine. Hospitals trying to cope with cholera, and now pandemic.

The burden on system gravely children in U N I C E F that "2 million in Yemen

resources and lack equipment, and are stretched malnutrition, the Covid-19

the healthcare impacts Yemen estimates children are acutely

malnourished, including 325,000 children under the age of five who suffer from severe acute malnutrition and are fighting to survive." According to the same statement, some children find themselves forced to work or beg to try to get food for themselves and their families. To make the matter worst, Saudi Arabia continues its sea, land, and air blockade on Yemen. In a country that urgently needs unhindered access to fuel, medicine, food, and humanitarian aid, the Saudi blockade is criminal and must be lifted immediately.

Yemen - Victim of Imperialist Expansion

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and their coalition would not carry out the war on Yemen without the full support of the United States and its imperialist allies. Saudi Arabia justifies the intervention in Yemen as necessary to bring back legitimacy and stability to the country and counter Iran's meddling in the region. The mainstream media labels Yemen's Houthis, and any Yemenis resisting the Saudi-led aggression on their land, as "Iranian puppets." Of course, it is easier for them to dismiss and justify the killing, death, and destruction that the Saudi-led intervention has caused in Yemen under the guise of fighting the "evil Iranian proxies." Interestingly, Al-Monitor news on December 5, 2019, quoted Gerald Feierstein, former U.S. Ambassador to Yemen under Obama, saying, "The Houthis have never been proxies of Iran. They never followed Iranian leadership guidance."

The Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen is an imperialist war for domination and hegemony in the region. The goal is to smash the democratic aspiration of the Yemeni people for self-determination by intervening in a domestic conflict to impose a puppet government to serve the imperialist interest in the Middle East region. The U.S. and its allies couldn't afford the idea of a free and independent Yemen. They are as responsible as Saudi Arabia and its coalition for the atrocities the war creates in Yemen.

The United States has offered political and military support to Saudi Arabia since day one of the airstrikes on Yemen. The U.S. continues to provide Saudi Arabia with arms and military equipment, as per the U.S. Department of State website, "The U.S. has \$126.6 billion in active government-to-government sales cases with Saudi Arabia under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) system." In addition to selling them weaponry, the U.S. military proudly boasts images on its website of their soldiers training with Royal Saudi Air Forces at military bases in the Saudi Kingdom. Saudi military pilots are also

Continued on page 37



THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE ASKING THE DEVOTEES OF CIVIL RIGHTS, "WHEN WILL YOU BE SATISFIED?" WE CAN NEVER BE SATISFIED AS LONG AS THE NEGRO IS THE VICTIM OF THE UNSPEAKABLE HORRORS OF POLICE BRUTALITY... WE CANNOT BE SATISFIED AS LONG AS THE NEGRO'S BASIC MOBILITY IS FROM A SMALLER GHETTO TO A LARGER ONE... NO, NO, WE ARE NOT SATISFIED, AND WE WILL NOT BE SATISFIED UNTIL "JUSTICE ROLLS DOWN LIKE WATERS, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A MIGHTY STREAM."

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. - FROM "I HAVE A DREAM", AUGUST 28, 1963, AT THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL, WASHINGTON D.C.



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"WHEN A WOMAN KISSES ANOTHER WOMAN THE WORLD DOES NOT END."

*An Interview with Cuban lesbian activist
Isel Calzadilla Acosta
by Radio Siboney*

Isel Calzadilla Acosta is a beautiful woman from Santiago, a passionate woman. She wiped away tears and saved lives as a nurse. Since the beginning of this century, she has presided over the women's group Las Isabelas. She decided to come out of the closet, fight for her rights. She decided to bet on her country, on its justice, on a more inclusive and more contemporary society.

Her experiences have been shared in Cuba and the world, in forums, theaters, communities, in life. A happy person is a guarantee of a happy country. Isel shows us that when a woman kisses another woman, the world does not end. On this day in May, she is our guest for our conversation against all forms of homophobia.

I have always believed that happiness has no recipes, but when it comes lesbians, women who have another woman as a partner, some are scared, they are offended. How then to be yourself while breaking so many barriers?

Assuming yourself as a woman who loves another woman is a great challenge: you must fill yourself with a lot of courage. First, understand how you are and who you are, and then face all prejudices from your own home, school, work ... Breaking ground is transgressing our macho, patriarchal and homophobic culture; but there is no other way for those of us who feel love for another person of the same sex, for those of us who believe in love between two people.



Isel Calzadilla Acosta in Santiago de Cuba

How did the idea of forming the group Las Isabelas come about? What are your main goals?

Las Isabelas emerged on December 18, 2000 out of the necessity to learn about our sexual orientation and our rights. I took it upon myself to ask if there was a group of lesbian women to connect with, and after investigating and going to community meeting places and not getting any affirmative answer, I decided to form the group to support each other. Thus, in 2002 I wrote to the Cuban National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), to Dr. Mariela Castro, to ask for advice and training, and they gave me support from the beginning.

Our objectives are to fight against discrimination and intolerance against lesbians, to fight for our sexual rights, and to give visibility to lesbian women. By making our group visible in different settings in our province, Cuba, and the world, we are contributing to the development of a diverse sex education.

What anecdotes can you tell us about the numerous occasions that you or the group have approached the community, or have crossed borders, sharing your experiences?

There are many anecdotes from over the years, but I will refer to one from an LGBT panel that we developed with educators from day-care centres in our province. Students and teachers showed great interest in learning about this topic. After showing them who we are and sharing our experiences, they came over to thank us for addressing the subject, and explained to us how they were able to understand many things that until that moment they considered taboo.

Taking my experiences as an activist outside of Cuba, to meetings in Mexico, Peru, the United States, and Spain, to showcase the LGBT community in Cuba, its achievements and challenges, has been of great importance.

Cuban society approved a new constitution that guarantees the protection of Cubans against various forms of discrimination, including



Artwork by @Archer_Eve on Instagram

those resulting from sexual orientation and gender identity (Article 42). However, we know that it is not enough. How long until a relationship between two women or two men is not met with negative comments, is not a matter of public censorship, is recognized as an inalienable right of each person? Fears, ignorance, stubbornness, fundamentalisms?

We must continue educating the population by all means possible, to enjoy the rights guaranteed in our constitution, since harmful prejudices and taboos persist. It is very important to continue developing educational work with people and institutions.

There are fundamentalist, religious, conservative beliefs that insist on preventing the recognition of the rights of our community in Cuba to form the family we want, to get married, to obtain the right to reproductive assistance. Everything that is out of what they call "traditional family," they do not recognize. I believe that everyone has the right to their beliefs, but without attacking the rights of the other.

Do you hold your partner's hand in public? Are you a happy person?

I show my affection and love by holding my partner's hand; but at times we are censored for this. Heterosexuals, on the other hand, can do it freely.

We are happy loving another woman, and by being reciprocal, our life flows in a better way. As Dr. Mariela Castro said, "It is not about taking rights away from those who already have them, it is giving them to those who do not have them."

There is a debt to our community that has been discriminated against due to homophobia, transphobia and lesbophobia. It is time to give us back everything we are entitled to as human beings.

Reprinted from: www.radiosiboney.icrt.cu

Cuba's Revolutionary Internationalism: Saving Lives Around the World

By Tamara Hansen

On June 30, 2020 Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) and Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver jointly organized a webinar titled, “Despite the U.S. Blockade Cuba’s Internationalism Leading the Way.” Tamara Hansen, the coordinator of VCSC and executive member of the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) was one the speakers at this successful event. Tamara is an author, journalist, and member of the Fire This Time newspaper editorial board. She spoke about Cuba’s revolutionary internationalism. Below we are reprinting her talk from the event.

Thank you very much to participants and speakers for joining us here today. In the face of this U.S. blockade, Cuba has earned such an important leadership role in the world, in the fight against Covid-19 and through their example of revolutionary internationalism over the last 60 years of the Cuban revolution.

I wanted to start my talk with a José Martí quote, which I think really summarizes our current situation, which is that “homeland is humanity” or “patria es humanidad.” For those of you who might not know, José Martí is Cuba’s national hero, poet, writer, and an anti-colonial revolutionary. He was killed in battle during Cuba’s war for independence against Spanish colonialism.

When José Martí said, “homeland is



humanity,” he really meant that humanity is where we find our place in the world. That we should not be divided by nations and borders, but that we should truly find a place for ourselves in the struggle alongside all of humanity.

In the last 60 years of the Cuban revolution, Cuba has really exemplified this. In fact, May of this year marked one hundred and twenty-five years since José Martí’s death in combat, and in those last 125 years, José Martí has inspired the Cuban people in many fights for independence and many internationalist causes.

Cuban medical internationalism in the fight against Covid-19

As has been mentioned, the most significant part of Cuba’s revolutionary internationalism today is the over 3,000 Cuban doctors currently working in 29 countries all over the world to fight this global pandemic of Covid-19. We are so inspired by the work that they are doing in bringing free healthcare to many communities where it is not accessible and really see the hope that they are presenting. This is happening not just in other so-called third world countries, but even countries like Italy

and Andorra that are in, you know, the so-called first world. They still count on Cuba in this time of global pandemic to fight the crisis.

While Covid-19 is a new virus, Cuba’s revolutionary internationalism – and even Cuba’s revolutionary internationalist doctors – are not new. This project began fifty-seven years ago when Cuba sent its first group of internationalist doctors, nurses, dentists, and medical technicians to Algeria in 1963.

But doctors are not all that Cuba has offered humanity, and that’s what I wanted to talk about today. Cuba’s revolutionary internationalism is inspiring us through its doctors’ work today, but this is not all that Cuba’s revolutionary internationalism is. So, I wanted to talk a little bit about those lessons.

Cuban internationalism in the fight against imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid

Revolutionary internationalism is really the foundation of Cuba’s foreign policy. And this doesn’t mean that Cuba is necessarily fighting to create revolutions in other countries. It demonstrates that Cuba believes in the idea that “homeland is humanity” and that Cuba’s job is to fight for all human beings’ health and well-being, no matter where they live. Of course, with a special focus on poor, working, and oppressed people worldwide. Revolutionary internationalism is sending



Cuban developed literacy campaign “Yes, I Can!” used by the the Aboriginal adult literacy program in Brewarrina, New South Wales, Australia.



The Cuban doctors medical brigade with local medical staff at a hospital in Turin, Italy.

responsibility whatsoever.” Here, Comandante Fidel Castro, leader of the Cuban Revolution, talks about how the racist South African apartheid army was advancing on Angola and how Angola’s people called on Cuba to help defend their independence against this racist regime and its invasion.

In fact, Cuba did take up the call, despite not having any obligation, but really feeling a human responsibility. Fidel sent over 55,000 soldiers to Angola. He remained in Cuba, spending days and nights helping to strategize the battle happening half a world away in Africa. These plans were victorious, and the victory against the South African apartheid army at

Cuito Cuanavale severely weakened the apartheid regime. Eventually, years later, in 1991, apartheid fell in South Africa.

While in Cuba on July 26, 1991, as president of the African National Congress at the time, Nelson Mandela said, “The Cuban people hold a special place in the heart of the people of Africa. The Cuban internationalists have contributed African independence, freedom, and justice, unparalleled for its principles and selfless character. From its earliest days, the Cuban Revolution has also been a source of inspiration to all freedom-loving people. We admire the Cuban people’s sacrifices in maintaining their independence and sovereignty in the face of the vicious imperialist-orchestrated campaign to destroy the impressive gain made in the Cuban Revolution. We too, want to control our own destiny.”

Cuban revolutionary internationalism in the fight against illiteracy & illness

That’s one of the beautiful examples of Cuba’s revolutionary internationalism in terms of sending soldiers and fighters, but again, in an entirely different context than U.S. imperialism.

We can also talk about the highly successful Cuba’s literacy campaign. In 1959, the Cuban Revolution decided that it needed to fight to create a very literate population that could read and write, which did not exist in Cuba before the revolution. So, they fought to build a campaign to eradicate illiteracy within

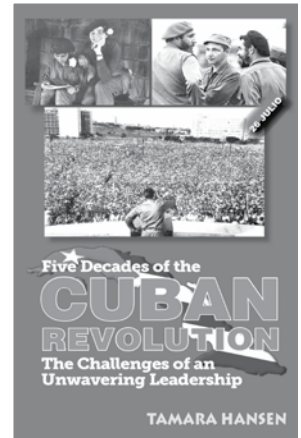
Cuba, sending thousands of young people, mostly from the city, mostly teenagers, to rural communities in Cuba to teach families how to read. And in only one year, in 1961, Cuba was declared free of illiteracy. This was a huge and very moving campaign, which has been covered in hundreds of important books and works all around the world. If you haven’t seen the documentary “Maestra,” by U.S. filmmaker Catherine Murphy, I highly recommend it.

From this literacy campaign, Cuba also developed a literacy method called the “Yo, sí puedo” method, or “Yes, I can.” This literacy method has not just stayed in Cuba. It has also been a part of Cuba’s contribution to revolutionary internationalism. The “Yo, sí puedo” literacy method has been taken by Cuban teachers to countries throughout the world, but it has also been developed by people in those countries to teach literacy in their own communities.

For example, here in Canada, there’s a program called ArrowMight, which is an

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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.

April 2010, paperback, \$10.00

314 pages, illustrated,

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adaptation of the “Yo, sí puedo” method for indigenous communities in Canada. It is widely used across Canada in many indigenous education centers, including the Squamish Education Center in North Vancouver. These programs integrate traditional knowledges of Indigenous people in a pan-Indigenous lens to inspire people who may have suffered from residential school experiences or may not trust colonial educational institutions to convince them of getting involved in their own literacy and their own learning. It’s a remarkably interesting and exciting program, inspired by Cuba.

Researchers at the University of New England in Australia, Bob Boughton, and Deborah Durnan, have been doing more research on the use of the “Yo, sí puedo” method in Australia and internationally. And they say, “Since it was first trialed in Haiti in 2000, Cuba’s Yo, Si Puedo model for mounting mass adult literacy campaigns has mobilized over six million people in twenty-nine countries to acquire basic literacy.”

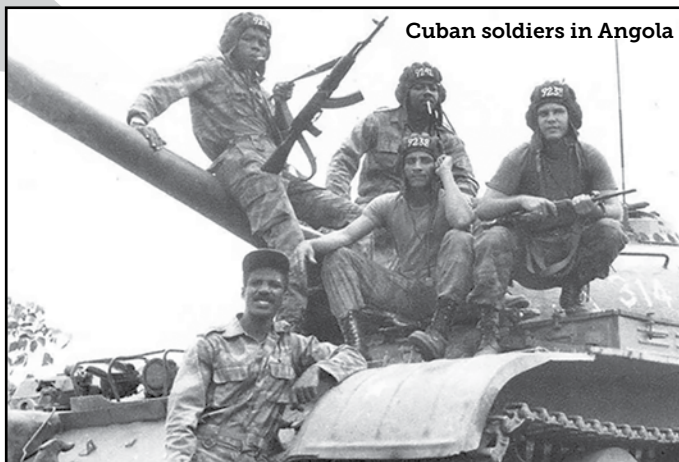
Very excitingly, in 2021, next year, Cuba will celebrate 60 years since the triumph of the literacy campaign. We’re looking forward to celebrating with Cuba the significant victory of this campaign, not only within Cuba but also worldwide.

We encourage you to make sure you stay in touch. Make sure you’re following Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba on Twitter, Facebook, and that you get signed up to our email list to hear about our plans and projects for celebrating this important anniversary.

Speakers tonight have already mentioned that Cuba’s Henry Reeve International Medical Brigades are in 29 countries worldwide, with over 3,000 medical professionals helping in the fight against Covid-19. But it should be mentioned that Covid-19 is not the first time that the Henry Reed Medical Brigades have taken on an international pandemic. In the early 2010s, when West Africa was facing the Ebola crisis, Cuba sent doctors that were again internationally recognized, even in mainstream news, for their amazing work. We saw articles from Time magazine “Why Cuba is so good at Fighting Ebola” or in the Telegraph from the U.K., “Cuban

doctors take a leading role in the fight against Ebola,” and these articles were reflecting the amazing work of Cuban doctors.

It is also important to mention Cuba’s work in Haiti for many years before and after the earthquake; Cuba’s work in Pakistan also after the earthquake there;



and how Cuban doctors and other medical professionals have played an important leading role in providing free healthcare to people in need.

Building solidarity with Cuba

So why is this important today? As I conclude, I just want to say, I think that it’s important that we consider that right now during this pandemic, a lot of people are questioning how life is going to look once we are going back to normal and whether the normal that existed before is the normal that should exist after this Covid-19 pandemic. We see this in the Black Lives Matter movement and Black and Brown folks’ remarkable struggle in the United States against police brutality. We see this again in the role that Cuba

is playing internationally with its doctors. The world is crying and asking, ‘isn’t there a better way to do things?’ I think that the answer is ‘yes!’

We want to look for examples of how we can organize a better society, put humanity before corporate profits, put humanity before corporations, and put humanity before capitalism and imperialism. Socialist Cuba is a shining light, again, not only within the gains made by the Cuban revolution for the Cuban people but in Cuba’s role as revolutionary socialist internationalists.

Cuba’s revolutionary internationalism demonstrates that with health, education, proper nourishment, and housing, new liberation fighters will be born, and more people will be able to educate themselves and conclude that the people of the world deserve a better world


and a better future.

We have a role to play as people involved in the Cuba solidarity movement, or folks who are just coming to their first event about Cuba, to start talking about these issues. We should force the mainstream media in our country to talk more about these issues, and we need to spread that information on social media. We must defend Cuba’s amazing revolutionary internationalism, which is coming under profoundly severe attack today by the U.S. government.


I want to thank everybody for joining us today on this webinar. I’m looking forward to a great discussion.

Thank you. ¡Viva Cuba!

Follow Tamara on Twitter: @THans01



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

A Talk by Venezuelan Vice-Minister Carlos Ron



The U.S. Target is our Independence and Our Natural Resources



Carlos Ron is the Venezuela's Vice-Minister of foreign relations for North America & director of the Simón Bolívar Institute for Peace and Solidarity among Peoples (ISB). This talk is an excerpt from a presentation given by Carlos Ron at "U.S./Canada Hands Off Venezuela!" webinar organized by the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign on June 25, 2020.

Venezuela is a country that has been under siege for the last 20 years. I think that the reason for this siege is mostly based on two things. First, we have the largest oil reserves in the world. So, there's a lot of interest in controlling Venezuela's resources. Not only because of the obvious, taking that oil and using it, also because, by controlling Venezuela's oil, you also get to control or to affect the rest of the oil market throughout the world. And that's something that we have to consider important right now because it's no longer just about taking the oil, it's about controlling the businesses. It's about the U.S. getting an opportunity to have access to our oil, or to oil markets, now that the U.S. has become, you know, a significant producer.

This is also our idea about Canada's sanctions and support for U.S. intervention in Venezuela. U.S. sanctions prohibiting U.S. refineries from importing Venezuelan oil have opened up space for Canadian oil to be used. And that's opened up a market for the heavy crude produced in Alberta, which is now taking over what used to be Venezuela's natural market. There are interests in both countries that are very important that are involved in this

process of dismantling Venezuela's oil industry.

The United States is also attacking Venezuela because of the political aspect, in the sense that Venezuela is a lively participatory democracy. Within our democracy, we have asserted that it is not only okay just to participate, but also, you have to be the transformation itself. You are the protagonist. You're also part of this whole process.

By the end of this year, we should have our 26th election in 21 years. This demonstrates that our democracy is a model that contradicts everything that the United States has been preaching for Latin America in the last half-century. Venezuela has supported regional integration and regional sovereignty. And we have supported the idea that we should have relations with other parts of the world. I mean, we don't believe in this unipolar world only controlled by the United States. We believe that Latin America should become a pole ourselves and have relations with Europe, Asia, China, and Russia. This is a democratization of the way that geopolitics is currently set up.

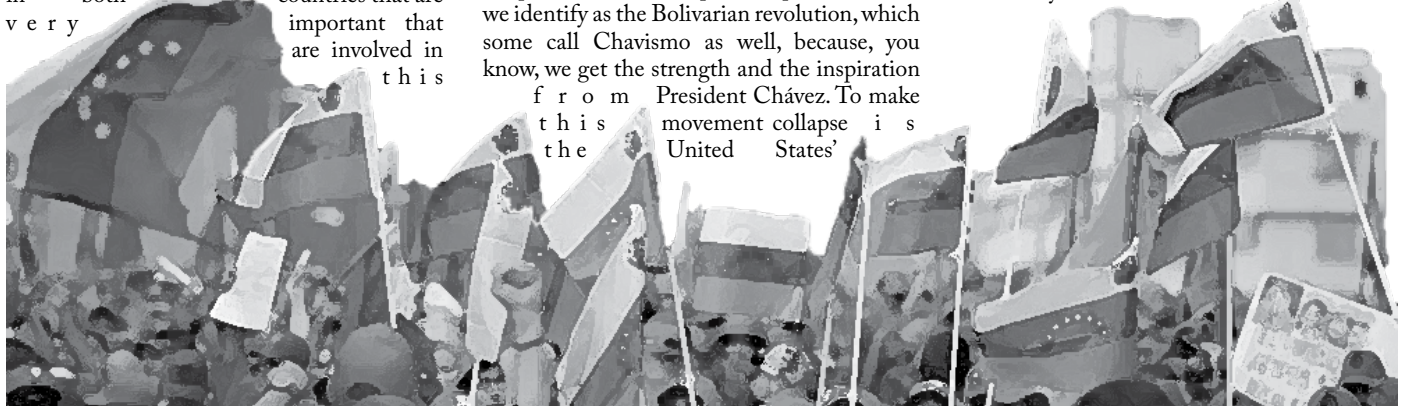
So, Venezuela has these two characteristics: our independent political policy and all these resources that have made it a target for the United States.

Right now, we're in the middle of this strong U.S. campaign, which aims to overthrow President Maduro's government, eliminating the possibilities of this political process, which we identify as the Bolivarian revolution, which some call Chavismo as well, because, you know, we get the strength and the inspiration from President Chávez. To make this movement collapse is the United States'

aim, to erase this region's movement. That's why we have been under such a severe attack at this point.

Particularly in the last couple of months, you could see a spike in the attacks. I mean, these attacks are not new. There was a coup attempt against President Chávez in 2002, and there have been many other attacks since then. But everything became even more vicious after President Chávez died because the opposition and the United States both believed that it would be easier to take over the country when President Chávez was not there. Eventually, elections and other processes started showing them that was not true. As a continuation of the Bolivian revolution, President Maduro remains strong and supported by the people.

So, they decided that they had to find ways of destabilizing more. There was violence in the streets by the right-wing in 2014 and 2017, and now we get to a point where right now after the Trump administration comes in, there's even a more vicious attack because of the people that are running the show. I mean, we just saw the book by Bolton. I am not telling you to read it, but it is interesting to see some of the descriptions he has of the relationship with Venezuela. What you see there are these people who are trying to live out their Cold War frustrations and eradicate everything that's left of the left in the world. You know, they believe that this is the point in time where this can be done, especially because we are in the middle of a pandemic. And they are convinced that a



we cannot handle fighting a pandemic and fighting U.S. pressure at the same time.

Now, to add to this, to see how deep U.S. pressure has become, the Trump administration recognizes a government in Venezuela that doesn't exist. A man [Juan Guaidó] stood up in a corner on January 23 of last year and said, "I am the president of Venezuela." With no legal backing for this, with no popular support. So, this man now claims to be President because he has support from the United States. You can read the process, or at least what Bolton describes as the process, to reach this was. They were convinced that if they created this idea of this parallel government, then the Bolivarian government of Venezuela would definitely collapse because countries from around the world would jump to recognize the parallel government. Then all of a sudden, we would be lost. Of course, not recognizing President Maduro as the legitimate President of Venezuela allows the United States to implement coercive measures. They believed that this parallel government would receive recognition from all these other countries, and then basically, the government would eventually collapse.

This has not happened. A year has gone by, and Juan Guaidó, this man who proclaimed himself President, is still not President. He is actually not even President of the National Assembly anymore, which he used to be last year. But he has the support of some countries. These are some countries in Latin America, countries like Canada, and some European countries. These are the usual suspects. These are the people that follow the lead of the United States, or they are very conservative. In Latin America, for example, you have the recognition by Bolsonaro [Brazil], Duque [Colombia], who are right-wing governments. But they never tell you about the other side. There are 130 countries or more that do recognize President Maduro as the President; the United Nations recognizes our government as Venezuela's legitimate government.

This is interesting because the idea of the United States has been, through all of this time, with their sanctions and with their actions against Venezuela, with the blockade, that they will eventually produce so much suffering in the Venezuelan population that the Venezuelan people will somehow go out in the streets and overthrow the government or ask for military intervention or ask for the military to turn against the government. The U.S. government is trying to find a way

to produce some sort of altercation that would end up deposing Maduro. Their point of honour is that Maduro leaves, that he's no longer President. They understand that since President Chávez said that Maduro was the person he trusted as his successor if something happened to him, Maduro has been a unifying force within Chavismo. The key aspect here, what they really want to get at, is they want to destroy the unity. They know they can't deal with Chavismo and the Bolivarian revolution as a political force, so they want to promote this division. So, the United States has been targeting Maduro

Departments of Defense's investigations and their own information, and when you look at the United Nations information, most of the flow of illegal drugs to the United States does not come from the Caribbean, they come from the Pacific. This shows it doesn't make sense that you have such a massive operation in the Caribbean if you aim to curb drug trafficking.

The bottom line is when you add all these things up - what the U.S. government is aiming for is the government of President Maduro, an overthrow, a resignation, anything that will get him out of power so that they can shift the dynamics in Venezuela and take control of the resources, of the companies, of everything.

This is what we're facing. We're facing a criminal group acting on behalf of the United States for the United States' interests. We're facing this massive pressure campaign with all types of diplomatic, economic, political, and all these types of attacks, a hybrid war against Venezuela. And we're trying to defend our legitimate government that we voted for.

This might seem like a very negative scenario in a sense. But, the positive side of this is that the Venezuelan people, despite all the hardships that we have faced during the last year or so, despite all this campaign, despite all the attacks on the economy, despite all of this, there's a consciousness here that we have to defend our liberty, that we have to defend our independence, that we have to defend our democratic system. That we have to vote because we have elections this year, and one of the things they're trying to do is block that. I mean, you have Guaidó saying that the National Assembly could run after its period because, you know, they want elections where the

OAS [Organization of American States] can come in and make the same mess they did in Bolivia [overthrowing Evo Morales' victory in a legitimate election] and overthrow a government. Even part of the opposition is now standing up in favor of new elections.

The majority of Venezuelan people want to maintain democracy, want to continue deepening this revolutionary process. With Covid-19, we even have a great opportunity of seeing the importance of having a strong state or having a healthcare system or having an education system or having public housing policies because that's what's going to defend people in light of any of these troubles. Whether they be human-made, like the sanctions, or whether they be something like Covid-19. We are standing strong.

*Follow Carlos Ron on Twitter:
@CarlosJRonVE*



Top: US President Trump with Juan Guaidó at the White House on February 5, 2020 in Washington, DC
Bottom: Documents of the former US special forces soldiers captured in Venezuela in a failed coup attack



specifically.

So, you hear about this indictment. You hear about this attempted incursion. You hear about this military operation. You hear about this vast military operation in the Caribbean, where today there were ships trying to cross over Venezuelan waters, and there's new airplanes based in Curaçao there somehow to intimidate us, and there were some ships that moved in right when Iranian tankers were coming in with gasoline to Venezuela. So there's a lot of these movements by the U.S. military. It is the largest military operation since 1989 when Panama was invaded. And it's all in the Caribbean.

The justification that the United States gives is that they are doing this because they are fighting drug trafficking coming to the United States because President Maduro is trying to flood the United States with cocaine. But the interesting thing is that when you see the

IN DEFENSE OF VENEZUELA, U.S. YANKEE HANDS OFF

By Alison Bodine

Talk by Alison Bodine at the FTT Venezuela Solidarity Campaign Webinar for Venezuela on June 25, 2020

I have been fortunate to travel to Venezuela four times in the last two years with the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice, which I couldn't imagine happening until it did. It has been an incredible experience to travel to a country that I have been writing about in Fire This Time newspaper and have supported for so many years. To go there and learn directly from Venezuela's people and their struggle against interventions, war, and blockade imposed on them by the imperialist government of the United States.

While at the Sao Paulo Forum, in Caracas, Venezuela, at the end of July 2019, I was able to interview young Venezuelan revolutionary Yakuana Martinez for an article in the Fire This Time newspaper. Yakuana is coordinator of the Estafeta Cultural Center, a collaborative art space that opened one year ago in the very heart of Caracas. She is a young revolutionary woman from a working-class neighborhood who is doing remarkable work despite the U.S. blockade's challenges.

When asked about the impact of U.S. policy in Venezuela on her life and community, she said, "Given the level of attack against Venezuela today, it seems that the cost of these decisions is high [referring to the decision by the people of Venezuela to build the Bolivarian revolution]. It is costly to be young, to be revolutionary, and to have a struggle for independence that has gone on for more than 200 years. The great empires continue to see us as the third world, as their backyard, as a people who do not deserve self-determination. In the 21st century, we continue fighting for that right. Which seems incredible, but it is true. These attacks have increased after Comandante Chavez died. At that time, they believed that everything was going to end with the death of Comandante Chavez, but it turned out not to be the case."

Yakuana emphasized a significant point about why the United States, Canada, and their allies, have targeted her country. Venezuela is not under attack only because of its natural resources. Venezuela is in the crosshairs of the U.S. government, of the government of Canada, of the European Union, because of the commitment of the Bolivarian

revolutionary process to maintain Venezuela's independence. Because of their rejection of the United States hegemony in Latin America, and their continued implementation of social justice programs.

This is one of the main reasons that the U.S. government and their imperialist allies have unleashed war, economic terrorism, and a vicious media campaign against Venezuela. In only the last six months, the U.S. and Canadian governments have been relentless in their escalation of the blockade and sanctions against Venezuela. And despite the deadly threat of the coronavirus pandemic, the United States government has imposed further sanctions that limit Venezuela's access to food, medicines, and medical equipment. These sanctions have cost Venezuela's economy at least \$116 billion in the last five years and killed an estimated 100,000 people, as was reported by Alfred DeZayas, a former U.N. rapporteur on human rights.

Today, we've been talking about the main reason the U.S. government is attacking Venezuela and what we, as concerned and human-loving people in the United States and Canada, need to do to stand with Venezuela's people in their fight for their sovereignty and self-determination.

The U.S. and Canadian governments and their allies cannot accept and cannot tolerate a growing anti-imperialist movement in Latin America. A movement which can bring colonial and semi-colonial countries in Latin America and around the world united against the bully of the United States. Against the endless plundering of Latin America and imperialist drive for capitalist market hegemony, neocolonialism and super exploitation. Despite sanctions, war, and continued meddling in Venezuela by the U.S. and Canadian governments and their allies, Venezuela's people continue to defend their popular democracy, the democratically elected government of President Nicolas Maduro, and the Bolivarian revolutionary process.



Alison Bodine leading the chants at a protest in solidarity with Venezuela in front of the U.S. consulate in Vancouver, Canada, July 5, 2019.

The leader of the Bolivarian Revolution and president of Venezuela from 1999 to 2013, Hugo Chávez, began this process over 20 years ago. But the people of Venezuela have stood firm and strong. They have not lost their conviction to struggle with escalating U.S. war and the continuous U.S.-backed counter-revolutionary violence and sabotage. Even during the coronavirus pandemic. This is something that we can all learn, especially when traveling to Venezuela.

We must understand that now more than ever what our immediate tasks are as people living in the U.S. and Canada, in the belly of the beast. The best way to contribute to the struggle of the Venezuelan people against the reactionary, pro-imperialist right-wing opposition inside Venezuela and against the constant attack, blockade, and interventions of imperialism is to build a strong anti-war, anti-imperialist movement that also focuses on building a Venezuela solidarity movement in defense of self-determination for the Venezuelan people. I look forward from the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign to working with people on this call and building this movement. I see many people who are organizers and activists in the United States and Canada.

A campaign means ongoing political activities, no matter what conditions we may face. The objective reality is that there is a coronavirus. We face a challenging situation because of Covid-19, but there is so much that we need to do together to build this campaign. This is especially true when the devastating impact of the U.S. economic, commercial, and financial blockade is intensified due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We must also keep in mind that there is a National Assembly election

scheduled in Venezuela for December 2020. Especially since President Chávez passed away, the United States has intensified their campaigns to attack Venezuela during the time of elections. They have done this through promoting violence and hardship to disrupt the electoral process in favour of the Venezuelan counter-revolutionaries and their U.S. backers. Already, the governments of the U.S. and Canada have questioned the legitimacy of the upcoming elections. People who stand in solidarity with Venezuela have the responsibility to respond to these outrageous accusations and meddling.

We must remember that the U.S. is not just attacking Venezuela because Venezuela has a socialist government. But because Venezuela is fighting for independence and self-determination. That guides our work, which helps us in our campaign to popularize the Venezuela revolutionary process. We need to make Venezuela an important political issue in our towns and cities and make it part of our ongoing social justice work and campaigns.

I look forward to continuing this discussion and thank you again to all the speakers.

Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette

Battle of Ideas Press

Revolution & Counter Revolution in Venezuela



By Alison Bodine

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

October 2017, paperback, \$10.00
190 pages, illustrated, ISBN 978-0-9864716-5-0
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U.S. Hands Off Venezuelan Revolution Activities in Defense of Venezuela

By Janine Solanki

Since the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela started with the election of former President Hugo Chávez in 1998, the United States government has been trying to turn back the tide and destroy the gains being made by the Venezuelan people. This has continued under Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, with the U.S. imposing crippling sanctions and blockade, backing an attempted (failed) coup, and giving covert and overt support for the violent, right-wing forces within Venezuela. The government of Canada has also taken a leading role in the imperialist maneuvering against Venezuela. Canada co-founded the Lima Group, which is made up of right-wing governments in Latin America with a sole agenda of "regime change" in Venezuela.

While the global pandemic has kept us all from gathering together in person, it hasn't stopped the solidarity and action in defense of Venezuela and their Bolivarian Revolution. The Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign has taken part in online activities over the last few months and will continue to do so.

On May 1, Fire This Time editorial board member and BC Teachers Federation member Tamara Hansen was invited to participate in a Venezuelan online May Day celebration. The event featured international guests from over 16 countries, and via video conference, Tamara spoke with Venezuelan President Maduro and gave a greeting from Fire This Time to the Venezuelan people!

On June 5, Fire This Time participated in a webinar organized by The Ecology Movement of Venezuela (MEVEN) marking World Environment Day. Alison Bodine, the coordinator of the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign and organizer with Climate Convergence, joined the panel

of Venezuelan and international speakers to speak about climate justice, the Covid-19 pandemic, and capitalism.

On June 25, the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice - Venezuela Solidarity Campaign organized an online webinar to demand U.S./Canada: Hands Off Venezuela! Tamara Hansen introduced the event. The first speaker was Dr. Luis Acuña Cedeño, the Chargé d'Affaires in the Venezuelan Embassy in Ottawa, Canada. Dr. Acuña is also a former Minister of Higher Education in Venezuela and former elected governor of Sucre state in Venezuela. The online audience then heard from Carlos Ron, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs for North America at the Venezuelan Ministry of External Affairs, who spoke directly from Caracas, Venezuela. Also speaking from Venezuela was William Camacaro, a Senior Analyst at COHA (Council on Hemispheric Affairs), co-founder and coordinator of the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle of New York, an artist, radio host, and activist in New York City. Then the webinar went back to Ottawa, Canada, for the next speaker, Maricarmen Guevara. Maricarmen is a Latin America and Venezuela solidarity organizer with the ALBA Social Movements of Canada - Ottawa. The final speaker was Alison Bodine, speaking from Vancouver, Canada. Alison is the coordinator of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice Venezuela Solidarity Campaign and author of "Revolution & Counter-Revolution in Venezuela" (Battle of Ideas Press, 2018).

As this report details, despite the pandemic, Venezuela supporters have found ways to defend the Bolivarian Revolution and the Venezuelan people. They have come together even more internationally while connected online. For upcoming events and actions, visit www.firethistime.net or follow on Facebook @firethistimemovement, on Twitter @FTT_np, or Instagram @FTT.Venezuela



FTT tweet thanking speakers for their participation in the webinar on June 25, 2020.

THE CAPITALIST CRISIS IS WORSE THAN COVID-19

By Manuel E. Yepe

The confinement finally decreed in the United States to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic has crippled the capitalist economy and thus demolished the process of capital accumulation, writes William I. Robinson, a U.S. professor of sociology specializing in political economy, globalization, Latin America, and historical materialism at the University of California, Santa Barbara

“The fact that this economic paralysis is throwing tens of millions of workers into a crisis of survival is entirely fortuitous for the transnational capitalist class’ concern to immediately resume the machinery of profit, since capital cannot remain idle while it remains capital. The impulse to revive accumulation explains the fact that in many American cities there have been public demonstrations by the ultra-right-wing to demand the lifting of the quarantine, just as the most reactionary sectors of capital promoted the Tea Party in the wake of the financial collapse of 2008, a movement that in turn mobilized in support of Trumpism.

Although the protests seem spontaneous, they have in fact been organized by conservative groups, including the Heritage Foundation, Freedom Works, and the American Council on Legislative Exchange (coo ALEC), which brings together the CEOs of large corporations along with local right-wing legislators from across the United States.

Donald Trump inflamed the protesters through a series of tweets, including one calling to “Free (the state of) Virginia, and for protecting its great Second Amendment,



which is under siege.” The call to defend this amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees the right to bear arms, was almost a call for armed insurrection. In the state of Michigan, armed Trump supporters blocked traffic to prevent the flow of aid. A few days ago, Trump claimed to have “total” power to lift the quarantine.

Despite its populist rhetoric, Trump has served the interests of the transnational capitalist class well by implementing a neoliberal program ranging from regressive tax reform and extensive deregulation and privatization to an expansion of capital subsidies, social spending cuts and union repression.

Trump – himself a member of the transnational capitalist class – picked up where he left off in the wake of the 2008 financial collapse and forged a social base among those sectors of the (mostly white) working class that had previously enjoyed privileges such as stable, well-paid jobs, and that in recent years have suffered acute socio-economic destabilization and downward mobility in capitalist globalization.

Like the Tea Party that preceded him, Trump has been able to arouse increasing social anxiety among these sectors, from a radical critique of the capitalist system to a racist and patriotic mobilization against scapegoats such as immigrants. These Trumpist tactics have turned these sectors into shock forces for the ultra-right-wing capitalist agenda that has brought them to the brink of a truly fascist project.

The growing crisis of global capitalism has led to a rapid political polarization in global society between an insurgent left and ultra-right and neo-fascist forces that have gained adherents in many countries of the world. Both forces draw on the same social base of the millions of people devastated by neo-liberal austerity, impoverishment, precarious employment and their relegation to the ranks of superfluous humanity. The level of

global social polarization and inequality is unprecedented at this time.

The richest 1% of humanity controls more than half of the planet’s wealth while the lowest 80% have to make do with just 4.5% of that wealth. As popular discontent against this inequality spreads, the ultra-right and neo-fascist mobilization plays a critical role in the effort by dominant groups to channel such discontent into support for the agenda of the transnational capitalist class, disguised in populist rhetoric.

In this context, the conservative groups are determined to organize a far-right response to the health emergency and the economic crisis, involving a greater dose of ideological subterfuge and a renewed mobilization of their shock forces than to demand the lifting of the lockdown, a resource that could well require the State to provide aid to millions of poor workers and families instead of insisting on the immediate reopening of the economy.

May 25, 2020.

Source: *Por Esto!* newspaper



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

*A CubaNews translation. Edited by
Walter Lippmann.*

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LA CRISIS CAPITALISTA ES PEOR QUE LA COVID 19

*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

Por Manuel E. Yepe

El confinamiento finalmente decretado en Estados Unidos para hacer frente a la pandemia de COVID-19 ha paralizado la economía capitalista y, por tanto, ha demolido el proceso de acumulación de capital, escribe William I. Robinson, profesor estadounidense de sociología especializado en la economía política, globalización, América Latina y materialismo histórico en la sede de Santa Bárbara de la Universidad de California,

“El hecho de que esta parálisis económica arroje a decenas de millones de trabajadores a una crisis de supervivencia es totalmente fortuito para la preocupación de la clase capitalista transnacional por reanudar de inmediato la maquinaria lucrativa, ya que el capital no puede permanecer ocioso sin dejar de ser capital. El impulso de reavivar la acumulación explica que en muchas ciudades norteamericanas se hayan producido manifestaciones públicas de la ultraderecha para exigir el levantamiento de la cuarentena, al igual que los sectores más reaccionarios del capital promovieron el Tea Party a raíz del colapso financiero del 2008, movimiento que a su vez se movilizó en apoyo al trumpismo.

Aunque las protestas parecen espontáneas, de hecho han sido organizadas por las agrupaciones conservadoras, entre ellas la Fundación Heritage, Freedom Works (Obras de Libertad) y el Consejo Americano de Intercambio Legislativo (conocido como ALEC por sus siglas en inglés), que reúne a los directores ejecutivos de las grandes corporaciones junto con los legisladores derechistas locales de todo Estados Unidos. Donald Trump enardeció a los manifestantes mediante una serie de tweets, entre ellos uno que llamaba a “Liberar (al estado de) Virginia, y por proteger su gran Segunda Enmienda, que está bajo asedio”. El llamado a defender dicha enmienda a la Constitución estadounidense, que garantiza el derecho a portar armas, prácticamente constituía un llamado a la insurrección armada. En el estado de Michigan, seguidores de Trump armados bloquearon el tráfico para impedir el paso a la ayuda. Días atrás, Trump adujo tener poder

“total” para levantar la cuarentena.

A pesar de su retórica populista, el trumpismo ha servido bien a los intereses de la clase capitalista transnacional implementando un programa neoliberal que va desde la reforma impositiva regresiva y la amplia desregulación y privatización hasta una expansión de los subsidios al capital, recortes al gasto social y represión sindical. Trump - miembro él mismo de la clase capitalista transnacional - retomó el Tea Party donde lo había dejado a raíz del colapso financiero del 2008 y forjó una base social entre aquellos sectores de la clase obrera (mayoritariamente blancos) que anteriormente habían gozado de privilegios tales como empleos estables y bien remunerados, y que en años recientes han sufrido una aguda desestabilización socioeconómica y movilidad descendente en la globalización capitalista.

Al igual que el Tea Party que le precedió, Trump ha sabido despertar una cada vez mayor ansiedad social que sienten estos sectores, desde una crítica radical al sistema capitalista hasta una movilización racista y patriotería contra chivos expiatorios tales como los inmigrantes. Estas tácticas trumpistas han convertido dichos sectores en fuerzas de choque para la agenda capitalista ultraderechista que los ha llevado al borde de un proyecto verdaderamente fascista.

La cada vez mayor crisis del capitalismo global ha acarreado una rápida polarización política en la sociedad global entre una izquierda insurgente y fuerzas ultraderechistas y neofascistas que han logrado adeptos en muchos países del mundo. Ambas fuerzas recurren a la misma base social de los millones de personas devastadas por la austeridad neoliberal, el empobrecimiento, el empleo precario y su relegación a las filas de la humanidad superflua. El nivel de polarización social global y de desigualdad no tiene precedentes en estos momentos.

El 1% más rico de la humanidad controla más de la mitad de



la riqueza del planeta mientras el 80% más bajo tiene que conformarse con apenas el 4.5% de esa riqueza. Mientras se extiende el descontento popular contra esta desigualdad, la movilización ultraderechista y neofascista juega un papel crítico en el esfuerzo por parte de los grupos dominantes por canalizar dicho descontento hacia el apoyo a la agenda de la clase capitalista transnacional, disfrazada en una retórica populista.

En este contexto, los grupos conservadores se empeñan en organizar una respuesta ultraderechista a la emergencia sanitaria y a la crisis económica, abarcando una mayor dosis de subterfugios ideológicos y una renovada movilización de sus fuerzas de choque que para demandar el levantamiento del confinamiento, recurso que bien podría exigir que el Estado proporcione ayuda a millones de trabajadores y familias pobres en vez de insistir en la inmediata reapertura de la economía.

Mayo 25 de 2020.

Reproducido del periódico POR ESTO



Manuel E. Yepe Menendez es periodista y se desempeña como Profesor adjunto en el Instituto Superior de las Relaciones Internacionales de La Habana.

www.manuelyepe.wordpress.com

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We need to keep fighting. It might not be the way that we're used to. It might not be the way that we would prefer to organize. But we have to find ways to organize. And we've seen that people in extremely challenging situations find ways to make changes and challenge power. And so, we need to take that into account and be part of that as well.

I'm going to close with two quotes and book recommendations. One is called "Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel" by Lee Maracle. It's a memoir of growing up as an Indigenous woman in North Vancouver and getting involved in radical politics in the sixties and seventies.

"Creation is not passive. The birth, re-birth process of the earth, her storms, eruptions, tidal waves, floods, droughts, and the coming of periodic ice ages attest to the total lack of passivity. The birth process of the plant and animal kingdom is not passive. Individually, every living thing on earth must labour to re-create itself. Seeds burst from shell to regenerate and the process of birth for mammals is accomplished only with much bloodshed.

The re-birth of any social order also is not passive. We cannot live in the world the way it is. What is it when the mayor of a foreign town can come into your backyard and propose to play golf on the graves of your dead? What is it when that foreign country forms its internal laws to make this despicable act legal? At no time in history have Europeans ever suggested played golf on their own graves. Yet gravesite after gravesite of our dead is considered accessible for the most ridiculous of pastimes."

"They/we are refusing to be obedient. From July 11th onward, we will listen to one instruction only – love our own. We have been busy over the past summer deciding who "our own" are. They are a range of colours: black, red, brown, yellow and white. And we can recognize them by their loyalty to justice, peace, and solidarity."

And finally, from the Autobiography of Martin

Battle of Ideas Press

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**SYSTEM CHANGE
NOT CLIMATE CHANGE**

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By Thomas Davies

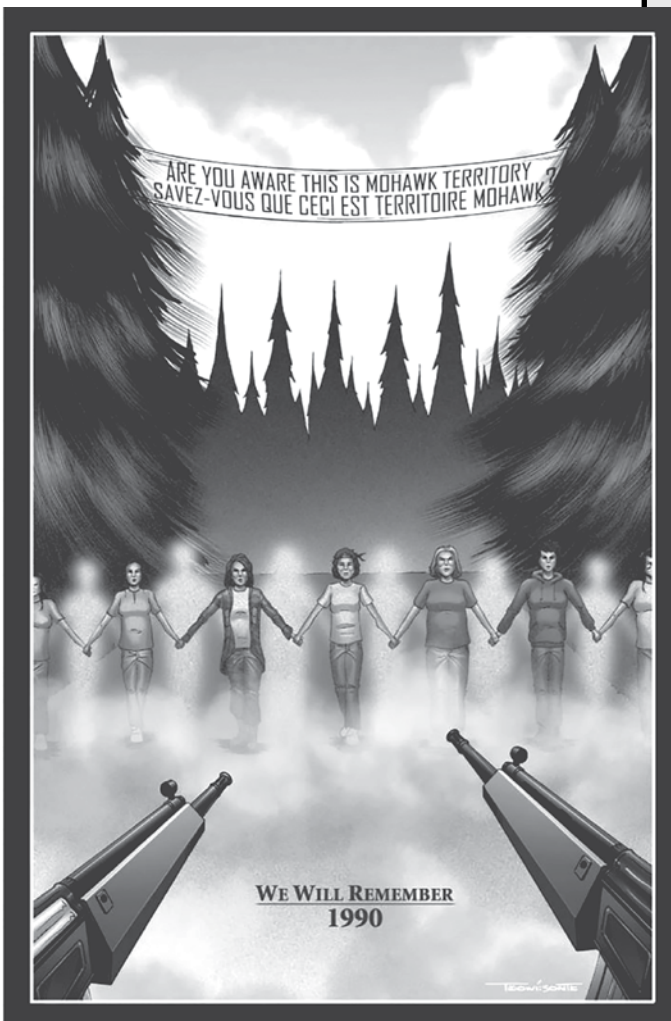
Thomas Davies is a social and environmental justice organizer based in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the Fire This Time Newspaper and a founding member of Climate Convergence Metro-Vancouver.



Luther King Jr. In his final speech, which was part of a campaign supporting striking sanitation workers in Memphis, he said, "Be concerned about your brother. You may not be on strike, but either we go up together or go down together. Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness."

So what we're advocating here is to continue in that spirit of struggle, of dangerous unselfishness. To be convinced that we can stop the TMX pipeline and build a better world if we work together. Thank you very much everybody.

Follow Thomas on Twitter: @thomasdavies59



This poster by Teiowí:sonte Thomas Deer (Kaniien'kehà:ka) celebrates the 20th anniversary of the 1990 Uprising at Kanehsatà:ke (Oka Crisis) and the leadership role of Kaniien'kehà:ka women on the frontlines.

MOTHER OF ALL STRUGGLES!

Indigenous struggle against colonialism



Lee Maracle

(July 2, 1950 -)

Sto:lo Author, Poet, Instructor [University of Toronto - INS] and Traditional Teacher First Nations House.

I think about what has happened to us in the last 60 days. In every major city, on the Reserves of 37 First Nations homelands, people rose up to support the Mohawks.

The racist structure of this society only thinly veils the class structure. The reality of this country is that many Canadians are having a hard time, financially. The homeless are increasing geometrically in urban centres and they are predominantly white. The cycle of recessions which began in this country in 1973 has led to a spiralling down of the standard of living of the citizens of this nation. The state is more than aware that to satisfy the demand of a single Native Reserve is to have to satisfy the demands of all of us. The state is also aware that to meet our demands for a decent life would mean upgrading the lives of thousands upon thousands of single white Canadian mothers, and thousands upon thousands of working poor.

The state is aware that should our laws prevail anywhere in this country, the heyday of corporate imperialism is over. The difference is that now we care enough about our sacred being to get up and say no, and the echo of that no continues across the country.

An excerpt of "Oka Peace Camp - September 9, 1990" from Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel

CLIMATE JUSTICE ORGANIZING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

By Alison Bodine

In Metro-Vancouver, Climate Convergence has found ways to continue organizing safely with consistency and creativity and a focus on building the climate justice movement, here in B.C., Canada, and around the world. Our monthly Webinars have brought together hundreds of people from across Canada and the United States to discuss many different aspects of our planet's struggle. Other activities have included regular banner drops to raise awareness about the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. And Climate Convergence activists have also organized a massive public poster campaign bringing the message of "System Change Not Climate Change" and "We cannot Go Back to Business as Usual," to the streets of Metro Vancouver.

On **May 31**, Climate Convergence honoured the life of Eagle Eyes – Gordon August, a respected shishálh (Sechelt) elder, an organizer with Climate Convergence, and a constant fighter for climate and social justice. Through stories and song, participants in the online event came together to remember Eagle Eyes as someone who never gave up and was always looking for ways to bring people together to fight for a better world.

On **June 10**, Climate Convergence organized a Webinar called "What's Next in the Fight to Stop the TMX Pipeline." The forum featured Coast Salish Elder Kelly White; Lynn Perrin from the PIPE UP network in the Fraser Valley, BC; WeiChun Kua from Justice, No Pipelines, a student group at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Burnaby, BC; Bill Moyer from the Backbone Campaign, a U.S.-group known for its large and creative protest banners and displays, and Climate Convergence organizer Thomas Davies.

"War, Militarization & Climate Crisis," was held on **July 22**. At this online event, Tamara Lorincz, an anti-war and pro-environment organizer based in Ottawa, gave an important and informative report on the Canadian military and its massive climate impact. Then Kawena Kapahua from the Cancel RIMPAC Coalition spoke about the struggle against the RIMPAC war games (which Canada participates in), U.S. Military presence, and environmental degradation in Hawai'i.

On **August 19**, Climate Convergence organized a live update and Webinar from the Tree Top Resistance to the TMX pipeline and the Homes Creek Protectors Camp. This important action began on August 3, when SFU health sciences professor Tim Takaro suspended himself 75 feet off the ground to prevent a tree-removal necessary for the continued construction of the unnecessary and dangerous Tar Sands pipeline. At the

effective way to build awareness about the lack of federal and provincial government response to the climate emergency – and their continued support for destructive resource extraction megaprojects. Over the last six months, Climate Convergence organizers have installed over 50 murals measuring at least 4ft. by 4ft. on boarded up walls and abandoned storefronts throughout Vancouver, Burnaby, and New Westminster. This poster campaign covers a range of climate justice issues – from demanding "TMX and CGL: Get Your Dirty Hands Off the Lands" to "Save People, Not Pipelines," and "System Change, Not Climate Change!"

Banner Drops

On **July 8**, Climate Convergence organized a banner drop at four different locations in Burnaby and New Westminster with large and colourful banners declaring "No to the Trudeau Pipeline," and "Build Our Future, Not a Pipeline." The banners were met with lots of honks and support from cars driving underneath.

On **August 26**, Climate Convergence organizers unveiled over 90 feet of hand-painted banners over five different overpasses above Highway 1 in Burnaby. These banners, which happened to be displayed on a day when the air in the region was thick with smoke from the California climate fires, highlighted the negative impacts of the TMX pipeline expansion and demanded: "STOP TMX!" Banner drops, which can be done safely and while maintaining physical distance, help make the TMX pipeline and the health of our planet topics of discussion at the dinner table and move the climate justice movement forward.

Join Us!

Climate Convergence meetings and actions are open to everyone interested in building a consistent, creative, and effective climate justice movement. For information about upcoming meetings, Webinars and more, visit www.climateconvergence.ca or www.firethistime.net.

Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette



Four simultaneous rush hour banner drops in Burnaby and New Westminster, July 8, 2020.

Webinar, Professor Tim Takaro and Kurtis Baute, who had both lived camped out suspended in the endangered trees, spoke about their experiences and their motivations for joining the struggle against the pipeline. Next, Sara Hall from Extinction Rebellion encouraged people to support the ongoing protest and camp. Climate Convergence organizer Alison Bodine then explained how actions such as the Tree Top Resistance of the Holmes Creek Camp must be supported. As well as how such activities fit in the more extensive work of building a mass climate justice movement. We must build a movement capable of mobilizing millions of people against the capitalist system that drives the planet into climate chaos.

In addition to the ongoing online educational events, banner actions and the large-scale poster campaign have also been an

Continued from page 3

55% of those who tested positive showed no symptoms of having Covid-19. So how can we stop the spread if we only test those with symptoms?

The economic case for universal testing, was recently made in a report by two senior economists at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Reda Cherif and Fuad Hasanov. Their abstract explains, "This column argues that a universal testing and isolation policy is the most viable way to vanquish the pandemic. Its implementation requires an epidemiological, rather than clinical, approach to testing, and requires the ramping up of testing kit production in order to achieve a scale and speed that the market alone would fail to provide. The estimated cost of universal testing is dwarfed by its return, mitigating the economic fallout of the pandemic." Not addressed by this abstract is, of course, the human cost of the pandemic. It is quite clear that we must demand universal and mandatory testing to effectively combat this global pandemic. While this might take a restructuring of our testing system and be expensive, is it not worth it if well-being of people is the goal?

On August 14, 2020, the Atlantic Magazine published an article titled, "The Plan That Could Give Us Our Lives Back," by journalists Robinson Meyer and Alexis C. Madrigal. They explain, "Tests permit us to do the most basic task in disease control: Identify the sick and separate them from the well." This obvious fact is something that is rarely addressed by the mainstream media, where politicians have successfully highlighted the need for risk reduction (mask wearing, physical distancing, etc.) and contact tracing (once people are already sick!). Although rarely discussed is the idea of finding a way to test everyone.

In their article, Meyer and Madrigal explain quick or rapid tests for Covid-19, which are being developed. These tests deliver results in 15 minutes or less, require only a saliva sample, can be done at home, are cheap to

make, and easy to mass produce. This would mean people would be able to take a daily test, or maybe even to prove they are Covid-free before entering various institutions (schools, shopping malls, public transit, etc.). These tests are less sensitive than the existing nasal swabs. However, if you are testing daily, when you get a false negative one day, the daily test will likely catch it the next day. This would still be sooner than many who are waiting days for nasal swab results, or at times even waiting days to be able to get tested.

Unfortunately, regulatory bodies such as the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) and Health Canada, are blocking the process for approving these rapid tests falsely arguing that they may give the public a false sense of security and do not meet their stringent standards. Many researchers and medical professionals are organizing to put pressure on them to change this rigid, fictitious and bureaucratic approach.

While the government may argue that universal testing is not feasible, we know this is not true and that this is indeed a question of priorities. Restarting face-to-face learning in schools means parents back to work, which they believe is good for their capitalist economy. All reopenings have been economically motivated without human condition consideration. However, we have to ask, at what cost? For the benefit of which group? At the expense of which group? All indications point to this burden falling on the shoulders of oppressed and working people because for capitalism and capitalist politicians profit comes before human need.

We need a safe back to school plan for our communities. We need considerably smaller class sizes and more funding for schools to provide viable online options to all. Most of all, we need free mandatory universal testing for Covid-19 to stop this pandemic in its tracks!

Follow Tamara on Twitter: @THans01

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for their people's good. The world's biggest corporations and monopolies control more and more of the world market and pollute and destroy more and more of the planet.

System Change, Not Climate Change

If capitalism persists, the necessity of bringing in super-profits will always surpass the interests of our mother earth. This applies whether we are talking about companies that extract oil, or corporations that manufacture solar panels and build wind farms. The capitalist system encompasses the production and distribution of all aspects of human life – from the production of food and energy to our systems of health and education. Unless we get rid of this system and release the powerful technology and human capacity that is only possible without capitalism, we will not be able to fundamentally change humanity's destructive relationship with our mother earth.

In this critical fight for our lives, it is also important that we work together around the world to build climate justice movements based in our communities. Large so-called environmental organizations have been exposed to have close ties with the world's biggest polluting corporations. In countries around the world, U.S. imperialism has also attempted to undermine the sovereignty and self-determination of nations through the funding of so-called environmental groups, which in reality promote U.S. intervention.

The economic system of imperialist countries, capitalism – a system that puts profit and the exploitation of resources above all else – is warming, melting, and killing the planet and humanity. Each time a new report is released, the predictions are grimmer and the united voice of scientists clearer. Yet, the governments of the wealthiest countries in the world continue their operations. It's business as usual. In much the same way as we have seen, governments around the world attempt to return to business as usual despite the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic.

For poor, working, and oppressed people around the world, every new piece of devastating news about the crisis of our mother earth is a call to action. Yes, the destruction of the planet is something that we can all be angry, sad, and depressed about, but we have not other option but to fight back. To do this, we must build a more united and stronger international anti-capitalist climate justice movement.

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through Japan, and wildfires erupted throughout California. In May 2020 global emissions of both methane and carbon dioxide greenhouse gases reached their highest levels before human beings walked on planet earth. These disastrous events are not isolated; they are the devastating result of a planet that has been knocked off balance by a system that prioritizes profits over human beings and nature.

In many ways, the coronavirus pandemic has illuminated the fragile relationship between human health, human existence, and the ecosystem. There is a close relationship between environmental degradation and the growth of pandemics, and undeniable links between pollution and exposure to toxins and the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Indigenous, Black and Latino people.

In the face of the climate and health catastrophe, Canada's government has continued to fund climate destruction throughout the pandemic at levels higher than any other country in the G20, except for France. As of mid-August, despite the science, the Federal government has committed over \$300 per person to support the fossil fuel industry, as reported by the Energy Policy Tracker. This is not to mention that Prime Minister Trudeau has doubled down on his commitment to build the TMX expansion pipeline from Alberta to British Columbia. This pipeline expansion project, and the pipeline that it is supposed to twin, was bought by Canada's government \$4.5 billion in taxpayer

dollars. Ever since building the expansion, costs have ballooned from \$7.4 in 2016 to over \$12 billion today. Of course, the taxpayers are on the hook for the bill.

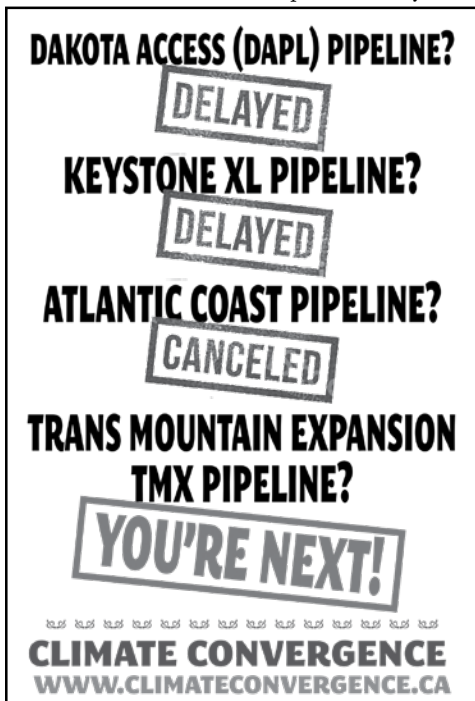
In British Columbia, Canada, the NDP government of John Horgan has pressed ahead with each one of the resource extraction mega-projects currently on the table. This includes the Trans Mountain Expansion dirty tar-sands pipeline and the Burnaby Mountain tank farm expansion, the Coastal GasLink fracked natural gas pipeline, and the Site-C hydro-electric dam. Each of these projects has put thousands of workers at risk of contracting Covid-19 as well as the surrounding communities and Indigenous-nations, many of whom have little to no healthcare access.

Suppose we need more signs that TMX pipeline is bad news. In that case, we only must look towards Sumas Mountain in Abbotsford, where a spill on August 14 from the existing Trans Mountain pipeline poured at least 1,195 barrels of oil onto the land of the Sumas First Nation and into the watershed.

Join Us!

From Vancouver, BC, to Brazil's forest, the arctic circle, and beyond, the struggle for humanity's future on earth is intensifying every day. Through all of this devastation, people who struggle for climate justice must recognize the critical moment we are in and continue organizing for a better world that is undoubtedly necessary and possible. Join us!

Follow Alison on Twitter:
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OUR HERITAGE



Alexandra Kollontai

1872-1952

Russian revolutionary socialist leader.

During the 1917 Russian Revolution, she was a member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party. She is renowned for her feminist writings.

All our strength, all our hope, lies in organisation!

Now our slogan must be: comrade women workers! Do not stand in isolation. Isolated, we are but straws that any boss can bend to his will, but organized we are a mighty force that no one can break.

We, the women workers, were the first to raise the Red Banner in the days of the Russian revolution, the first to go out onto the streets on Women's Day. Let us now hasten to join the leading ranks of the fighters for the workers' cause...

Our ranks united, we will aim at rapidly putting an end to bloody war among the nations; we will oppose all who have forgotten the great working-class precept of unity, of solidarity among the workers of every country.

It is only in revolutionary struggle against the capitalists of every country, and only in union with the working women and men of the whole world, that we will achieve a new and brighter future—the socialist brotherhood of the workers.

Excerpt from: Our Tasks, 1917

Continued from page 5

deadly than ever, the U.S. has tightened the blockade to unprecedented levels. In neighbouring Venezuela, layer upon layer of sanctions has effectively become a blockade of the country, which led to the deaths of more than 40,000 people in Venezuela between 2017 and 2018, according to a study by the Centre for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR). Iran is also facing the tightening grip of sanctions as well as U.S. threats of attack, provocations, and the assassination of key Iranian officials. What is the crime of these countries? Simply asserting their independence and sovereignty and not accepting the dictates of the U.S. government.

All of this war, destruction, and death is not about a war on terror or saving "failed states." It boils down to dollars and cents, as the U.S. must save their failing capitalist economy through securing control of foreign markets, plundering resources overseas, and exploiting oppressed and working people. This is enough for working and oppressed people to know what imperialism, by definition, is. This system is based on increasing profits and growth for the ruling class off the backs of poor, working, and oppressed people both at home and abroad. In fact, imperialism does not start or end abroad; imperialism begins at home. Imperialism means capitalism in its highest stage, the monopoly of banks and industry in a system of super exploitation. Its oppressive role at home is demonstrated by poverty and racism, and police brutality, and abroad through sanctions, wars, and occupations. Any resistance to the U.S. government's policies, whether in Fallujah, Iraq, or Portland, USA, is met with violent suppression by the U.S. military or police. Whether inside the United States or outside of the United States, the working class and oppressed have the same common oppressor, the same common enemy, the U.S. government.

We're under attack, let's get united

It becomes clear that poor, working, and oppressed people within the U.S. have a lot in common with the people beyond their borders, who they are often taught to fear and despise. Whether in Minneapolis or Baghdad, Louisville or Sana'a, Kenosha, or Kabul, oppressed people face a common enemy – the U.S. government, their war at home through police brutality and suppression, and the imperialist U.S. war abroad of sanctions, war, and occupation.

So how do we fight back? The first step is unity. Unity in the U.S., which we have

seen in recent protests where people from all walks of life have come together against police brutality. Then internationally, when poor and working people in the U.S. and other imperialist countries including Canada recognize that an Afghan farmer is their brother, and a Haitian sweat-shop worker their sister and join in defense of their rights against U.S. imperialism. In a world that relies on division, the "us" and "them" narrative between nationality, skin colour, and religion must become an "us vs. them" of people's unity against U.S. imperialism and their war at home and abroad. This can be achieved by fighting against all oppression at home and building a strong and united antiwar movement that spans across imperialist countries – bringing together people in countries like the U.S., Canada, and Europe in solidarity with people in countries facing imperialist war, occupation, and sanctions. Together we can and will build a better world, one for peace and in service of people's interests over corporate profit.

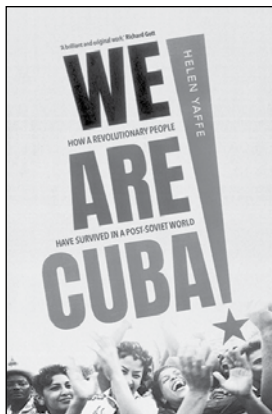
Bring U.S. troops home now! No to Occupation, No to military bases, No to NATO! No to sanctions!

Follow Janine on Twitter: @janinesolanki

We Are Cuba!

How a Revolutionary People Have Survived in a Post-Soviet World

By Helen Yaffe



The extraordinary account of the Cuban people's struggle for survival in a post-Soviet world

Publisher: Yale University Press (April 6 2020)

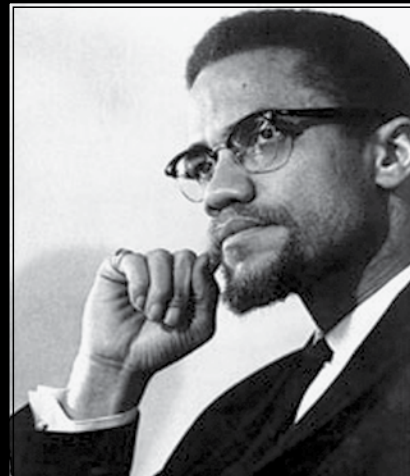
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"By Any Means Necessary..."



MALCOLM X SPEAKS

Police state and police brutality

"If we're going to talk about police brutality it's because police brutality exists. Why does it exist? Because our people in this particular society live in a police state. A black man in America lives in a police state. He doesn't live in any democracy, he lives in a police state. That's what it is, that's what Harlem is.

I visited the Casbah in Casablanca and I visited the one in Algiers, with some of the brothers – blood brothers. They took me all down into it and showed me the suffering, showed me the conditions that they had to live under while they were being occupied by the French. They showed me the conditions that they lived under while they were colonized by these people from Europe. And they also showed me what they had to do to get those people off their back.

They lived in a police state, Algeria was a police state. Any occupied territory is a police state; and this is what Harlem is. Harlem is a police state; the police in Harlem, their presence is like occupation forces, like an occupying army. They're not in Harlem to protect us; they're not in Harlem to look out for our welfare; they're in Harlem to protect the interests of the businessmen who don't even live there."

May 29, 1964

Continued from page 19

receiving training from the U.S. Navy in bases across the United States.

Canada's Complicity in the War Crimes in Yemen

Don't let Trudeau's smooth talk of Canada as a champion of human rights fool you. Canada has been selling weapons to Saudi Arabia since the start of the war on Yemen in 2015. Saudi Arabia has been the largest non-U.S. buyer of Canadian military goods for four consecutive years: 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019, according to Canada's annual report on the export of military goods.

In 2019, Canada's export of military goods to Saudi Arabia reached an all-time high of \$2.9 billion. This is more than double from the \$1.3 billion of military exports to Saudi Arabia in 2018. The Liberal administration has also moved ahead with the \$14 billion arms deal to supply Saudi Arabia with light-armored vehicles (LAV), despite proof that similar vehicles that Canada also sold to Saudi Arabia have been used in the war against Yemen.

Ironically, in 2019, Canada pledged \$40 million to the United Nations' Yemen Humanitarian Fund, as reported by CBC. What a farce! Canada is trying to wash the blood from the Yemen war off its hands by donating to the country less than 1.4% of the billions of dollars the government made in 2019 from selling weapons to Saudi Arabia to kill thousands of people in Yemen. The hypocrisy is surreal!

Canada also has a direct link to the Saudi-led bombing campaign. CAE Inc., a Montreal based Canadian company, is known for training fighter jet and drone pilots. Canada's National Observer reported in 2018 that CAE "has trained U.S. pilots who refueled Saudi fighter jets in mid-air during bombing raids"... "CAE has also trained drone pilots from the United Arab Emirates, whose drones have been deployed in Yemen." CAE USA, a subsidiary of the Canadian company, also trains military aviation students at a U.S. Navy training centre in Florida where Saudi air force pilots are also being trained.

A search in the Canadian Armed Forces website and the Veterans Affairs Canada website brings up the list of Canadian Forces members eligible to be awarded the General Service Medal - EXPEDITION (GSM-



LAV (Light Armoured Vehicle) captured from Saudi forces in Kitaf, northern Yemen, in August 2019. Experts consulted by Radio Canada International identified the LAVs as produced by General Dynamics Land Systems – Canada.

EXP). The list includes Canadian Forces stationed at Prince Sultan Air Base, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as well as Canadian soldiers deployed at al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates. What are Canadian soldiers doing at the airbases of the two countries leading an illegal, criminal, and devastating war on Yemen? Why is it that the only mention of these deployments is through the eligibility rules section for medals? People in Canada have a right to know the extent to which the Trudeau government is complicit in war crimes against the Yemeni people.

Hands Off Yemen!

We need a strong and united antiwar movement to organize and mobilize against the war in Yemen and hold the Canadian government accountable for its complicity in the war. We need to mobilize student unions, civil society organizations, labour unions, and all peace-loving people in Canada to follow up with their respective MPs and MLAs and

demand the immediate cancellation of Canada's arms sales to Saudi Arabia. In this time of the global pandemic, we stand with the Yemeni people who have been suffering for so long under this brutal war. We demand an immediate end to the war; we demand a complete lifting the blockade of Yemen. We demand the end of the violation of the human rights of the people of Yemen by the Saudi-coalition, U.S., and Canada. We demand that the right of self-determination for the Yemeni people be respected. We demand all foreign troops out of Yemen Now!

Follow Azza Rojbi on Twitter:
@Azza_R14

Grave diggers bury bodies at Radwan Cemetery in Aden, Yemen, May 21, 2020 as the death toll increases under Covid-19.



A hospital supported by Doctors Without Borders was hit by a Saudi-led airstrike using U.S.-made bombs, in the northern town of Abs, Yemen, August 16, 2016.

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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.





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SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 6

Initiation of the Simon Bolivar Institute for Peace & Solidarity with the Peoples

1pm Pacific Time / 4pm Eastern Time
www.isb.org.ve

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17

Virtual Picket Action to Lift the U.S. Blockade on Cuba Now!

4pm Pacific Time / 7pm Eastern Time
Canadian Network on Cuba
www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 19

60th Anniversary of the Cuban Delegation to NYC & the UN
"The Meeting of Fidel Castro & Malcolm X"

4:30pm Pacific Time / 7:30pm Eastern Time
REGISTER: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zffJd0YKQxWn_EBBUth-5w

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 20

Women on the Frontlines: 60th Anniversary of the FMC

2pm Pacific Time / 5pm Eastern Time
US Women and Cuba Collaboration
www.womenandcuba.org

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 20

"Silvio & el Poder de La Palabra" Film Debut & Concert

5pm Pacific Time / 8pm Eastern Time
Hot House Global <https://hothouse.net>

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26

Cuban Doctors Speak: 15 yrs of the Henry Reeve Internat'l Medical Brigade

5pm Pacific Time / 8pm Eastern Time
Nobel Peace Prize for Cuban Doctors
www.cubanobel.org

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26

PRE-ELLA FEMINIST GATHERING - North America & Caribbean

2pm Pacific Time / 5pm Eastern Time
www.facebook.com/planetaella

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27

Che Guevara Brigade - Virtual Cuban Cultural Night

4pm Pacific Time / 7pm Eastern Time
Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade
www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 7

"The State of Our Planet Today. Building an International Climate Movement"

5pm Pacific Time / 8pm Eastern Time
Climate Convergence
www.climateconvergence.ca

SATURDAY OCTOBER 10

Emergency Conference to Jail Killer Cops

12pm Pacific Time / 3pm Eastern Time
www.jailkillercopscoalition.org

THURSDAY OCTOBER 15

"Challenging Canada's \$19 Billion Warplane Purchase"

4pm Pacific Time / 7pm Eastern Time
Canadian Foreign Policy Institute
www.foreignpolicy.ca

SATURDAY OCTOBER 17

Virtual Picket Action to Lift the U.S. Blockade on Cuba Now!

4pm Pacific Time / 7pm Eastern Time
Canadian Network on Cuba
www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca

THURSDAY OCTOBER 29

Canada-Cuba Relations in the Time of Trump and Covid-19

4pm Pacific Time / 7pm Eastern Time
Canadian Network on Cuba
www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca

The Newspaper Of

FIRE THIS TIME

MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

www.firethistime.net

Volume 14 Issue 6-8 June-August 2020

Published Monthly

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

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For Fire This Time in your area across BC, Canada, and Internationally contact Publicity and Distribution Coordinator Thomas Davies
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Fire This Time Newspaper is written, produced and distributed entirely by volunteer labour and printed in Burnaby, Greater Vancouver, Canada

ISSN-1712-1817

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Commemorate the Life & Legacy of Che Guevara!

Join The Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba

By Janine Solanki

Commemorate the Life & Legacy of Che Guevara!

Revolutionary leader Che Guevara once said, "volunteer work is a school for building consciousness." These words have inspired Cubans and people around the world, and in this spirit, the Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade is named for him.

The Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade has traveled to Cuba 27 times annually, bringing brigadistas from Canada to Cuba. This unique trip is a project of the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) in Canada and the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) in Cuba. The two-week program is an 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 Che Brigade's vibrant program also includes visiting cultural sites, health and educational institutions, historical sites, workshops, concerts, dance classes, and more!

This year we are all living in the unprecedented situation of the Covid-19 pandemic. As international travel has come to a halt around the world, this has included travel to Cuba, where the focus has been on keeping people safe and effectively containing the outbreak in Cuba. Therefore our Cuban hosts at ICAP have announced that all international brigades will not be taking place in 2020. However, the 2021 Che Guevara Brigade to Cuba is on the not too distant horizon, and we are looking forward to a much-anticipated return to Cuba in Spring 2021!

June 14, 2020 marked what would have been the 92nd birthday of revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara - an Argentinian doctor who became a leader of the Cuban revolution and was killed by the CIA in a revolutionary struggle in Bolivia in 1967. To commemorate the life and legacy of Che Guevara, the Che Brigade Organizing Committee and the Canadian Network on Cuba held an online webinar, bringing together over 150 people from around the world!

The webinar MC was Janine Solanki, the National Coordinator of the Che Guevara Brigade, speaking from Vancouver, Canada. The webinar program included speakers from Cuba, starting with Giuvell Orozco Ortega, the Deputy Head of Mission and Counsellor at the Cuban Embassy in Ottawa, Canada, and David Aldama Pando, the Third Secretary of the Cuban Embassy in Ottawa. Joining direct from Cuba was Yamil Martínez Marrero from the Canada desk of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples. Ike Nahem joined from the US, where he is a founder and organizer of the New York-New Jersey Cuba Si Coalition and a member of the National Network on Cuba. The program then discussed the Che Guevara Brigade, starting with Claudia Peralta. She is the coordinator of the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association - Calgary, a former Che Brigade Brigadista, a Che Brigade Committee member, and an organizer with the Calixto Garcia Brigade. The next speaker, Haily Fox, traveled to Cuba for the first time on the 2018 Che Guevara Brigade



and shared how the experience influenced her to become a pre-medical student at York University in Toronto. The next speaker, Bronwyn Cragg, was a participant at the 2019 Anti-Imperialist Solidarity Conference in Cuba, is an executive member of the Canadian Network on Cuba, and a University of Toronto student. The final speaker was Che Brigade National Coordinator Janine Solanki, who shared her own experiences from the Che Brigade, complete with a photo slideshow.

How Can I Join the Next Che Guevara Brigade to Cuba?

The next Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade is scheduled for Spring 2021, details to be released soon! The Che Brigade is open to people of all ages and abilities, and although we are based in Canada, we welcome those wanting to join from other countries too! For more information, check out www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade, and for any questions to receive updates on the date, price, and program, you can call or email the National Coordinator Janine Solanki at 778-881-6156 or chevolbrigade@gmail.com.

Stay tuned to your social media accounts for news and updates on the Che Brigade too! You can follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CheVolBrigade or on Twitter at [@CheVolBrigade](https://twitter.com/CheVolBrigade), or Instagram [@cdnntwrkconcuba](https://www.instagram.com/cdnntwrkconcuba)

No to War and Occupation, Yes to self-determination! Sanctions Kill!

By Janine Solanki

During the first few months of isolation and the quarantine measures of the Covid-19 pandemic, it may have felt like the world was on hold. However, war, occupation, and sanctions carried out by the U.S. and their imperialist allies against oppressed nations around the world were not on hold. Underscoring these imperialist countries' cruelty, sanctions have even increased their stranglehold, especially on Cuba, Venezuela and Iran, when access to food, medicines, and medical equipment is now more vital than ever.

No Wars, No Occupations, No Sanctions

Early this year, a call from groups and individuals in the U.S. was made to organize international days of action under the campaign "Sanctions Kill." MAWO signed on and endorsed this campaign, which quickly became an even more important issue when the pandemic was announced, and

sanctions tightened their grip even more. Moving to online actions, on May 9, the Sanctions Kill campaign organized an international webinar with speakers from Cuba, Iran, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, Syria, and Venezuela. This webinar highlighted the impact of sanctions on these countries, especially under the Covid-19 pandemic. On May 31, another webinar brought together speakers from Palestine, Yemen, North Korea, Venezuela, and Iran, to speak more on the sanctions they face and the on-going U.S. military threats and interventions. The Sanctions Kill campaign continues to highlight and support events happening around the world, which can be found at <https://sanctionskill.org>

In Palestine and around the world, Nakba day (May 15) and al-Quds day (May 22 in 2020) signify the Palestinian struggle and resistance to Israeli occupation and the fight for self-determination. As Palestinians are facing not only the brutal Israeli occupation of their lands but now also the Covid-19 pandemic, it was important to bring attention to these

days and the Palestinian struggle. On May 16, the Alberta-based group Mobilization for Justice held an online webinar titled "The Palestine Question: Is it complex or complexified?" which was endorsed by MAWO and other groups. The event featured esteemed speakers from the U.S., Canada, and Iran and was followed by a dynamic discussion. More info and a recording of the event is at www.facebook.com/M4Justice/

While pandemic is the word on everyone's lips right now, our world is defined by war, occupation, and imperialism even more fundamentally. From the invasion and on-going occupation of Afghanistan in 2001, Iraq in 2003, and today when Syria, Libya, and Yemen have faced imperialist wars, and many other countries suffer under sanctions, we can characterize this time as a new era of war and occupation. Whether at home or on the streets, oppressed nations and antiwar groups and activists around the world demand an end to all imperialist wars, occupations, and sanctions, and for self-determination for all oppressed nations! For more information www.mawovancouver.org

Launch Event for the
Simon Bolivar Institute for Peace
and Solidarity Among Peoples

6 september 2020 | **4:00 p.m.**
Venezuela time

Watch on Youtube

Spanish: Instituto Simón Bolívar
English: Simón Bolívar Institute

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14:00 L.A. (US)

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7 pm 4pm Pacific Time
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Eastern Time 8pm Atlantic Time

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The Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade is a project of the Canadian Network on Cuba
www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade

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