

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

"The truth must not only be the truth...it must also be told" - Fidel



# FIRE THIS TIME



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# CAPITALISM VS. CLIMATE JUSTICE

## What Next for Humanity?

*By Alison Bodine*

This is a discussion meant for people that are not only here to talk about the crisis facing the planet, to discuss the destruction of Mother Earth, but to organize against the crisis, to fight to build a better and more just world and to reverse the catastrophe that humanity currently faces. This is the most significant part of all the webinars that Climate Convergence has organized. Although we are in this situation because of a worldwide pandemic, we have remained committed to growing our ideas and our thoughts and connections across Canada and around the world as best we can in this difficult situation. We are committing ourselves to be being prepared when we go back to the streets for our local fights here against TMX (Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion), against CGL (Coastal GasLink pipeline), against the Site C Dam, but also for the larger global struggles against climate change.

### **The Climate Crisis is Here, and It Is Very Real**

It is clear that the delicate balance between humans and nature is falling apart. The Covid-19 pandemic, which was the result, in many ways, of the infringement of humans on nature, is just one sign and one example of this delicate balance. The rift between humans and Mother Nature has reached a critical point, and now we are getting close to the point of

no return. As Lee Maracle said, of no return for humans, not of the wonderful Mother Earth that we live on, this rock in space.

The melting of glacial sea ice is accelerating rapidly. A recent report in Nature magazine described the rate of this acceleration. When they broke it down between 2000 and 2004, glaciers lost 227 billion tons of ice per year. But between 2015- and 2019, that number was as high as 300 billion tons annually. We're constantly facing exponential curves of the crisis that is coming.

The oceans are sick. The International Pollutants Elimination Network and the National Toxics Network just published a report saying that the oceans were on the precipice of disaster: chemical pollutants, pesticides, plastics, overfishing, and the warming of the oceans.

Despite the pandemic shutdowns, which initially had people thinking that there might be a dip in global greenhouse gas emissions,

are too many signs; humans, earth, and nature are related, and that cannot be ignored.

The climate crisis is air pollution and climate change, deforestation, species extinction, soil degradation, and the genocide of Indigenous peoples alongside continued wars and occupations and the mass movement of millions and millions of refugees on this planet. Thinking about the world this way can really make someone wonder

how there can be so much misery? While, at the same

time, we know ourselves and we know our human feelings towards one another, and we know that we feel love, appreciation, and community. So, how is it that the way that the world is run is so anti-human, so contradictory to what we as individuals feel and experience?

### **Capitalism is the Cause of the Climate Crisis**

The capitalist system we live under is not a system that considers the needs and desires of humanity. It is an anti-human system that only recognizes one logic, that of the profit of capital. This makes capitalism fundamentally incompatible with Mother Nature because it simply ignores that our planet is made up of finite resources. It ignores this fact and exploits nature continually and does not renew the resources that it exploits.

Under capitalism's endless drive for market growth, the world now contains islands the size of Texas made of plastic in the ocean,





and greenhouse gas levels are skyrocketing. Capitalism has turned the great Amazon rainforest into a region of the world that is beginning to generate more greenhouse gases than it absorbs.

We live in a world where profits for the capitalist class and corporations take precedence over people and the planet. Where profit comes way before and in front of social need, and it's not an exaggeration or a cliché to say that capitalism continues to consider everything to be for sale: human labor, human bodies, health care, education, and every component of nature can be bought or sold at a profit. It's not cynical to say that. It's really to understand that if the capitalist system continues, we will not be able to save the planet from destruction.

A report from three climate scientists was released recently about net-zero and what that means. This report describes how climate change has been a known danger for more than 30 years. They talk about James Hansen, who worked at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies. In 1988 he testified in front of U.S. Congress, presenting clear evidence that the Earth's climate was warming and that humans were the primary cause, saying, "the greenhouse gas effect has been detected, and it is changing our climate now." This report says that the most significant barrier and the reason that nothing fundamentally changed from that moment 30+ years ago was essentially the cost.

That means that no one was willing to sacrifice profit or able to sacrifice their profit to cut off the pouring of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere 30 years ago. Technologies such as installing carbon scrubbers or capturing carbon in other ways were known, but none was implemented because it was too expensive. That is to say that up to today, there are many technological solutions out there to reduce greenhouse gases, but they are not being implemented, and they will not be implemented under the capitalist system.

### **Biden is Lying, U.S. Government Continues to Fund Climate Change**

We can examine the climate plan presented by U.S. President Biden in 2021. Former Green Party U.S. Presidential candidate Howie Hawkins wrote an article where he really tore the plan apart. He exposed its many weaknesses and its inability to face the

problem of climate change fundamentally.

As Howie Hawkins describes in this article, "Biden's plan emphasizes corporate welfare: subsidies and tax incentives for clean energy that will take uncertain effect at a leisurely pace in the markets. Moreover, it does nothing to stop more oil and gas fracking and pipelines

and the U.S. government is not reducing the military budget by a penny. It is clear to see where their priorities lie.

In Canada, the Department of National Defense also makes an immense contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, and it's growing. Right now, the government of Canada is looking to buy 88 new fighter jets, for example, which burn an insane amount of very high polluting fuel.

### **The Unequal Impact of the Climate Disaster**

Although climate change will impact everyone, it will not do so equally. The divide between rich developed and poor developing countries - if you like - colonial and semi colonial countries - and people who have access to resources and those who do not - is growing. Poor developing countries and the people that live in them are already facing the brunt of the climate crisis. Hundreds of thousands of people are being forced to migrate. Extreme weather events are killing

hundreds of thousands of people yearly.

The unequal impact of climate change is another result of the capitalist system we live under today because capitalism is a system based on the exploitation of one by another - of the ruling class over the working class or of the rich developed countries over the poor developing countries.

The United Nations has reported extensively about the disproportionate impact of climate change. As the "World Social Report 2020, Chapter 3 - Climate Change: Exacerbating Inequality and Poverty" summarizes, "Within countries, people living in poverty and other vulnerable groups - including smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples, and rural coastal populations - are more exposed to climate change and incur greater losses from it, while having fewer resources with which to cope and recover." This same report goes on to explain, "Whether they manifest as individual



**Folks rally for climate justice with banners reading "Burn Capitalism, not Coal. Fridays for the Future." & "Changeons le système pas le climat" (Let's change the system, not the climate)**



for more gas-fired power plants or to shut down coal-fired power plants. Without directly saying so, it is a plan to burn fossil fuels for decades to come."

There is another important point to be made about the Biden Administration's "climate plan" - even though it is a lot of money - it pales in comparison to the U.S. military budget. The climate/infrastructure plan is \$2.3 trillion over eight years. Meanwhile, the U.S. government invests at least \$700 billion each year in the world's largest killing machine, also the world's biggest climate polluter.

It is also important to emphasize that military emissions are always excluded from international climate agreements and country-wide greenhouse gas emission targets. These emissions are considered a necessary emission and are not regulated even under the most stringent of agreements.

Even if the \$2.3 trillion was spent only on reducing the carbon footprint of the United States, it is less than the four-year budget of the U.S. Department of Defense. Yearly, the U.S. military sends an estimated 59 million tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. This is the equivalent of 2.8 million cars,

*Continued on page 15*

# IRANIAN & CUBAN REVOLUTIONS, TWO IDEOLOGIES CONFRONTING U.S. IMPERIALISM

Arnold's book, *Cuba-U.S. Relations*, or in Farsi, *Amperialism va democracy dar koba*, is explicitly written on U.S.-Cuba relations. However, it is also very valuable for Iranian readers because of the huge similarities that exist in the United States' unjust and oppressive approach to both Cuba and Iran.

While one being an Islamic government and the other being a revolutionary socialist government, Cuba and Iran have both been punished for exercising the right to self-determination, developing the way they see fit to build their respective countries. Both countries have been under severe sanctions and blockades, in the case of Cuba, for more than sixty years, and Iran, for more than forty years.

Yet both countries have continued resisting and fighting back for their rights, not only to survive, but Cuba and Iran have successfully and amazingly advanced and progressed in all aspects of technology, industrialization, medical sciences, arts, sports, military, education, and all other social and economic development. One good example is literacy and education in



**Iran and Cuba in the sights of the US government.** Image credit Boston Globe

both countries.

Iran's literacy rate reached 96.6% in 2022, from 47% in 1979 at the time of the revolution. Cuba's literacy rate reached 99.75% in 2022, from 47% in 1959 at the time of the revolution. Interestingly, in Iran, only 26% of higher education students were female at the time of the revolution. Today more than 60 % of higher education students are female. All significant advancements occurred under the brutal U.S. blockade of Cuba and Iran. This indicates how these two nations successfully positioned

themselves in a progressive course while under sanctions and blockades.

No wonder both countries have broadly influenced their respective regions, and both countries are the leading force of resistance against the U.S.'s meddling and domination in the Middle East, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Today, so much so, there is no political change or movement in Latin America without Cuba as a leading influencer and factor. Similarly, there is no political movement in the entire Middle East, Africa, and most parts of Asia without Iran as the leading player and influencer. Both countries have become the bastion of anti-imperialist struggle for oppressed nations around the world. Hence, the Farsi readers will find a lot of parallels and a lot of learning from Arnold's book, *Amperialism va democracy dar Koba* [Cuba-U.S. Relations].

It was a wise and smart idea to have this webinar, particularly today on Cuba and Iran, since today is the 43rd anniversary of the Iranian revolution, one of the tremendous changes that have occurred in modern human history. Today is the day the Iranian revolution of 1979 triumphed over the monarch's regime. So, I believe it is suitable to hear from me, a participant, how the revolution happened and how it evolved in a concise narration. As I mentioned, February 11 and 12 marked a turning point in the Middle East with the 1979 Iranian revolution. Two days that shook the world; two days that changed the world. Like millions of Iranians, young and old, I was honored to participate as a revolutionary socialist organizer alongside millions of Iranians in finishing the overdue task of overthrowing the imperialist puppet regime of monarch Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and cutting the hands of imperialist powers from Iran.



**U.S. military bases encircling Iran.**

Let me share a personal memory with you and a significant memory for me. You will find it interesting. Exactly, and I am saying exactly, and I am not exaggerating. Precisely 43 years ago today, at this time between 6 to 8am, after a mass uprising and heavy fighting the night before, I was standing with two of my friends in the middle of the compound of the Iranian secret police, called SAVAK, the Shah of Iran's vicious and ruthless secret police in a city of Rasht, the province of Gilan, by the Caspian Sea in North of Iran. The SAVAK compound had fallen. The night before, hundreds of newly armed people had fought back and brought down the huge secret police compound. By 6am, the compound surrendered. There I was, standing in the middle of the compound in these moments, smoke everywhere, two secret police hung off the lamp posts, another dead secret police body lay dead with many bullets on the ground, and all other secret police killed. Hundreds of people were roaming around the compound to uncover SAVAK's torture chambers, torture devices, and weapons. Some took pictures to document the historic moment, and reporters reported from the scene. At that moment, I was just happy that the secret police were gone. As the military base on the outskirts of the city collapsed, I clearly understood that the Shah of Iran was gone for good. However, I honestly had no idea what would happen two or five, or 43 years later. Here I am today with extraordinary stories of a unique moment in history.

As a young socialist organizer, I observed a tremendous exhibition of discontent, power, and will by millions of heroic Iranian people. The Iranian revolution was deeply rooted in the history of the Iranian people's struggle for freedom and democracy. The February 1979 revolution, known now as the Islamic revolution, stems from Iran's first anti-colonial movement in 1891 against the unjust colonial tobacco contract imposed on Iran by British imperialism. The Tobacco Movement was the vanguard



of oppressed peoples' anti-colonial movements throughout Asia and Africa. From 1891, this fundamental desire for change never rested, continued through 1905-1911; the 1920s; 1945-1953; and finally, 1979. For almost a century, the Iranian people were consistently on the march for change, for a better life. The Iranian revolution of 1979, in its nature and political dynamics, was an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist revolution. The tyranny of the monarch regime and imperialist influence and dominance in Iran were so integrated that the movement protesting the autocratic regime rapidly developed into an anti-imperialist movement. It did not take that long for the slogan of Marg Bar Shah [down with the Shah], to combine with the slogan of Marg Bar Amrica [down with the U.S.].

No matter what one calls it – the Iranian revolution or the Iranian Islamic revolution – the 1979 revolution was one of the most significant mass popular movements in modern times, demonstrating clear antagonistic classes in motion. The 1979 revolution in Iran was a classic revolution, resembling the great Russian revolution of 1917 in terms of the dynamics of the battle between revolution and counter-revolution of the social classes. After fourteen months of unrest and mass protest, both sides finally reached exhaustion. It became clear that one had to remove the other. The mass revolutionary struggle for eliminating the old order led to a mass popular armed insurrection of millions of Iranians against the old, corrupt, isolated, and broken monarchist regime.

By the dawn of February 12, 1979, today, in these hours, the will of the mass majority of Iranian people prevailed, and history took a deep breath of relief. It is fair to say that every honest person who participated and had the honor and privilege to intervene in this gigantic shakeup of history in Iran would say with utmost certainty and confidence that it was unequivocally the right thing to do. Regardless of all difficulties, tremendous pressures, danger, violence, physical harm, and death, bringing down the monarch was a historical task that was long overdue to bring freedom and a new course of life with dignity and independence.

The Iranian revolution changed the whole political equation and the class dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa. It has changed for the foreseeable future the balance and relationship of social and political forces, not only in the immediate region, the Middle East, but the whole

of Africa, Asia, and the rest of the world. The Iranian revolution's powerful message for independence and self-determination resonates, influencing, motivating, and inspiring hundreds of millions of working and oppressed people today in the Middle East and North Africa. It is no wonder that Iran has been under consistent attack



by U.S. Yankee imperialism to undermine and roll back the fundamental achievement of the Iranian revolution of 1979: political independence and self-determination.

With its mighty army and savagery, U.S. imperialism is currently in its lowest capacity to dominate oppressed nations. From the occupation of Afghanistan in 2001 to the occupation of Iraq in 2003 - which started the New Era of War and Occupation (NEWO) - to revolutionary uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa in 2011, and further ongoing resistance by Yemenis, Syrians, and Palestinians in the face of imperialist aggression, we see the proof of the continuing spirit of the Iranian revolution and its aftershocks for fundamental change.

What is known now as the Islamic revolution of Iran, its revolutionary dynamics, and its resistance to imperialism have put working and oppressed people in the Middle East, North Africa, and around the world in a better position to win the struggle against imperialist suppression and domination, to achieve self-determination and national independence. All of this with the continued hope to strike forward towards the many socialist revolutions and



**Top: Photo from 1979 Iranian Revolution**  
**Middle: Iran's first women's march on International Women's Day, March 8, 1979. The partially seen banner reads "Equal Rights for Women" and partially seen sign reads "We Demand Compulsory Education for Women."**  
**Photo credit: Ali Yerevani 1979**  
**Bottom: Woman passes historic mural outside former U.S. embassy in Tehran, Iran**



a better world, a socialist world.

Today, defending Cuba and Iran against the bully of the United States and its imperialist allies is a fundamental task of every true progressive and human-loving person, let alone revolutionaries.

What we need today, not tomorrow, is to get rid of the ugly capitalist and imperialist system. We need to build mass democratic and revolutionary organizations to be effective against imperialist war and occupation, against their sanctions and blockades, against their exploitation and plundering of the resources of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, all and all to bring a better world. As Fidel Castro said once, there is no other option.

*This article is based on a talk by Ali Yerevani at the Farsi language book launch webinar for Arnold August's book, "Cuba-U.S. Relations," held February 12, 2022. Follow Ali on Twitter @aliyerevani*

# Regional Mega-Elections in Venezuela

## A RESOUNDING VICTORY FOR THE BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION!

### Fire This Time Eyewitness Report

By *Alison Bodine*

Regional elections for governors, mayors, state legislatures, and city councils were held in Venezuela on November 21, 2021. In a great victory for the Bolivarian revolutionary process, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) won 19 out of 23 governors and 212 of 335 races for mayors. The people of Venezuela sent a powerful message that they support the Bolivarian revolutionary process and will continue to defend their sovereignty and self-determination in the face of brutal U.S. sanctions.

In response, and without any evidence, the government of the United States claimed that the elections did not reflect the will of the people of Venezuela. This same lie was repeated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Canada, which stated on November 23 that, "Canada will continue to stand with the people of Venezuela in their fight to restore democracy."

But, as I observed while on the ground in Venezuela during the election, this could not be further from the truth. Venezuelans do not need the United States to restore their democracy. Despite the cruel U.S.-led blockade, attacks, and meddling in the internal affairs of Venezuela, the people of Venezuela did exercise their democracy during the November 21 regional elections – in fact, for the 29th time since President Hugo Chavez was first elected in 1998.

I was in Venezuela for the November 21 election, representing the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice, alongside over 300 international observers, including representatives from the European Union, the Carter Center (a non-governmental organization founded by ex-U.S. President Jimmy Carter), the U.S.-based National Lawyers Guild, and the Council of Latin American Electoral Experts, among many others. We observed the opposite of what the U.S. government claims – we saw an active, dynamic, and participatory democracy.

#### Elections Day

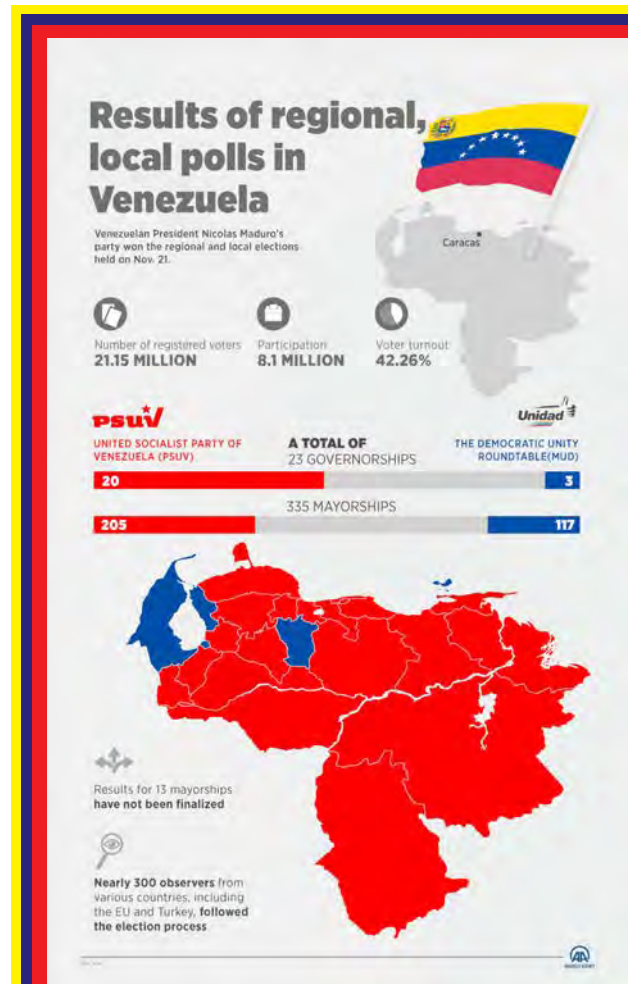
The November 21 elections mobilized over 8 million voters, a 42.3% election turnout. They voted to fill nearly 3000 positions: governors, mayors, members of state legislative councils, and municipal city councils. This is a great victory in the time of the pandemic and a brutal sanctions regime imposed on the United

States and its allies, including Canada.

On elections day itself, we observed elections that were free and fair, people wanted to vote and were motivated to participate. On the streets of the capital city of Caracas and in the voting centers we toured, we heard from Venezuelans who had confidence and pride in their electrical system. And we did not only hear from people supporting the PSUV, the governing party of the Bolivarian revolution and President Maduro. Unlike other recent elections, the November 21 mega-elections included the participation of opposition candidates, many of whom had boycotted past elections to try and

delegitimize the elections process itself. So, we also spoke to people who were supporting these opposition candidates.

Elections and the National Electoral Council (which is its own branch of government in Venezuela) are a fundamental part of Venezuela's popular democracy and the Bolivarian revolutionary process. What we observed on November 21 was the functioning of this well-oiled machine. There are many aspects of elections in Venezuela that contribute to their transparency, fairness, and accessibility: everyone in Venezuela that is 18 and over is automatically a registered voter, elections are held on Sundays so that they are accessible to more working people, the process of voting is efficient and secure, and the vote is registered and counted both



Alison Bodine of Fire This Time, and Miguel Torres, a young Venezuelan revolutionary working with the international election observers delegation



electronically and manually and also audited under the observation of all political parties.

However, regardless of the strength of the elections process and the presence of international observers, the United States, Canada, and other imperialist governments continue to insist that there is no democracy in Venezuela.

In a statement on November 22, 2021, the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry responded to these unfounded allegations pointing out, "It is the height of cynicism that a country where there is an indirect democracy [such as the United States], with second-degree elections and that has declared a brutal economic

war against Venezuela, [...] purports to have the morals to question the elections alleging lack of freedoms or other conditions." Really, how can the U.S. government claim that elections in Venezuela are not free or fair when they deny people in Venezuela their fundamental human rights - access to food, medicine, essential goods, and even Covid-19 vaccines?

### The Brutal Impact of U.S. Blockade

The United States, Canada, the European Union, and Switzerland have all imposed sanctions aiming to coerce the people of Venezuela into overthrowing their democratically elected government of President Maduro and therefore reversing the social justice gains of the Bolivarian revolutionary process. This campaign had become especially brutal and heavy since 2015, when President Obama signed an executive order declaring that Venezuela is a "threat to US national security." Since then, the U.S. government has imposed a brutal sanctions regime through congressional laws and executive orders. Over 300 administrative measures were issued, making it virtually impossible for Venezuela to conduct typical business transactions internationally. On top of that, these unilateral coercive measures, as the sanctions are described in international law, have enabled the theft of \$1.95 billion in Venezuelan gold currently being held in the Bank of England. It has also caused international financial institutions to withhold money during transactions, for example, when Venezuela is trying to pay into the COVAX program and get more access to Covid-19 vaccines.

### Venezuela: a Stalwart of Anti-Imperialist Struggle

The November 21 elections were held at a time when the United States and its allies were further isolated in Venezuela and Latin America. The U.S.-backed fake government of Juan Guaidó is failing apart rapidly, and the November 21 election was another nail in its coffin. Then, on December 6th, only 16 of 193 countries in the United Nations continued recognized U.S.-backed puppet Juan Guaidó as "Interim President" of Venezuela.

This clearly demonstrates that the United States has miserably failed to isolate Venezuela from the rest of the world. Despite

these terrible unilateral sanctions imposed on them, Venezuela has economic and cooperative relationships with other developing countries, especially



Venezuelans voting in the regional elections at polling stations in Caracas. November 21, 2021

those that have also been targeted by the United States government, such as Iran and Russia. Venezuela continues to show that economic and social agreements can be forged without the assistance of the United States and the global financial system that the United States controls. This demonstrates to the rest of the poor, working, and oppressed people around the world and in Latin America, that there is a possibility for continued development without relying on the United States, the IMF, and the World Bank. Venezuela is a threat to US domination in Latin America and worldwide because they show this different way is possible.

Poor masses, working class people, and young people are rising across Latin America due to the deepening crisis of neoliberalism and the capitalist market system in Latin America. This is a crisis that has been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic and sharpened by the U.S. hegemony, neoliberal governments, super-exploitation, sanctions, and intervention in the internal affairs of the people of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Venezuela today is one of the leading centers

of the anti-imperialist struggle worldwide. The continuity and advancement of the Bolivarian revolutionary process in Venezuela is a critical point for revolution and counter-revolution in Latin America. Defending Venezuela is not a question of supporting socialism or socialists in Venezuela; it is fundamentally about defending the self-determination of an oppressed nation, the Venezuelan people, and of all countries and people working to build their independence from U.S. domination all around the world.

### Free Alex Saab

Today is a critical time for peace-loving people around the world to strengthen our efforts against the brutal U.S. sanctions and blockade of Venezuela. It is also important that we support the case of Alex Saab, a Venezuelan diplomat, who's been illegally kidnapped from Cape Verde in the Caribbean and extradited to the United States, where he is facing a trial on trumped up charges of money-laundering related to his work to procure food contracts for the Venezuelans food distribution program known as CLAP.

Defending Venezuela is a central task for any anti-imperialist and anyone who believes that a better and just world is not only possible but necessary.

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.

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# CANADIANS CALL TRUDEAU TO DEMAND BIDEN #FREEALEXSAAB

*A Statement from organizations and individuals in Canada to Prime Minister Trudeau and Canada's Ambassador to the USA Kirsten Hillman*

We join in calling for the immediate release of Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab by the USA.

Alex Saab is a lawfully appointed diplomat to the African Union. Arresting and holding a diplomat for any reason is a violation of international law.

We join with Canadian civil society in a call to Trudeau in his new mandate to not follow the dictates of USA foreign policy, and to condemn the kidnapping of Ambassador Saab, noting that is a violation of the Vienna Convention and violates international law.

Alex Saab was kidnapped, held and tortured under orders from the Trump administration. Now the President Biden has extradited Alex Saab to the USA. This is clearly a violation of international law.

Alex Saab has been held in complete isolation in Cabo Verde from June 2020 and is in a life-threatening crisis having been denied treatment for cancer. Beyond the international law violations and flagrant disregard for diplomatic immunity, Alex Saab must be immediately released on humanitarian grounds as well.

We call on Canada to demand that the



USA Biden administration release Saab immediately to Venezuela to receive medical treatment.

The United Nations has repeatedly condemned the use of unilateral coercive measures as a violation of international law. Recognizing that unilateral coercive sanctions violate basic human rights and sanctions undermine peaceful relations and the sovereign equality of nations, we urge the Canadian government to:

- Undertake and apply a review of Canadian foreign policy with respect to UN Charter principles regarding multilateralism and the sovereign equality of nations.

- Abrogate all unilateral coercive measures adopted outside the UN Security Council. This would involve a specific review of the Special Economics Measures Act, and

- Implement the 16 point plan proposed by UN Special Rapporteur Alena Douhan with respect to the pandemic (see 16 Point Plan: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/covid-19-human-rights-guidance-note-covid-19-pandemic-humanitarian-concerns-and>)

## Canadian Organizations

Just Peace Advocates/Mouvement Pour Une Paix Juste

Louis Riel Bolivarian Circle

Canadian Foreign Policy Institute

World Beyond War

Socialist Action / Ligue pour l'Action socialiste

Justice for All Canada

International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS-Canada)

Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice  
Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) – Vancouver

Greater Toronto 4 BDS

Hamilton Coalition To Stop The War

## International Organizations

ACAT France

Workers' World Media Production, South Africa

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# TRUDEAU'S VENEZUELA POLICY HAS FAILED. IT'S TIME TO RESET RELATIONS.

Three years ago on January 23, a little-known Venezuelan politician declared himself president during an outdoor rally in Caracas. Canada recognized Juan Guaidó that day.

According to the Canadian Press, Canadian diplomats spent “months” coordinating the plan to proclaim the new head of the opposition-dominated National Assembly president. A Canadian diplomat told CP they helped Guaidó “facilitate conversations with people that were out of the country and inside the country” while the Globe and Mail reported that foreign affairs minister Chrystia Freeland “spoke with Juan Guaidó to congratulate him on unifying opposition forces in Venezuela, two weeks before he declared himself interim president.”

As part of Ottawa's effort to oust the Venezuelan government Canada has blocked their diplomats. Ottawa also adopted four rounds of sanctions against Venezuelan officials. These moves reinforced and legitimated US sanctions that have devastated Venezuela's economy and contributed to tens of thousands of deaths.

Alongside Peru, Canada launched the Lima Group in 2017. Canada hosted multiple meetings of this coalition opposed to Venezuela's government and pressed others to join an alliance that violated the principles of nonintervention in countries' internal affairs.

But, the Lima Group has effectively collapsed. Alongside a number of other countries, Peru withdrew from the alliance in August. The new Peruvian government's foreign minister said, “the Lima Group must be the most disastrous thing we have done in international politics in the history of Perú.”

In another sign of the failing campaign to isolate Caracas, only 16 of 193 UN members voted recently against recognizing Nicolás Maduro's government as the representative of Venezuela.

As his international backing steadily declines, Guaidó's influence among the Venezuelan opposition has greatly diminished. In December the self-declared president's “foreign minister” Julio Borges resigned and called for his parallel government to “disappear completely”. Additionally, nearly all of Venezuela's opposition parties participated in November's regional and municipal election.

Canadian officials know their policy has failed. Last year, Michael Grant, the Assistant Deputy Minister for the Americas for Global Affairs, told the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development: “I would agree with you that, in the last few years, the international community has failed. We have put a lot of effort into this, and the situation in Venezuela has gotten worse. We are no closer to a political solution. I think we have to be honest about that.”

Preferring to minimise their failure, Canadian officials rarely raise Venezuela anymore. But, their damaging policies remain in place. Venezuelans continue to suffer under North American sanctions and the lack of diplomatic relations undercuts cultural, sports, health and business ties.

On the three-year anniversary of Guaidó's self-declaration as president, it's time Ottawa re-evaluate its policy towards Venezuela. Canada should remove its sanctions, lay the Lima Group to rest and stop recognizing Juan Guaidó. It's time to normalise relations with Venezuela.

## INITIATING ORGANISATION:

*Canadian Foreign Policy  
Institute*

## SIGNATORIES:

*David Suzuki, Environmentalist and broadcaster  
Roger Waters, Musician (Pink Floyd)  
Elizabeth May, Member of Parliament  
Matthew Green, Member of Parliament  
Andrés Fontecilla, Québec solidaire MNA  
Linda McQuaig, Author  
Libby Davies, Former member of parliament  
Svend Robinson, Former member of parliament  
Tariq Ali, Author, Political activist, writer, journalist, historian and filmmaker  
John Pilger, Journalist and documentary filmmaker  
Chris Hedges, Journalist  
Jim Manly, Former member of parliament  
Paul Manly, Former member of parliament  
Sid Ryan, Former president Ontario Federation of Labour  
Antonia Zerbisias, Journalist  
Cy Gonick, Former member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba  
Vijay Prashad, Executive Director, Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research  
Judy Rebick, Journalist  
El Jones, Professor, poet and author  
Alain Deneault, professeur de philosophie, Université de Moncton  
Chris Hannab, Propagandhi  
Todd Kowalski, Propagandhi  
Jord Samolesky, Propagandhi  
Dimitri Lascaris, Lawyer, journalist and activist  
Carmen Aguirre, Author, actor and playwright  
Rachad Antonius, Professeur associé, Université du Québec à Montréal*

*Alison Bodine, Coordinator, Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice Venezuela Solidarity Campaign  
Rana Bose, Novelist  
Dolores Chew, Professor, Marianopolis College  
Matias de Dovitiis, Canadian Latin America Alliance  
Peter Eglin, Professor Emeritus, Wilfrid Laurier University  
Joe Emersberger, Author, activist and engineer  
Yves Engler, Author  
Alan Freeman, The Geopolitical Economy Research Group  
Kay Gimbel, Victoria Central America Support Committee  
Larry Hannant, historian  
Pierre Jasmin, Secrétaire-général des Artistes pour la Paix  
Tamara Lorincz, Canadian Foreign Policy Institute fellow  
Eva Manly, retired filmmaker, activist  
Aaron Mate, Journalist  
Claude Morin, Professeur d'histoire (retraité), Université de Montréal  
Bianca Mugenyi, Director, Canadian Foreign Policy Institute  
Ben Norton, Journalist  
Isabel Orellana, Professeure, Université du Québec à Montréal  
Justin Podur, Author and professor  
John Price, Professor emeritus University of Victoria  
Janine Solanki, Mobilization Against War and Occupation  
Ken Stone, Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War  
David Swanson, Executive Director, World Beyond War  
Dr. Maria Paetz Victor, Sociologist, founder Louisw Riel Bolivarian Circle  
Pablo Vivanco, Journalist, Former director of teleSUR English  
Theresa Wolfwood, Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation*



# SUPPORT THE #RISEUPFORPELTIER CAMPAIGN FOR CLEMENCY FOR U.S. POLITICAL PRISONER LEONARD PELTIER

*Leonard Peltier is an Indigenous activist and political prisoner in the United States. In 1975, Leonard was set up and convicted of the death of two FBI agents who had sped on to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in an un-marked car. The FBO agents then began a shoot-out. Leonard is 72 years old and, as of February 6, he has been imprisoned for 46 years. Regardless of his innocence and huge health problems, including contracting Covid-19, the U.S. refuses to release him. Despite huge adversity he continues to speak out for Indigenous rights and social justice.*

## Call-to-Action from the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee (ILPDC)

Leonard Peltier, Anishinaabe and Dakota, has spent over 4 decades of his life behind bars, and recently, the prison system has failed to provide him adequate care and protection against COVID-19. His story is the epitome of the systemic abuse that continues to target Indigenous people and Movement Leaders.

We call upon President Biden to show proof of his efforts toward justice and equity by granting Executive Clemency to elder movement leader Leonard Peltier.

Call the White House and demand the release of Leonard Peltier. (202) 456-1111.

Say you support the commutation of #LeonardPeltier's sentence.

He's held at USP-Coleman I in Florida. Register number 89637-132

Sign the online petition by following the link, or scan:

<https://bit.ly/3refswl>

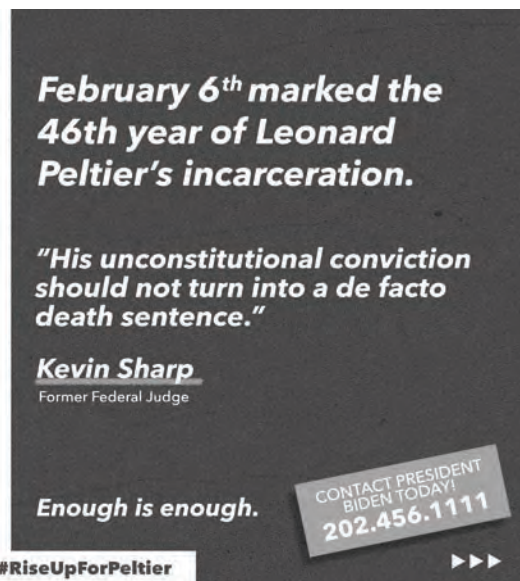


[In the United States] Contact your reps.

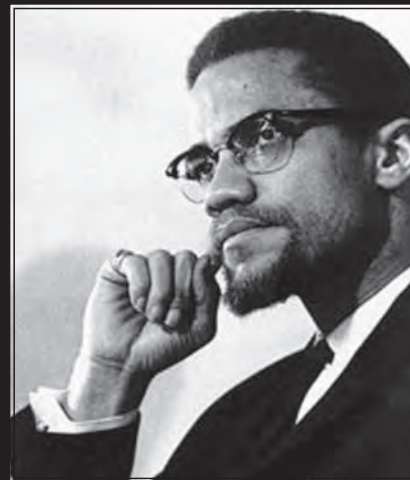
Find them here or scan: <https://bit.ly/35raR>



Scan & Donate to the International  
Leonard Peltier Defense Committee:



## "By Any Means Necessary..."



## MALCOLM X SPEAKS

"Right now in New York we had a couple cases where police grabbed the brother and beat him unmercifully—and then charged him with assaulting them. They used the press to make it look like he's the criminal and they're the victim. This is how they do it, and if you study how they do it there, then you'll know how they do it over here. It's the same game going all the time, and if you and I don't awaken and see what this man is doing to us, then it'll be too late. [...]"

The step-by-step process that was used by the press: First they fanned the flame in such a manner to create hysteria in the mind of the public. And then they shift gears and fan the flame in a manner designed to get the sympathy of the public. And once they go from hysteria to sympathy, their next step is to get the public to support them in whatever act they're getting ready to go down with. You're dealing with a cold calculating international machine, that's so criminal in its objectives and motives that it has the seeds of its own destruction, right within."

*"Racist in Reverse?" Speech at the Ford Auditorium on Feb. 14, 1965*



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#UnblockCuba

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**7PM** Eastern Time  
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COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE

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A documentary about  
Cuba's plan for climate change  
adaptation and mitigation

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ONLINE EVENT - Documentary, Speakers & Discussion!

**FRIDAY APRIL 8, 2022**  
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Featuring:  
**DR. HELEN YAFFE**  
Senior Lecturer in Economic and Social History at the University of Glasgow. In the last year she has co-produced two important documentaries: «Cuba's Life Task: Combatting Climate Change» (2021) and «Cuba & Covid-19: Public Health, Science and Solidarity» (2020). She is also the author of «We Are Cuba! How a Revolutionary People Have Survived in a Post-Soviet World» (2020), and «Che Guevara: the Economics of Revolution» (2009).

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Organized by: Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC)  
Sponsored by: Seattle/Cuba Friendship Committee, Climate Convergence Metro Vancouver, Stories from the Salish Seas, Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade - Vancouver

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**Battle of Ideas Press**

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

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

April 2010, paperback, \$10.00  
314 pages, illustrated,  
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**Battle of Ideas Press**

**U.S. & SAUDI WAR ON THE PEOPLE OF YEMEN**

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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*By Azza Rojbi*

On Sunday, November 7, 2021, millions of Nicaraguan voters showed up at their local polling stations to exercise their democratic right and cast their ballot in the country's elections. President Daniel Ortega and Vice President Rosario Murillo of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) were re-elected for another term, winning 75% of the vote.

### First Impression

Over 165 international representatives from 27 countries were present in Nicaragua to act as election accompaniers alongside more than 40 independent international journalists. These delegations traveled to 10 departments and two autonomous regions of Nicaragua to observe the elections at over 60 voting centres.

I had the opportunity to be part of this international delegation of election accompaniers as one of the two representatives from the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice in Canada. Our delegation arrived a couple of days ahead of the election day. From setting foot at the airport in the capital Managua, I was welcomed by the warmth and friendliness of the Nicaraguan people. Managua is a beautiful city with countless monuments and murals that proudly display Nicaragua's history of resistance and its people's aspiration to fight against imperialism and be sovereign and live in peace. The streets were calm ahead of the election day, and we observed several banners and posters advertising different election candidates, including opposition parties.

Walking down the streets of Managua on the eve of the election, it was easy to strike conversations with vendors and people we came across. Some shared with us that they were looking forward to exercising their right to vote and their frustrations with the lies and attacks by mainstream international media against their country and their upcoming election.

### Election Day

On the day of the elections, I accompanied an international delegation to visit polling stations in Juigalpa, the capital city of the Chontales Department of Nicaragua. My co-organizer from Fire This Time, Alison Bodine, was part of

# Nicaragua Election, Another Defeat for the U.S. in Latin America

## An Eyewitness Account

the group that traveled to León, the capital city of León Department and the second largest city in Nicaragua.

As in other departments that international election accompaniers visited, my delegation witnessed a great turnout at the different voting stations in Juigalpa. Voters had started lining up outside the stations before the doors were open. The process we witnessed was efficient, calm, peaceful, and democratic. My delegation visited four voting stations across different parts of the city of Juigalpa. We didn't witness any disturbances or disruptions to the process. On the contrary, we saw an overall joyful atmosphere. We watched kids, families, and people of all ages and abilities coming together to vote on this important day in Nicaragua. We also noticed several volunteers assisting people with different mobility issues to ensure they were able to exercise their rights. When we asked people about the elections, voters explained to us that they were voting to exercise their sovereign right.

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**An electoral worker holding a ballot at a polling station in a school in the city of Juigalpa, Nicaragua.**

rights. When we asked people about the elections, voters explained to us that they were voting to exercise their sovereign right.

### Young People Running the Show

It's important to know that the voting age in Nicaragua is 16, which means a higher presence of young people at all the voting stations we visited. Many young people came with family or friends to exercise their right to vote, and several young people were also actively involved in the process of the elections themselves. Young people were running the voting centres, others worked as poll watchers, and some audited the votes. We saw the involvement of young Nicaraguans





**Top: Line outside of voting centre in the city of Juigalpa, Nicaragua.**

**Bottom: Line outside of voting centre in the city of León, Nicaragua.**



**Voter showing his inked thumb, a symbol of having participated in voting.**



**Election accompaniers delegation at one of the four polling stations visited in the city of Juigalpa, Nicaragua.**



in every level of the electoral process on that day. As a young woman from Tunisia, now living in Canada, it was inspiring for me to see young people active and leading in this electoral process in defense of their country's sovereignty and throughout Nicaraguan society overall.

### **U.S. and Canada, the Enemy of Democracy**

While people in Nicaragua were still casting their votes, the governments of the U.S. and Canada had already started their vicious media campaigns to delegitimize the results of the elections. Only a few days after the elections, U.S. President Biden signed into law the RENACER Act, imposing further sanctions on the people of Nicaragua. People in Nicaragua we spoke to from many different political tendencies all stood firmly against U.S. sanctions and attacks on their country and called for an end to U.S. meddling in Nicaragua's internal affairs. It is also important to note that the Government of Canada stands firmly with the United States in its cruel sanctions regime against Nicaragua. In the last three years, the Trudeau Liberal government has also imposed three rounds of sanctions against the people of Nicaragua.

On November 8th, Mélanie Joly, Canada's minister of foreign affairs, stated, "Nicaragua's November 7th elections do not reflect the will of the Nicaraguan people." From what we observed in our time in Nicaragua, nothing could be further from the truth. People from many different ages, backgrounds and political parties in Nicaragua stand behind their electoral process and the results of the November 7th election, which saw a massive victory for the Sandinista government.

Regardless of the futile effort of the governments of the U.S. and Canada to change the government of Nicaragua to bring about the overthrow of President Daniel Ortega, the people of Nicaragua have said, and continue to say, otherwise. On November 7 they defended their sovereignty and self-determination with a massive turnout for the elections.

### **People of Nicaragua Fighting Back**

After almost one week in Nicaragua, we have many examples of Nicaraguans expressing their commitment to defending their elections and democracy that we can share. One, in particular, stuck with us. It's from a conversation Alison had while visiting the Escuela Modesto Armijo in León. As Alison approached a line of people waiting to vote, she asked if anyone would like to say anything as a message to people in North America to International elections observers from North America.

An older woman immediately stepped up named Karina. She spoke about her reasons for voting and her support and pride in Nicaragua's progress for people under the Sandinista government. She also had a message for the U.S., for us as international elections observers. She asked, "Why is it that the United States wants to get involved in the elections in Nicaragua?" She continued, "We do not have a problem with the people of the United States, but we as people of Nicaragua do have a problem with the government's policies of the United States." She encouraged us to "talk to peasants, talk to women, talk to children" and told us to go back home and call on the United States government, not just to respect Nicaragua but "let us live, work in progress, in peace."

*Follow Azza Rojbi on Twitter:  
@Azza\_R14*

# NO NEW FIGHTER JETS FOR CANADA

July 2021

Dear Prime Minister Justin Trudeau,

As wildfires blaze in western Canada amidst record breaking heat waves, the Liberal government is planning to spend tens of billions of dollars on unnecessary, dangerous, climate destroying fighter jets.

The government is currently moving forward with the competition to procure 88 warplanes, which includes Lockheed Martin's F-35 stealth fighter, SAAB's Gripen and Boeing's Super Hornet. Despite previously promising to cancel the F-35 purchase, the Trudeau government is laying the ground to acquire the stealth fighter.

Officially the cost of buying the jets is about \$19 billion. But, a report from the No New Fighter Jets Coalition suggests the full life cycle cost of the planes will be closer to \$77 billion. Those resources could be used to eliminate boil water advisories on reserves, build light rail lines across the country and construct thousands of units of social housing. \$77 billion could turbocharge a just transition away from fossil fuels and a just recovery from the pandemic.

Conversely, purchasing new jets will entrench fossil-fuel militarism. Fighter jets consume huge amounts of specialized fuel that emit significant greenhouse gases. Purchasing a large number of warplanes to use in coming decades is at odds with Canada's commitment to rapidly decarbonize by 2050. With the country experiencing the highest temperatures in history, the time for climate action is now.

While exacerbating the climate crisis, fighter jets are not needed to protect our security. As a former deputy minister of national defence Charles Nixon noted, there are no credible threats requiring the acquisition of new "Gen-5" fighter jets. The expensive weapons are largely useless in responding to natural disasters, providing international humanitarian relief or in peacekeeping operations. Nor can they protect us from a pandemic or

the climate and other ecological crises.

Rather, these offensive weapons are likely to generate distrust and division. Instead of resolving international conflicts through diplomacy, fighter jets are designed to destroy infrastructure and kill people. Canada's current fleet of fighter jets has bombed Libya, Iraq, Serbia and Syria. Many innocent people were killed directly or as a result of the destruction of civilian infrastructure and those operations prolonged conflicts and/or contributed to refugee crises.

The procurement of cutting-edge fighter jets is designed to enhance the Royal Canadian Air Force's ability to join U.S. and NATO operations. Spending \$77 billion on warplanes only makes sense based on a vision of Canadian foreign policy that includes fighting in future U.S. and NATO wars.

Polls show the public is decidedly ambivalent about warplanes. An October 2020 Nanos poll revealed that bombing campaigns are an unpopular use of the military and supporting NATO and ally-led missions is a low priority. The majority of Canadians said that peacekeeping and disaster relief was a priority, not preparing for war.

Instead of purchasing 88 new fighter jets, let's use these resources for healthcare, education, housing and clean water.

At a time of health, social and climate crises, the Canadian government must prioritize a just recovery, green infrastructure and invest in Indigenous communities.

\*\*\*

***For more information & full list of signatoires visit:  
nofighterjets.ca***

## ***SOME NOTABLE SIGNATORIES***

Neil Young, Musician  
David Suzuki, Geneticist and Broadcaster  
Elizabeth May, Member of Parliament  
Noam Chomsky, Author & Professor  
Roger Waters, co-founder Pink Floyd  
Daryl Hannah, Actor  
Tegan and Sara, Musicians  
Sarah Harmer, Musician  
Leah Gazan, Member of Parliament  
Paul Manly, Member of Parliament  
Michael Ondaatje, Author  
Yann Martel, Author (Man Booker Prize-winner)  
Roméo Saganash, Former Member of Parliament  
Fred Hahn, President CUPE Ontario  
Dave Bleakney, Vice President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers  
Stephen von Sychowski, President, Vancouver District Labour Council  
Douglas Roche, Former Senator, Parliamentarian, Diplomat & Author  
Svend Robinson, Former Member of Parliament  
Libby Davies, Former Member of Parliament  
Jim Manly, Former Member of Parliament  
Gabor Maté, Author  
Setsuko Thurlow, co-recipient of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of ICAN and recipient of the Order of Canada  
Monia Mazigh, Ph.D, author and activist  
Chris Hedges, Author & Journalist  
Judy Rebick, Author and Activist  
Ben Isitt, Victoria City Councillor  
Jeremy Loveday, Victoria City Councillor  
Paul Jay, Executive Producer & Host of The Analysis  
El Jones, Department of Political and Canadian Studies, Mount Saint Vincent University  
Dimitri Lascaris, Lawyer, Journalist and Activist



shocks or gradual environmental degradation, the effects of climate change are contributing to the loss of lives and homes, poor health, and damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, and environmental resources. In extreme flooding and coastal erosion cases, the physical survival of whole communities – or even nations, in the case of small island developing States – may be at stake. In 2010, deaths resulting from climate change were estimated at 400,000 (DARA and the Climate Vulnerable Forum, 2012). By the end of the century, this number may increase to 1.5 million per year if the rate of emissions remains unchanged (Climate Impact Lab, 2018)."

When discussing how climate change disproportionately impacts people, we should also discuss global wealth inequality. The world's 2,153 wealthiest billionaires have more wealth today than 4.6 billion people, who make up 60% of the planet's population. This enraging and incomprehensible inequality has been growing - the number of people at the top decreases, and the number of people at the bottom increases. Again, this is a consequence of the capitalist system we live under.

### **System Change, Not Climate Change! We Must Build a Mass Movement**

Now, what we have been talking about so far tonight has the potential to be disheartening. The climate crisis can be overwhelming and can seem just too big to tackle at times. But I think what is most important to say, after taking a good objective look at the planet this way, after understanding the immense destruction that capitalism perpetuates on humanity, is that, in fact, we do have a way to confront the climate crisis. We have the tools we need to build a mass movement for climate justice and Indigenous rights. These are the tools that we need to fight against racism and against all of the ills that result from the capitalist system we live under today.

In Canada, as in the United States, we live in countries with the world's largest ecological footprints, at the expense of the vast majority of the world. Therefore, we have the most responsibility to change rapidly and fight for the world that we know is possible. To stand against these corrupt policies by the governments of Canada and the United States that we live under.

From here in British Columbia and within Climate Convergence, we must support all actions taken for our planet. We support actions locally here in BC as we continue to strive for an international climate justice movement that is united across borders and recognizes fundamental human rights: self-determination for oppressed nations, access to food and water, and housing and education.

For this, we also know the climate justice movement must have a long view. The situation is dire and urgent, but we have to take what we're doing very seriously and work together to build the mass movement we



need. We need a network of local struggles, and we need to be connected and coordinate our work together to build an effective protest movement for a complete change.

We also need to articulate the world we want to live in, a world where we live, not just exist. A world where we relate to each other and nature entirely differently than the system we currently live under.

### **From Henry David Thoreau and Joel Kovel, to Fidel Castro**

In his book *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau describes an essential feature of the capitalist system that we have not yet discussed: our alienation from nature. The fact that capitalism has turned nature into a resource to be exploited has driven a separation from humanity and nature that did not exist before. For example, yes, we can go for walks here in British Columbia, we can feel very close to nature in a lot of ways, but these sentiments contradict our daily lives where we are forced to sell our time and energy in exchange for money to buy things which nature could provide. In 1854, Henry David Thoreau described this alienation as, "The laboring man has not leisure for a true integrity day by day; he cannot afford to sustain manliness with men; his labor would be depreciated in the market. He has no time to be anything but a machine."

The revolutionary scientist Joel Kovel, who is one of the formulators and originators of the

idea of eco-socialism, has a book called "The Five Theses on Eco Socialism." He describes in many ways throughout the book how we have to be open to rethinking the world as we've been taught. And one of those fundamental lessons that we've been told repeatedly is that the capitalist system we live under is the system that humans were meant to live under that we will always live under. It is the best that humanity can do. When the world we live in is dynamic and ever-changing and will not stay the same and is definitely not always this way. Joel Kovel addresses how capitalism is not human nature. In one quote, he says, "Capitalism is the first system of production

in the history of the world where exchange value [buying and selling] rules over use-value [the real value of everything]." Use value can be conceived as how valuable something is based on human need, and exchange value is instead valuing something based on how much profit it makes. So, he says, "Its whole history and culture may be

seen from this perspective, which requires that money rules the economy and that the economy rules over society, subordinating humanity and nature to the logic of accumulation."

But that's not the way it has to be. In 1992, at the Rio Summit, Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro described the world as he saw it, which is not so different than today. Fidel said, "An important biological species, humankind, is at risk of disappearing due to the rapid and progressive elimination of its natural habitat. We are becoming aware of this problem when it is almost too late to prevent it. It must be said that consumer societies are chiefly responsible for this appalling environmental destruction. They were spawned by the former colonial metropolis. They are the offspring of imperial policies, which in turn brought forth the backwardness and poverty that have become the scourge for the great majority of humankind..." Enough of selfishness, enough of schemes of domination, enough of insensitivity, irresponsibility, and deceit. Tomorrow it will be too late to do what we should have done a long time ago."

They are right! We have no option but to change the world.

*This article is based on Alison's talk at Climate Convergence Webinar on May 5, 2021*

*Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette*

# CLIMATE CONVERGENCE ACTIVE FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE!

By Alison Bodine

## No New Pipelines in a Climate Emergency!

When public health and safety measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic were first introduced in March 2021, it became clear that climate justice actions would have to change as well. Mass rallies, consistent street actions, and in-person public educational meetings have not been regularly possible over the past two years. However, for Climate Convergence, a grassroots climate justice organization in the Metro Vancouver region of British Columbia, this did not stop the consistent and creative actions.

Through large-scale poster campaigns, online "Webinar" public events, and physically distanced rallies and banner drops, Climate Convergence has continued working to build a more united and stronger movement for climate justice, Indigenous rights, and a just, sustainable world.

These actions have brought together people and organizations from BC, across Canada, and worldwide. They have also covered a range of local and international struggles, with the understanding that the defeat of a climate destroying project anywhere is a victory for all poor, working, and oppressed people everywhere.

## STOP TMX! No CGL!

As the climate catastrophe escalates – both the federal Liberal government and the NDP government of BC continue to support the reckless construction of the Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) and Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipelines.

On February 18, 2022, the Trudeau Liberal government announced that the Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) pipeline cost jumped from an estimate of \$12.6 billion to the outrageous price tag of \$21.4 billion. This is a 70% increase in the estimated

costs for this environmentally disastrous pipeline – spending that will continue to fall on the shoulders of people in Canada. All this money could be spent on healthcare, education, housing, and social justice, not climate destroying pipelines.

Meanwhile, the BC NDP government is pushing ahead with the reckless construction of the Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline. The Coastal GasLink pipeline is a fracked natural gas pipeline planned to run 670km from near Dawson Creek, BC, to a new liquified natural gas export facility on the BC coast in Kitimat. Fracking gas is devastating to both the environment and human health, which is why the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs, whose traditional territory the pipeline is planned to cross, continue to oppose the pipeline.

Wet'suwet'en land defenders and allies face violence and persecution as they defend their traditional territories. In November 2021, 27 land defenders were brutally arrested during peaceful actions against the CGL pipeline. They continue to face charges.

Climate Convergence has been working with other grassroots and community groups throughout the pandemic to find creative and effective ways to oppose the TMX and CGL pipelines.

This has included a consistent campaign of banner drops and bright light sign displays focusing on the demands of "Don't Drill Burnaby Mountain," "No TMX & CGL Pipelines!" and "Drop All Charges Against Climate Activists and Land Defenders!" The actions over roads and highways, or at busy intersections, receive continuous and enthusiastic support from people passing by, showing that there are many people we can bring into the movement against the climate destroying TMX and CGL pipelines.

Just a few of the great speakers: Sleydo', Brandi Morin, CJ McCormic, April Thomas, and Alison Bodine from the "Climate Justice Webinar: Building the Fight to Stop Oil & Gas Pipelines + Fundraiser for the Gitxsan Land Defenders Legal Fund" on February 9, 2022.



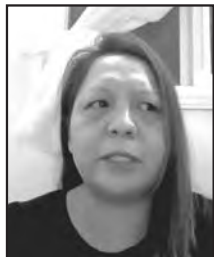
#United4ClimateJustice rally in Vancouver November 12, 2021.

Climate Justice" rally and march to mark the COP26 United Nations climate summit's final day in Glasgow, Scotland. This action was co-organized by Climate Convergence, the Sustainabiliteens, Mountain Protectors, Protect the Planet Stop TMX, 350 Vancouver, Fridays for Future Vancouver, BROKE, Greenfaith, and the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty BC.

That day, over 250 people gathered in downtown Vancouver, filling the plaza in front of Environment and Climate Change Canada with beautiful banners and signs with strong climate justice messages. Participants in the action chanted together during a dynamic program chaired by Climate Convergence organizers Alison Bodine and Hanieh Shakeri, which featured speakers including Cedar George-Parker of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation; T'uy'tanat-Cease Wyss of Squamish, Stolo, and Hawaiian descent; parents and toddlers from Babies for Climate Action and hip-hop artist Estee Elements.

However, this peaceful gathering was severely disrupted when the Vancouver Police (VPD) forcibly arrested three young climate justice activists right as the march through the streets of downtown Vancouver was about to begin. These young people were participating in a ceremony where they used washable red paint to leave handprints on the building housing the department of Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Because of these unjust and violent arrests, the planned march to the CBC was then turned into a spirited solidarity march to the VPD station, where the young climate activists had been taken. Along the way, there was chanting, drumming, and more speakers, including Jolene Andrew of the Wet'suwet'en & Gitxsan Nations, who spoke about the continued fight against the Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline.



## Activists Fight Back Against Police Attack on Peaceful Climate Rally

On November 12, 2021, Climate Convergence initiated a "United for





**Left: Organizers at the Climate Convergence rally at a Trans Mountain Expansion pipeline construction site. August 14, 2021. Right: Climate Convergence organizers prepare for #United4ClimateJustice rally in Vancouver November, 2021.**

A rally continued in the street in front of the police station for two hours – until all three of the young people arrested were successfully released. This was a great victory for everyone that gathered that day. However, the struggle continues to ensure that all charges against them are dropped.

Climate Convergence has continued to demand that all charges are dropped against these three young activists and all land defenders and peaceful climate justice protestors.

#### **Online Actions Unite People Locally and Internationally for Climate Justice**

The climate justice movement must not only focus on one important struggle, one province, or even one country to be effective. The climate crisis is international, so the struggle against it must be global. In 2021, Climate Convergence organized 10 webinars that mobilized support online against the climate emergency internationally, in solidarity with Indigenous land defenders and climate justice activists around the world.

This included a successful webinar held following the COP26 United Nations climate conference in November 2021 called “After COP26 - What is Next?” This webinar brought together Métis activist Erin Blondeau, Communications Coordinator at Indigenous Climate Action and a delegate to COP26; anti-war activist and organizer Tamara Lorincz, who was in Glasgow during COP26 organizing to challenge military spending and emissions; Abby Herd, a Simon Fraser University (SFU) student and organizer with SFU350; Hanieh Shakeri, a member of SFU350 and Climate Convergence, and is on the Solidarity and Social Justice Committee of the TSSU (Teaching Support Staff Union of SFU); D’Arcy Briggs, an organizer with Climate Justice Victoria and Climate Convergence central organizer Alison Bodine.

The February 9th, 2022, “Fighting to Stop Oil & Gas Pipelines and Start Building a Better World!” webinar was an opportunity to hear important updates and ways to support the ongoing struggles against the TMX, CGL, and Line 3 pipelines from organizers and land defenders on the frontlines. This included: Sleydo’ (Molly Wickham), Gidimt’en Checkpoint Spokesperson and key leader in the Wet’suwet’en fight against

the Coastal GasLink natural gas pipeline; Brandi Morin, award-winning Cree/Iroquois/French journalist from Treaty 6 territory in Alberta; April Thomas, spokesperson for the “Secwepemc Say No TMX” defendants currently representing themselves in court for peacefully resisting TMX pipeline construction on their traditional territories; members of Climate Justice Committee – Minnesota, active participants in the fight to Stop the Line 3 Pipeline; and Thomas Davies, Climate Convergence founding member and author of “System Change Not Climate Change!” (Battle of Ideas Press).

As with the webinar following COP26, this webinar raised the important discussion about how to build a more united and stronger climate justice movement with a vision for a just and sustainable world. Climate Convergence was also able to fundraise over \$1100 for the Gitksan Land Defenders Legal Fund, to support the legal costs of defending the unceded traditional territories of the Wet’suwet’en from being encroached upon by the Coastal GasLink Pipeline.

#### **System Change, Not Climate Change!**

The disastrous response of big business and capitalist-imperialist governments to the growing climate crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic has led people around the world to question the “status quo” when it comes to the “profit before people” capitalist system that we live under.

In addition to building the ongoing struggle to defeat the TMX and CGL pipelines, now is a critical time for building a mass anti-capitalist movement in defense of mother earth to demand “System Change, Not Climate Change!” The growing climate crisis should not make us depressed or disheartened; it is instead a call to take action and work together to build the better world that we know is possible!

Climate Convergence meets online every two weeks to discuss important developments in the struggle for climate justice and Indigenous rights locally and internationally and plan for upcoming events and actions. To find out how to get involved, visit: [www.climateconvergence.ca](http://www.climateconvergence.ca)

*Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette*

## **OUR HERITAGE**



**AUDRE LORDE**  
(1934-1992)

*In her own words, Audre Lorde was a “black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet.”*

I was going to die, if not sooner than later, whether or not I had ever spoken myself. My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you.

What are the words you do not have yet? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence? We have been socialized to respect fear more than our own need for language.

And, of course, I am afraid– you can hear it in my voice– because the transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self-revelation and that always seems fraught with danger. But my daughter, when I told her of our topic and my difficulty with it, said, “tell them about how you’re never really a whole person if you remain silent, because there’s always that one little piece inside of you that wants to be spoken out, and if you keep ignoring it, it gets madder and madder and hotter and hotter, and if you don’t speak it out one day it will just up and punch you in the mouth.

*Excerpt from “Sister Outsiders: Essays and Speeches” (1984)*

# Remembering Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Demanding Justice

*By Tamara Hansen*

On Valentine's Day, February 14, 2022, Vancouver held its 31st annual Women's Memorial March gathering at the corner of Hastings St and Main St in the heart of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). This important event began originally in Vancouver in 1992. Since then, it has grown, and this year dozens of inspiring events and actions were organized across Canada.

During the time of the global Covid-19 pandemic, violence against women in Canada and around the world has increased. At the same time, the 2019 National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls concluded that the ongoing neglect by the government of Canada towards the lives of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls constitutes "an ongoing genocide." The report further explains, "this genocide has been empowered by colonial structures, evidenced notably by the Indian Act, the Sixties Scoop, residential schools, and breaches of human and Inuit, Métis and First Nations rights, leading directly to the current increased rates of violence, death, and suicide in Indigenous populations." Despite this report, the government of Canada continues to fail women across Canada, Indigenous women in particular. It is because of this that women, girls, 2SLGBTQ+ people, and their allies join in the streets and continue to demand justice and real solutions to end systematic racism, poverty, homelessness, and violence against women, girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ people!

The Women's Memorial Marches were started by the families and friends of missing and murdered DTES women (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous). Thirty-one years later, the demands remain the same. It is up to justice-loving people to take on the struggle to end violence against women each day and to demand immediate action from the government of Canada.

On May 5, 2022, many organizations across Canada will be marking the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & 2SLGBTQ+ people, and Red Dress Day. Please consider supporting and attending local events and actions in your community.

#MMIWG #NoMoreStolenSisters  
#Reddresscampaign



**Women's Memorial March in Vancouver, BC, February 14, 2022.**



**Women's Memorial March in Courtenay, BC, February 14, 2022.**



**Women's Memorial March at Vancouver Island University, BC, February 14, 2022.**



**Women's Memorial March in Terrace, BC, February 14, 2022.**

## MOTHER OF ALL STRUGGLES!

*Indigenous struggle  
against colonialism*



**Howard Adams (Métis)  
1921 - 2001**

*Revolutionary Métis Marxist scholar and professor Howard Adams grew up in a Métis community in Saskatchewan. He was a leader in the struggle for Indigenous rights, self-determination, and socialism.*

"We can never be free and equal people as long as the white man uses government instruments, such as jails, courts and police to keep the Indian and Halfbreed in 'his place' by charging us with petty offences. Jailing us, and using police brutality is the white man's scheme for terrorizing us, and for reminding us that he is in complete control of us. It is his way of showing his power and authority.

Our struggle is against those things of the business man's government — capitalism — that keeps the Native people down. Therefore, we have to struggle against the courts, the ballot box, the school system, and all the other things that dominate us. Our struggle is a revolutionary one, and we can not settle for anything less than complete freedom."

*Excerpt from "The Need for a Revolutionary Struggle" (The New Breed Magazine, 1972)*



# Happy New Year 2022

## Come join our monthly Vancouver Car Caravans for Cuba!



As we look towards the struggle against the immoral, unjust, and illegal U.S. blockade on Cuba, I feel it is important and necessary for us to reflect on our past year of work against U.S. aggression towards Cuba.

March of 2021 saw Vancouver's first-ever Car Caravan for Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade. Cars lined the streets of Vancouver plastered with signs and flags calling for an end to the criminal U.S. blockade on the people of Cuba. This action would be the first of a monthly campaign that has taken place ever since. These caravans have been in coordination with several cities across Canada and the U.S., and around the world.

9 straight months of Caravans were capped off in December with a unique vigil for peace in downtown Vancouver where Cuba solidarity activists collected petition signatures calling for the government of Canada to condemn and protest the U.S. Blockade on the people of Cuba. We also had the opportunity to talk with hundreds of passersby about the blockade and how to get involved in Cuba solidarity work.

2021 saw an escalation of hostility by the new Biden administration towards Cuba through a series of extensive sanctions against Cuba and direct attempts of destabilization through violent street disruptions and rioting.

As the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic enters its third year, Biden's intensification of the blockade is all the more cruel and inhuman. Cuba has been a world leader in developing vaccines to help in the fight against the viral pandemic but has struggled to obtain many medical supplies due to the effects of the blockade.

As we begin the new year, it is of utmost importance that we continue to fight in defense of Cuba against the U.S. blockade. I look forward to joining with all of you in 2022 on the streets of Vancouver as we continue our highly visible and peaceful Car Caravans for Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade!

Viva Cuba!  
Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!  
Abajo el bloqueo!

Andrew Barry  
Coordinator of Vancouver Car Caravan for Cuba  
Against the U.S. Blockade  
@andrewbarry





# Socialism is the only explanation for how we have survived

Excerpts from a speech by Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel

Speech delivered by Miguel M. Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Republic. October 29, 2021

>> Excerpts are printed below, for the full speech please visit: [www.firethistime.net](http://www.firethistime.net) <<

The historical enemy of the Cuban nation knew the gravity of the moment and launched even more viciously against our economy. In frank contradiction with the recent declarations of President Biden before the United Nations General Assembly, to favor multilateralism and cooperate in the fight against the pandemic at a global level, the blockade against Cuba was tightened, new sanctions were imposed, and a new destabilization program that complies with the letter of the manual of the "soft hit".

We have never sat down to wait for the change of a policy that for 62 years has varied only to strengthen the fence. The enemy's formula has been to bet that our great material difficulties weaken the resistance of the people and finally bring us to our knees before them.

Violent or warlike actions, invasion, occupation are never ruled out against a socialist project like ours; but in the first place they bet on demoralization, on surrender, hence the message of hatred towards the communists, the anti-socialist emphasis, the persecution of every possible economic solution, in short, the blockade.

The evidence is before everyone's eyes to verify that the objective has been, from the beginning, to cause economic scarcity, punish the people, damage their standard of living, restrict their sources of income, limit their consumption and damage the social services of the people. that depends on a part of your well-being and the answer to your most basic needs. The purpose has been to condemn the Cuban population to the role of hostage in a genocidal policy with hegemonic designs.

That is why Cuba's success in confronting the pandemic causes such annoyance in Washington, particularly the outstanding

result of the vaccination program developed with ingenuity, effort, and its own resources. This explains the determination to denigrate our Public Health System and to hide this extraordinary achievement of Cuba, which breaks the deceptive matrix that it wants to impose on our reality.

Against the plans of imperialism, we are defeating the pandemic, as we have and will defeat aggressive plans, no matter how

problems. Socialism is the only explanation that we have survived this fierce and genocidal siege without giving up on developing ourselves (Applause). Popular Power, with capital letters, genuine, innovative and, for that same reason, questioned and attacked by those who do not know it or fear its example, constitutes the foundation and essence of the Cuban political system; To strengthen it is to promote the initiative and direct action of our people in the consolidation of socialism.

When we speak of innovation as one of the pillars of government management, we also think of our People's Power. Socialist democracy requires making, innovating, changing, and permanently transforming the forms of democratic participation.

Actions that stimulate, promote, and materialize popular participation have defensive and constructive importance for socialism. The immobility, the formalism in the government structures at the local level are as

harmful as the welfare, which is limited to delivering goods and resources without considering the importance of social participation.

Participation, that is the essence and safeguard of our socialism. The opposite only serves the enemies of the Revolution for their purposes of returning to capitalism in Cuba. The freedom of discussion, the exercise of criticism and self-criticism of what we do wrong, of our problems, is vital to continue moving forward, to found and to love.

We must listen, dialogue, attend to the proposals of our people. We have to carry out popular consultations on matters of local and national interest, promote participatory budgeting to decide among all where and how best to use public funds, with an emphasis on the locality, the neighborhood, the municipality.

We have a country and we defend Life!

And we are still from Homeland or Death!

Venceremos!



Miguel Diaz-Canel with College Students, November 2021.



Fidel Castro Addressing Mass Rally, Havana 1961.

powerful the campaigns and slanders are.

The blockade is and will continue to be, for the foreseeable, a fundamental obstacle to our strategies and potential for economic growth and development, but it is not an insurmountable impediment. We will continue to fight him tirelessly, with the support of the international community. The blockade is not only a punishment for the resistance. It is the everyday way of preventing socialism from being associated with growth, progress, and prosperity.

No! Socialism is not to blame for our



# El socialismo es la única explicación de que hayamos sobrevivido

## Extractos de un discurso de Miguel Díaz-Canel

**\* En Español \***

*Discurso pronunciado por Miguel M. Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, Primer Secretario del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba y Presidente de la República. 29 de octubre de 2021*

>> *Unos extractos, para leer el discurso completo, por favor visite: [www.firethistime.net](http://www.firethistime.net)* <<

El enemigo histórico de la nación cubana conocía la gravedad del momento y se lanzó con más saña aún contra nuestra economía. En franca contradicción con las recientes declaraciones del presidente Biden ante la Asamblea General de Naciones Unidas, de favorecer el multilateralismo y cooperar en la lucha contra la pandemia a nivel global, hacia Cuba se arreció el bloqueo, se dictaron nuevas sanciones y se puso en marcha un nuevo programa de desestabilización que cumple al pie de la letra el manual del “golpe blando”.

Nunca nos hemos sentado a esperar el cambio de una política que durante 62 años ha variado solo para afianzar el cerco. La fórmula del enemigo ha sido apostar a que nuestras grandes dificultades materiales debiliten la resistencia del pueblo y nos pongan finalmente de rodillas ante ellos.

Contra un proyecto socialista como el nuestro no se descartan jamás las acciones violentas o bélicas, la invasión, la ocupación; pero se apuesta en primer lugar a la desmoralización, a la rendición, por eso el mensaje de odio hacia los comunistas, el énfasis antisocialista, la persecución de cada posible salida económica, en fin, el bloqueo.

Las evidencias están ante los ojos de todos para comprobar que el objetivo ha sido, desde el comienzo, provocar escasez económica, castigar al pueblo, perjudicar su nivel de vida, restringir sus fuentes de ingresos, limitar su consumo y dañar los servicios sociales de los que depende una parte de su bienestar y la respuesta a sus necesidades más elementales. El propósito ha sido condenar a la población cubana al papel de rehén en una política genocida con designios hegemónicos.

Por eso causa tanta molestia en Washington el éxito de Cuba en el enfrentamiento a la pandemia, en particular el resultado sobresaliente del programa de vacunación desarrollado con ingenio, esfuerzo y recursos propios. Se explica así el empeño en denigrar



**Miguel Díaz-Canel con Raúl Castro, Primero de Mayo 2018.**



**Manifestación de la Campaña de Alfabetización en Cuba, La Habana 1961.**

nuestro Sistema de Salud Pública y en ocultar este logro extraordinario de Cuba, que rompe la matriz engañosa que se quiere imponer sobre nuestra realidad.

En contra de los planes del imperialismo estamos venciendo a la pandemia, como hemos vencido y venceremos los planes agresivos, no importa cuán poderosas sean las campañas y las calumnias.

El bloqueo es y seguirá siendo, en lo previsible, un obstáculo fundamental para nuestras estrategias y potencialidades de crecimiento económico y de desarrollo, pero no es un impedimento insuperable. Seguiremos luchando contra él incansablemente, con el respaldo de la comunidad internacional.

El bloqueo no solo es un castigo a la resistencia. Es el modo cotidiano de impedir que el socialismo se asocie al crecimiento, al progreso y a la prosperidad.

¡No! El socialismo no es el culpable de nuestros problemas. El socialismo es la única explicación de que hayamos sobrevivido

a ese cerco feroz y genocida sin renunciar a desarrollarnos (Aplausos).

El Poder Popular, con mayúsculas, genuino, innovador y, por esa misma razón, cuestionado y atacado por quienes lo desconocen o temen a su ejemplo, constituye el fundamento y la esencia del sistema político cubano; fortalecerlo es potenciar

la iniciativa y la acción directa de nuestro pueblo en la consolidación del socialismo.

Cuando hablamos de la innovación como uno de los pilares de la gestión de Gobierno, también pensamos en nuestro Poder Popular.

La democracia socialista exige hacer, innovar, cambiar y transformar permanentemente las formas de participación democráticas.

Las acciones que estimulen, promuevan y materialicen la participación popular tienen importancia defensiva y constructiva para el socialismo. El inmovilismo, el formalismo en las estructuras de gobierno a nivel local son tan nocivos como el asistencialismo, que se limita a entregar bienes y recursos sin considerar la trascendencia de la participación social.

Participación, he ahí la esencia y salvaguarda de nuestro socialismo. Lo contrario solo sirve a los enemigos de la Revolución para sus propósitos de retornar al capitalismo en Cuba. La libertad de discusión, el ejercicio de la crítica y la autocrítica de lo que hacemos mal, de nuestros problemas, es vital para seguir avanzando, para fundar y para amar.

Debemos escuchar, dialogar, atender los planteamientos de nuestro pueblo. Tenemos que realizar consultas populares en asuntos de interés local y nacional, promover presupuestos participativos para decidir entre todos dónde y cómo utilizar mejor los fondos públicos, con énfasis en la localidad, en el barrio, en el municipio.

¡Tenemos Patria y defendemos la Vida!

Y seguimos siendo de ¡Patria o Muerte!

¡Venceremos!

# ¡Alicia Jrapko Presente!



January 11, 2022 brought the sad news of the passing of a dear friend of the Cuba solidarity movement – Alicia Jrapko, a passionate, dedicated activist in the United States.

The Canadian Network on Cuba expresses its sadness at the loss of this stalwart defender of Cuba.

Alicia was a major driving force in the struggle to free the Cuban 5 Heroes, often visiting Gerardo Hernández in prison. Her work with Pastors for Peace and young medical students going to the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Cuba was just one expression of her generous support for Cuba.

Her indefatigable commitment to the cause of social justice and Cuba was reflected in her dedication to building the National Network on Cuba (NNOC), serving as a co-chair since 2011. Alicia's stirring voice at numerous conferences and international meetings inspired solidarity activists around the world.

The Canadian Network on Cuba expresses its deep condolences to Alicia's life partner, Bill Hackwell, and to her three children and six grandchildren. She will be greatly missed by her many friends in Canada.

Co-Chairs Elizabeth Hill & Isaac Saney  
On behalf of the Canadian Network on Cuba



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*By Janine Solanki*

The island of Cuba is famous around the world for many things, from Cuban salsa dancing and music to its exemplary healthcare and education systems. While many people travel to Cuba to enjoy the extraordinary beaches, resorts, and sun, there is much more to experience on this dynamic island with the Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade!

The Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade is a unique

## **Returning to Cuba with the Che Guevara Brigade!**

After a long wait through the pandemic, in fall 2022, the 27th Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade traveled to Cuba



are also bringing support and solidarity in suitcases full of medical aid destined for Cuban hospitals. This year the Che Guevara Brigade will stay in Havana and participate in the International Worker's Day parade. This massive and

inspiring event will be the first May Day parade after two years of the pandemic. Brigadistas will also stay in Santa Clara, known as the "City of Che," where Che Guevara led the final battle marking the victory of the Cuban revolution and where Che

# **Solidarity, Adventure & Fun in Cuba with the Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade!**

opportunity to know Cuba through people-to-people solidarity and on-the-ground experiences. There is no better way to get to know the Cuban people than working alongside them, sharing meals and leisure time, and there is no better way to learn about the Cuban Revolution than by seeing its accomplishments firsthand!

The Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade, based in Canada, is a project of the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) and the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) in Cuba. While based in Canada, the trip welcomes participants from other countries too!

## **Che Guevara Brigade in a Time of the Pandemic**

While the Che Guevara Brigade is an annual trip, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the brigade was unable to travel as originally planned in spring 2020. From June 2020 to March 2022, the Che Guevara Brigade held 9 webinars that celebrated Cuban culture with music, dance, and poetry, marking Cuban historical dates like the 60th anniversary of Cuba's successful literacy campaign. To watch past events check out <https://www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade/events.html>

with an enthusiastic group of brigadistas from across Canada and the U.S., many visiting Cuba for the first time. As Cuba was restarting tourism and its economy, the Che Guevara Brigade was on the ground in Cuba with support and solidarity! The group also brought suitcases of medical aid since the brutal U.S. blockade, severely tightened by Trump and compounded by the pandemic, has made medical supplies and many other goods difficult to obtain in Cuba.

While traveling through Havana, Pinar del Rio, Varadero, and Playa Giron, brigadistas visited schools and hospitals, met with Cuban community organizations, and learned about Cuba's revolutionary history and how Cuba's dynamic political system works today. At every meeting, whether on a campesino's farm or in the Capitol Building, brigadistas promised to transmit the truth about Cuba and their own firsthand experiences through social media, events, and conversations back home.

Less than six months since the 27th Che Guevara Brigade, the 28th Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade is ready to return to Cuba with more brigadistas from Canada and beyond! Again, brigadistas

Guevara's mausoleum now stands. The brigade will also visit the historic Playa Giron, where Cuban revolutionary fighters defeated the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of U.S. mercenaries in less than 72 hours. The exciting full program can be viewed online at <https://www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade/program1.html>

## **Want to join the Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba?**

The Che Guevara Brigade is open to everyone of all physical abilities and ages. Brigadistas have ranged in age from 7 to 86 years! Join the 28th Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade in Cuba from April 26 to May 10, 2022. For questions or to receive updates, please contact the Che Brigade national coordinator Janine Solanki at (778) 881-6156 or by e-mail at [chevolbrigade@gmail.com](mailto:chevolbrigade@gmail.com)

To register or for more information, visit: [www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade](https://www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade)

If you can't join the Che Guevara Brigade, you can track their day-by-day activities in Cuba on social media! Follow @chevolbrigade on Facebook and Twitter and @cdntwrkconcuba on Instagram for updates and reports from Cuba!

*Follow Janine on Twitter: @janinesolanki*



# JOIN THE 28<sup>TH</sup> ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA VOLUNTEER WORK BRIGADE



TO CUBA!

April 26 - May 10, 2022



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[www.CanadianNetworkOnCuba.ca/Brigade](http://www.CanadianNetworkOnCuba.ca/Brigade)



@CheVolBrigade