

"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

70 years of Cuba's Moncada Day



26 DE JULIO
Victoria de las ideas

Viva Fidel!

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Workers Fighting Back!

Workers of the World Unite!

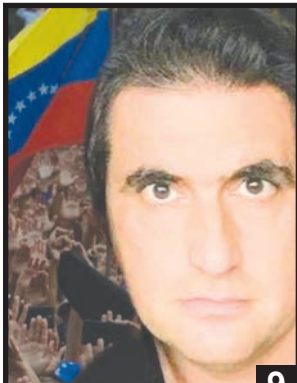
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¡Viva Cuba!

Pride 2023!

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**Free
Venezuelan
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stands with
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**Niger & Africa
stand up
against French
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**STOP THE
TRANSMOUNTAIN
PIPELINE
EXPANSION!**



Workers Fighting Back!

Workers of the world unite! ✨

By Alison Bodine

"I've cleaned guest rooms here for 27 years. During the pandemic, the owner took millions of dollars from the government to quarantine travellers at the hotel. Meanwhile, the hotel fired 143 of our co-workers and most of our room cleaning staff. We're fighting back for ourselves and for our families."

- Pardeep Thandi, a worker on strike, Room Attendant at Radisson Blu Hotel at Vancouver International Airport (formerly the Pacific Gateway Hotel)

"With the record profits that the BCMEA's member companies have earned over the last few years, the employers have not addressed the cost of living issues that our workers have faced over the last couple of years as all workers have,"

- Statement from the ILWU Canada Longshore Division, July 18, 2023

"Many workers struggle to live in this expensive city, especially through the high levels of inflation. Molson Coors refuses to provide wages that allow us to live in Vancouver."

- Farya Abdianni, worker currently on strike at the Granville Island Brewery

Throughout 2023, tens of thousands of workers have been on strike and out on the picket lines across the province, fighting for better working conditions and a better life. These workers are facing the same basic challenges as working and poor people across Canada: skyrocketing food costs, outrageous rent and housing costs and increasing fuel and transportation expenses. As just one example of the severity of the crisis, in March, Statistics Canada released a study showing that 25% of people in Canada cannot afford a sudden \$500 expense.

Capitalists' Offensive and Workers on Strike!

These are just some of the increasingly difficult living conditions that have contributed to a spark in dynamic labour action in 2023. Including the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) strike in April, where 155,000 federal employees were on strike across Canada, there have been seven separate strike actions in BC so far this year. This includes the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Vancouver dockworkers, CUPE Local 561 Fraser Valley Transit bus drivers, UNITE HERE Local 40 hotel workers, Teaching Support Staff



Union (TSSU) non-faculty teachers and researchers at SFU, SEIU Local 2 Granville Island Brewery workers, and Teamsters Local 213 Coca-Cola bottling plant and distribution centre workers.

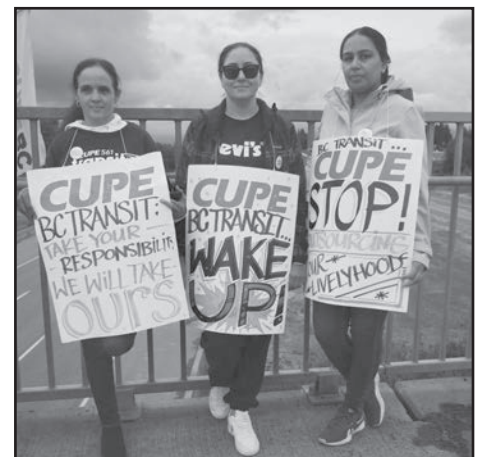
Fraser Valley Transit bus drivers represented by CUPE Local 561 begin their 124-day strike on March 20. This brought BC Transit bus services to a halt in Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Harrison, Agassiz, Hope, and several smaller communities in the Fraser Valley. Workers demanded higher wages to match those of transit workers in other BC municipalities, pensions, and better work schedules.

The Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU) at Simon Fraser University held its strike vote in May, with a vote of 94% in support of taking strike action. Throughout the summer, the TSSU has been on pickets across the various SFU campuses or engaged in other forms of strike action, such as overtime bans. TSSU represents over 1,000 Teaching Assistants, Tutor Markers and Sessional Instructors who are not part of the SFU

Workers strike at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport hotel in Richmond



Fraser Valley BC Transit workers protest



Faculty. These workers, who are often also graduate students, are already in a precarious position as their jobs are often short-term and with limited benefits. In this strike, they are fighting for better working conditions, pay, and benefits, including a cost of living adjustment. In 2019, SFU also signed an agreement recognizing TSSU as the Union for Research Assistants, but SFU has delayed negotiating their contract.

On June 12, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Canada Longshore Division voted 99.24% in favour of supporting strike action against their bosses, the BC Maritime Employers Association. A powerful 13-day-long strike by nearly 7,500 Metro Vancouver dockworkers began on July 1. The Longshore workers were on the picket lines demanding job protections against future port automation, an end to the contracting out of work to non-union workers, and better compensation to protect workers from inflation and increasing cost of living.

The ILWU strike impacted more than 30 port terminals and is estimated to have disrupted \$10.7 billion of trade, according to the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. The strike only came to an end when the federal Liberal Trudeau government threatened to intervene.

Over the last few years, there have been multiple strikes of BC hotel workers fighting for their jobs and living wages. These strikes began as hotel chains attempted to take advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic to institute massive

lay-offs, especially of long-term unionized workers. The hotel workers that have been impacted are majority women and people of colour. The most recent of these strikes has been the UNITE HERE Local 40 workers at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport hotel, where 200 workers began pickets on June 14. These workers joined the UNITE HERE Local 40 workers at the Radisson Blu Vancouver Airport hotel have been on strike for over two years.

The Radisson Blu Hotel, formerly known as the Pacific Gateway Hotel, was one of the hotels contracted by the government of Canada as a Covid-19 quarantine hotel. At that time, the hotel laid-off 143 hotel workers (70% of the hotel staff). After one year, these workers unjustly lost their jobs when the recall rights entrenched in their collective agreement expired. The Public Health Agency of Canada eventually terminated their contract with Pacific Gateway, expressing concern about the mass terminations of hotel staff as one of the reasons, as reported in Richmond News. However, the laid-off workers have still not got their jobs back, and the strike has continued.

In late July 2023, the Labour Relations Board ruled that the picket line at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport can extend to the Marriott Vancouver Airport and the Hilton Vancouver Airport hotels, which share the same building complex and are also owned by Larco Hospitality. In solidarity, five airlines (not including Air Canada) have so far refused to cross the picket lines and have stopped sending

passengers to the three picketed hotels.

The SEIU Local 2 strike of workers at the Granville Island Brewery is a strike of seven workers up against one of the world's largest brewers – Molson Coors. This strike, where the central demand is for a living wage, began on July 8. As reported by the Union, most of the workers at Granville Island Brewery are making \$20.97 per hour (the starting wage is a miserable \$16.75 per hour). This wage is far below the living wage for Vancouver of \$24.08, as calculated by Living Wage for Families BC in 2022.

Workers at five Coca-Cola locations in BC, including the Richmond bottling plant, are also fighting for fair wages and better working conditions against a global corporation. More than 400 workers with Teamsters Local 213 have been on strike against Coca-Cola Canada since July 13. Already, Coca-Cola Canada has been caught twice attempting to use “scab” strike-breaking labour to keep its operations going. They have been ordered to stop this illegal practice twice by the BC Labour Relations Board but have not suffered any consequences.

Same struggle, Same fight, We must unite!

The strikes in B.C. are reflective of the increasing labour struggles across Canada and the United States. During all these strikes, the demands of workers are very much the same: cost of living increases, better benefits, job security, and dignified and safe working conditions.

Most working and poor people in

Striking Coca-Cola workers



Rally in support of SFU Teaching Support Staff Union



Canada know that each year their wages are covering less and less of the basic necessities: food, housing, transportation and utilities. In fact, real wages for workers have not increased since the 1970s, according to data from Statistics Canada. As explained by Kaylie Tiessen, an economist with Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union, in a recent CBC article, "The share of GDP that labour is taking home compared to the share of GDP that capital is taking home — the gap is increasing and has increased over time....Workers are not taking home as much of what is produced in Canada and that leads to higher inequality"

As more and more people are struggling every day, employers are continuing to make record profits. For example, Molson Coors, which owns the Granville Island Brewery, had net sales reaching over \$10 billion USD in 2022. In February, the Canadian Press reported the CEO of Molson Coors saying, "The company is healthier than it has been in many years and has a strong trajectory." So, why is it that they cannot pay workers at one of their Vancouver breweries a living wage?

All the way across Canada, Michelle Charles, a worker on strike at the Metro Grocery store chain in Brantford, Ontario, told CBC News, "I can't afford to shop at Metro...It's ridiculous that I had to sell the house...honestly, I needed about \$200 or more a week, and I probably could have kept the house." It is an outrage that in 2022, Metro made a record-high profit with net earnings of \$922 million, yet they cannot offer the people that work for them a dignified wage.

There are ongoing strikes throughout Canada and the U.S. From Metro Grocery store workers and the Windsor Salt Mine strike in Ontario to the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) and the Writers Guild of America (WGA) strike in the U.S.

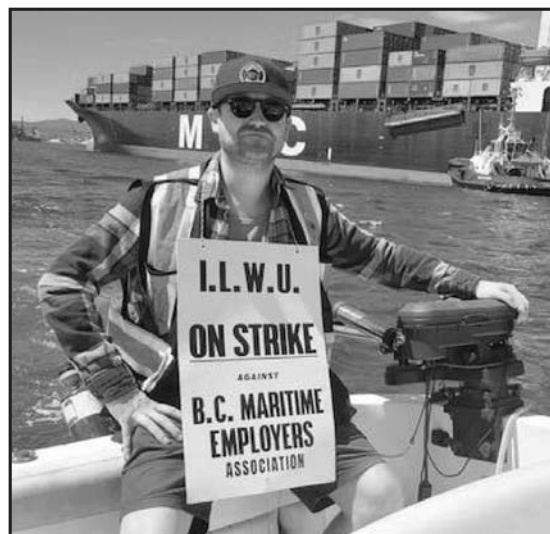
and many more important struggles, workers are standing up to say to their bosses, "Enough is enough!"

A Victory for Striking Workers is a Victory for All Working and Oppressed People

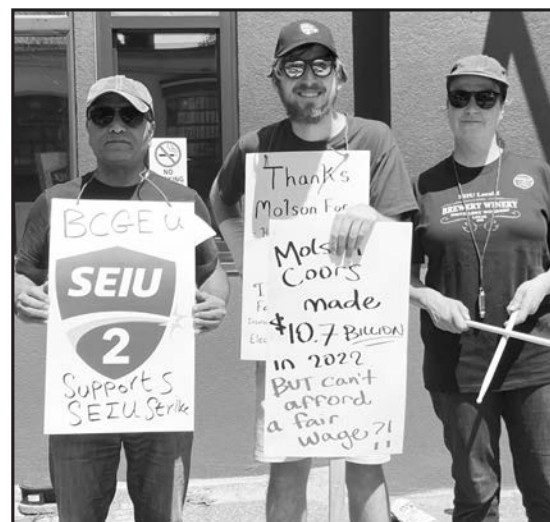
When 155,000 PSAC workers went on strike across Canada in April 2023, Angus Reid released a study showing that most people in Canada supported the three main demands of the PSAC strike. These were: better compensation for overtime or late-night shift work, work from home protections, and higher wages. These results demonstrate that despite a campaign by major media in Canada and the federal government to paint the striking workers as "ungrateful" and "greedy" for fighting for their rights, most people in Canada identified with and understood their basic demands.

Emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic, working people across Canada have found that life is increasingly more expensive and more difficult under capitalism. While capitalists and corporations are making billions of dollars, workers are sinking deeper into debt and are increasingly pushed into poverty and worsening living standards. Now is the opportunity for us to stand up in solidarity and support with striking workers! If unionized workers make gains in benefits, wages, and job security, that will mean better working conditions for all workers as capitalist employers are forced to raise their standards across the board. The outcome of any of the ongoing strikes in BC, Canada, and the U.S. will set the stage for the many labour struggles that are sure to come. A victory for any worker is a victory for all poor, working, and oppressed people! More and more working people are finding out that this system, capitalism, does not work. Capitalism must go! There is no other option!

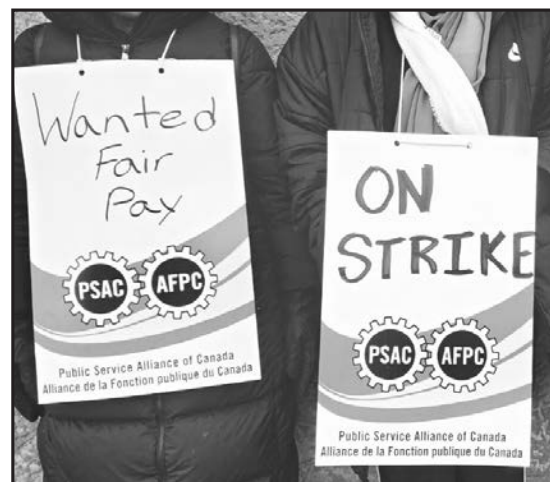
Follow Alison on Twitter:
@Alisoncolette



ILWU mobile picket in Vancouver Harbour



Workers at Granville Island Brewery on strike



PSAC workers on strike



By Abayome Azikiwe

General Abdourahamane Tchiane, the chairman of the ruling military administration in the West African state of Niger, has rejected the call by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to relinquish power to former President Mohamed Bazoum.

The Council for the Safeguarding of the Homeland (CNSP) staged a coup against the Bazoum government on July 26.

Tchiane is the commander of the presidential guard, which led the putsch. The following day on July 27, the leadership of the conventional armed forces in Niger announced their support for the coup.

On July 31, a joint statement was issued by the military governments in Burkina Faso and Mali expressing their solidarity with the CNSP in Niger. The declaration went further to send a message to the ECOWAS Chair, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, that any intervention aimed at removing the current regime in Niger would be viewed as an attack on their countries as well.

This statement begins by acknowledging that Burkina Faso and Mali:

“Express their fraternal solidarity and that of the peoples of Burkina Faso and Mali with the brotherly people of NIGER who have decided in full responsibility to take their destiny into their own hands and to assume before history the fullness of their sovereignty; denounce the persistence of these regional organizations in imposing sanctions aggravating the suffering of the populations and jeopardizing the spirit of Pan-Africanism; refuse to apply these illegal, illegitimate and inhuman sanctions against the people and authorities of Niger; warn that any military intervention against Niger would amount to a declaration of war against Burkina Faso and Mali; warn that any military intervention against Niger would result in the withdrawal of Burkina Faso and Mali from ECOWAS, as well as the adoption of self-defense measures in support of the armed forces and the people of Niger.”

Such a political position portends much for the future stability of the entire West Africa region as the rhetoric of ECOWAS Chair Tinubu of

Imperialists, Hands Off Africa!

Three African Military Governments Say They Will Resist Any Western-backed Intervention in Niger

Nigeria indicates a determination to attempt the reinstallation of Bazoum by military means. Undoubtedly, the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and the French Armed Forces would play a critical role if such an intervention was authorized.

AFRICOM and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) are in charge of two drone stations in Niger which ostensibly are there to assist in the battle against Islamic rebel groupings which have grown since the Pentagon-NATO war of regime change against Libya in 2011. Niger is the site of large deposits of uranium which is mined and exported by a French multinational corporation (Orano).

The same above-quoted statement from Burkina Faso and Mali goes on to:

“Warn against the disastrous consequences of a military intervention in Niger which could destabilize the entire region as was the unilateral NATO intervention in Libya which was at the origin of the expansion of terrorism in the Sahel and West AFRICA. The Transitional Governments of Burkina Faso and Mali are deeply indignant and surprised by the imbalance observed between, on the one hand, the celerity and the adventurous attitude of certain political leaders in West Africa wishing to use armed forces to restore constitutional order in a sovereign country, and on the other hand, the inaction, indifference and passive complicity of these organizations and political leaders in helping States and peoples who have been victims of terrorism for a decade and left to their fate.”

France has already begun the evacuation of its nationals wishing to leave. Other people from the European Union (EU) and the U.S. have been transported out of the country by the French Armed Forces.

The State Department says that it will evacuate what it describes as “non-essential staff” at the U.S. embassy in Niamey. As of early August, the White House has not announced any intentions to close the embassy in Niger.

Sanctions Are Acts of War

ECOWAS, the 15-member West African regional organization, has already imposed sanctions against the CNSP in Niger. This follows a similar pattern of what has already occurred with respect to Mali,



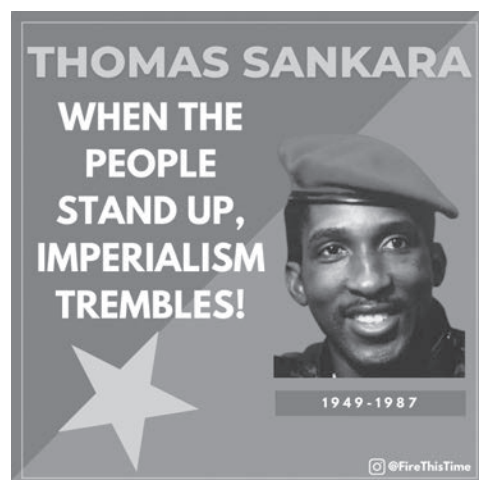
Sign reads "Down with Imperialism" at one of the mass protests in support of the army in Niger

Guinea-Conakry and Burkina Faso over the recent period of 2020-2023, in the aftermath of the seizure of power by military regimes.

However, the degree of economic sanctions and threats to remove the CNSP by force reveals that there is much more at stake for the imperialist states and their allies in Niger. The fact that Niger is a formidable base for purported “counterterrorism” activities by Washington and Paris means that there is a concern over the exposure of AFRICOM forces, intelligence personnel and military hardware if the Russian Federation was invited to come to the aid of the military administration in Niamey.

On August 2, it was announced that neighboring Nigeria had cut power supplies to Niger by 90%. Niger, a country of 25 million people, is listed

Continued on page 23



Thomas Sankara was an anti-imperialist and revolutionary socialist leader who led a Revolution in Burkina Faso in the 1980s. He was assassinated by imperialist stooges but his legacy continues to live in the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggle in Africa today.

Why are we marching with Cuban flags and signs at Vancouver Pride?

By *Azza Rojbi & Tamara Hansen*

On September 25, 2022, Cuba passed a new “Families Code” in a national referendum in which 67% voted in favor of adopting this code into law. Over 6 million Cubans living outside and inside of Cuba participated in the referendum which has cemented and expanded LGBTQAI+, women’s, children’s, and elders’ legal rights in Cuba.

We see a new important development for the Queer movement in Cuba, which folks in Canada and internationally will benefit to know about. Since 1959, Cuba has used mass mobilizations and popular democracy within all levels of society towards building: agrarian reform, ending illiteracy, health initiatives (such as vaccination campaigns), national defence, and many other legal and political changes.

The Cuban people and their revolution have been in constant motion for change. Specifically with the goal of activating and including those who have been traditionally marginalized under capitalism: workers, farmers, women, youth, elders, people of colour, people of African decent, and the Queer community. Cuba’s new Families Code shows that Cuba’s revolution continues in this dynamic motion.

Trans Rights in Cuba

Trans people in Cuba have had access to free, gender affirming surgery and health care since 2008. Additionally, in Cuba, trans folks can correct their legal names and gender on official documents without surgery since 2013. Cuba also has a national network of trans people and supporters called TransCuba, designed to



provide support and family counseling and social awareness build about trans issues across the country.

Cuba’s New Families Code

The new families code expands on the rights of the LGBTQAI+ community and families by expanding the definition of family. Some important highlights of the Families Code include:

It protects the rights of same sex parents to build a family whether that is through marriage, adoption, or assisted reproduction.

Equal marriage and adoption rights regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Parental rights can now be shared among extended and “non-traditional” family structures, including grandparents, stepparents, and surrogate parents.

The right to assisted reproduction.

The extension of labour rights to those who care full-time for children, seniors, or people with disabilities.

The right to a family life free from violence.

The codification of domestic violence penalties and the outlawing of corporal punishment (in Cuba, a parent’s decision to disown an LGBTQIA+ child is considered domestic violence and is punished accordingly).

The new Families Code does not limit the existing family code, but it expands it. It does not limit the rights of anyone, but again expands and extends them for others.

This new Families Code was not only written by lawyers, politicians or legislators. It was the result of the research and work over many years by sociologists, psychologists, doctors, statisticians, social



Top: TransCuba activists at a rally in Havana, Cuba in 2021. Bottom: Over a million Cubans marched in Havana for International Workers’ Day on May 1, 2022.



Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) marched at the annual Vancouver Trans March on August 4, 2023.

workers, and other social institutions in Cuba.

The debates and discussion on the contents of the Families Code took place throughout Cuba over many months in workplaces, community centres, and in the media. You feel it when you talk to people in Cuba. You see it when you observe how mass consultations and processes like this happen in the country. The popular democracy is alive in Cuba, and it is very engaging.

Cuba's Families Code referendum was important proof of the relationship between the Cuban people and the leadership of the revolution including the government, state, and the popular mass revolutionary institutions such as the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), the Cuban National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), the University Student Federation (FEU) and others.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel tweeted after the referendum on the families Code passed, "Approving

the new Family Code [#CódigoDeLasFamilias] is doing justice. It is paying off a debt with several generations of Cuban men and women, whose family projects have been waiting for this Law for years. From today we will be a better nation. Love is now the law [#ElAmorYaEsLey]"

As we see the challenges facing the LGBTQAI+ community in Canada and attempts to roll back the rights of trans and non-binary folks, Cuba's new Families Code shows us that a better future is possible. One that embraces diversity and respects the rights of all.

We hope you will join us in our work in solidarity with Cuba!

Get Involved in Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) follow us on Twitter & Instagram:

@VanCuba_VCSC or find us on Facebook @vansubasolidarity. You can also keep up with our work on our website:

WWW.VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM



Top: VCSC tabling at the Vancouver Dyke March & Festival Aug 5, 2023.

Bottom: Signing the postcard to President Biden demanding Cuba be removed from the so-called "State-Sponsors of Terrorism" List

Fundraising Campaign "Jardin de Luz - Special Aid to a Special School for Children with Disabilities" in Cuba

Support this important campaign initiated by the Asociación de Cubanos "Juan Gualberto Gómez" and sponsored by the Canadian Network on Cuba.

Funds will be raised to go toward supplies for a school in Bayamo, Granma, Cuba for children with disabilities aged 5-11 years old. This area was very hard hit by recent flooding.

There are two payment methods available to make a donation:

- 1) Through eTransfer to: asociacionjgg@gmail.com
- 2) Cheques written out to the "Asociación de Cubanos Juan Gualberto Gómez" - Mail to: CNC, PO Box 99051 - 1245 Dupont St., Toronto, Ontario M6H 4H7



POSTCARD CAMPAIGN CUBA IS NOT A SPONSOR OF TERROR!

New postcard campaign initiated by Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade - Vancouver (FCAB) & NY-NJ Cuba Si Coalition calling for Cuba to be removed from the State Sponsors of Terrorism List.

For more details, check out www.vancubavsblockade.org or email NoBloqueoVancouver@gmail.com

For more information about Cuba's challenges and gains related to Queer rights, scan this QR Code to watch the June 29, 2023 webinar: *Celebrate Cuba's International Days Against Homophobia & Transphobia* "For all Families, Love is the Law" organized by the U.S.-Cuba Normalization Conference Coalition



SCAN ME



Viva Cuba! Viva Pride! End the U.S. Blockade on Cuba Now!



By Janine Solanki

For years Cuba has been at the forefront of fighting homophobia and transphobia, building a more inclusive society and advancing the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and more). This last year the Cuban people made an important and historic advancement with the approval of Cuba's new Families Code, which was passed into law with massive participation of millions of the Cuban population. You can learn more about this revolutionary legislation in the Fire This Time article, "Why are we marching with Cuban flags and signs at Vancouver Pride?" on page 6.

2SLGBTQIA+ Rights are Human Rights!

Pride season in Vancouver kicked off on June 24 with the East Side Pride Festival, where VCSC had an information table and a great afternoon talking to festivalgoers interested in learning more about Cuba! In online activities, VCSC was also part of two successful webinars on June 28 and June 29 to celebrate Cuba's International Days Against Homophobia & Transphobia, as reported in the last issue of Fire This Time.

On **August 4**, the Vancouver Trans Pride March marched through the streets of East Vancouver, with participants holding signs and chanting to demand healthcare, dignity, and equal rights for all Trans, Two-Spirit, Genderqueer, Intersex people. In the mix were Cuba solidarity activists holding a banner proclaiming, "Cuba Says: Sexual Diversity is not Dangerous, Homophobia and Transphobia are!"

On **August 5**, the annual Dyke March marched down East Vancouver's Commercial Drive, with signs and flags celebrating Lesbian and all 2SLGBTQIA+ pride held high! The march's destination was the Dyke March Festival at Grandview Park, where thousands gathered for an afternoon of music, speakers and an info fair. VCSC had a table

busy with festival goers who stopped to discuss all things Cuba, to pick up literature about Cuba and to sign postcards demanding U.S. President Biden remove Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism List!

Rounding out a weekend of Pride festivities, on **August 6**, the Vancouver Pride Parade took over the streets of Downtown Vancouver in an explosion of colour, sounds and exuberant crowds! VCSC marched in the parade for the 15th year, complete with a decorated vehicle, Pride, Trans and Cuban flags, and banners letting the crowds know that "Cuba Says LGBTQIA+ Rights are Human Rights!" VCSC organizers and supporters danced through the streets in matching pink t-shirts with the demand "Lift the U.S. Blockade on Cuba!" While parading past over 3 km of enthusiastic crowds, activists handed out hundreds of Cuba solidarity buttons and newsletters!

For the first time the Vancouver Pride Festival spanned two days, and VCSC joined in the festivities with an info table on **August 5** and **August 6**. Cuba solidarity activists spent the afternoons distributing VCSC newsletters and talking to festivalgoers about what Cuba is doing to advance 2SLGBTQIA+ rights!

VCSC will also join New Westminster for their dynamic Pride festival, on Saturday August 19. If you are in the area, make sure to visit the Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba table!

Join us! ☺

There are many ways to support and defend Cuba and to learn about how Cuba is leading the fight against homophobia and transphobia! To find out about upcoming events and actions in Vancouver and beyond, visit www.vancubasolidarity.com or follow Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba on Facebook @vancubasolidarity and Twitter and Instagram @VanCuba_VCSC

Follow Janine on Twitter: @janinesolanki

"By Any Means Necessary..."



MALCOLM X SPEAKS

"One of the last things I must say concerning the Congo: not only do they not intend for the Congo to fall into African hands because of its mineral wealth—and it has the greatest deposits of some of the richest elements, or minerals, of any other area on this earth. They don't intend to give it up because of its wealth; another reason they don't intend to give it up is if you look at the map you'll see that it is so strategically located geographically..."

"And the United States' interests are involved in blocking this, yes! Some of these liberals who grin in your face like they're your best friends, they have money tied up in the Congo. Some of the most powerful political figures in this country, come up and governors over states, have got interests in the Congo, and got interests in South Africa, and got interests all over the African continent, and go there! And as the Africans awaken and realize, they—it makes them full of the incentive to never rest until that exploiter is driven out."

*"After the Firebombing – Ford Auditorium"
– Detroit, Michigan – February 14, 1965*

The Worldwide Women's & Queer Liberation Movement Must Join Revolutionary Cuba



By Alison Bodine

Women and the international movement for queer rights need Cuba. Yes, Cuba also needs the work of the international solidarity movement, especially at this time of the escalating U.S. blockade against Cuba and the Covid-19 pandemic, but I think it's important that we flip the narrative. It's not only that Cuba needs our solidarity, but we also, as women and queer people, need Cuba to become stronger and arm ourselves with a revolutionary vision. We must join Cuba to build the better world that we all are fighting for.

Cuba is an example of the gains that are possible in a revolutionary society. An example of the accomplishments that women can make is when society sets the elimination of inequality based on gender as a real goal. And then that society works to achieve that goal in laws and government policy, but also through actions to carry out those laws and work in communities.

That is why we must recognize our responsibility as women, as 2SLGBTQIA+ people in the U.S., Canada and beyond, to fight against the criminal U.S. blockade on Cuba. The women who spoke earlier today on this panel have already given us so much important information about the gains of women in Cuba during the revolution. They have also told us about the new revolutionary Families Code and encouraged us to learn not just from the Families Code but from the entire process that went into passing the Families Code into law.

The Importance of Cuba for Women and the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community

Today I wanted to talk about how we can bring Cuba to the women's movement and to the queer community. I'm glad that

Cindy Domingo from the US Women and Cuba Collaboration went before me on the panel because we've already learned about some of the ways that we can do this work. I especially want to highlight the important people-to-people exchanges that happen when we travel to Cuba, when U.S. citizens travel to Cuba, despite U.S. laws that prevent them from travelling there, and despite the criminal blockade. When we travel to Cuba, we learn from Cuban women, trans women and men, and queer people on the ground about their experiences. When we return to the U.S. and Canada, we can use this experience to build our solidarity with Cuba but also to build our own movements for women's and queer liberation in these capitalist and imperialist countries.

In our work, we must educate people about the reality of women and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Cuba. We must organize events about the gains of women and queer folks in the Cuban Revolution. We must discuss at these events about how abortion in Cuba is free and on demand, especially at a time when women's rights to choose are being eroded in the United States. We must talk about how a majority of Cuba's National Parliament (the National Assembly of People's Power), 53.4%, are women. This places Cuba second in the world for the most women in a national parliament, and in Cuba, there is no required quota. It is not a law for at least 50% of the national parliamentarians to be women, but Cuba has achieved this because of how Cuban society is organized and the space that the Cuban revolution has opened for women's leadership. In Canada, only 30% of parliamentarians are women, in the United States, only 27% of congresspeople are women.

We must talk about the progress of Cuban women and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community on social media and in media at every chance we get.

And lastly, we need to talk about Cuba not only at events for Cuba but also at other events and actions in the women's and queer rights movement.

Viva Cuba! Viva Queer Liberation!

One important event that we, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) and Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver, attend every year are the Pride events and actions in Vancouver and surrounding municipalities. At these events, we bring our campaigns against the U.S. blockade on Cuba and our educational campaigns about the gains for women and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Cuba. This year, we will have the new "Cuba is Not a State Sponsor of Terrorism! Remove Cuba from Your List" international postcard demanding that U.S. President Biden remove Cuba from the list of the "State Sponsors of Terrorism" with us too. We will have the postcards there, alongside signs, banners, and other materials, and we will be talking to people about revolutionary Cuba.

Pride is an excellent opportunity to reach hundreds of thousands of people with our message for Cuba. 400-600,000 people attend the Pride Parade in Vancouver each year. They are from all walks of life, from the working class to the middle class, from minimum wage working people and poor and unemployed to unionists and union members, and from oppressed nationalities to immigrants and refugees. These hundreds of thousands of participants in Pride see the banners and signs, and if people are interested, they come to our table, and we

talk to them about Cuba and why Cuba is important, and what we can learn from Cuba.

When people approach us to talk about Cuba, we can tell them about the gains Cuba has been making, despite the difficulties in this criminal blockade imposed upon them by the U.S. We can share about how in 2012, Adela Hernandez was the first openly trans person in Cuba to be elected to a public office. She was elected to the municipal government of Caibarien in the central province of Villa Clara. We can talk about how in 2007, Gender Affirmation Surgery has been made available for free to trans people in Cuba under their universal health care system and how people can change their identification as they need to without surgery.

Pride is an excellent opportunity to have all of these important conversations and more, and I encourage people to participate in local Pride events and actions. We must work harder to bring Cuba solidarity and the Cuban revolution to the women's and 2SLGBTQIA+ movement.

We Have a Lot to Learn from the Cuban Revolution

Let me emphasize again we, as women, queer people, and poor working and oppressed people in the U.S. and Canada, have a lot to learn from Cuba. Many of us have been in this process of learning for many years, and some of us are just starting. But one thing is sure, the cruel U.S. blockade on Cuba prevents countless opportunities for exchange and learning.

I'd like to end with a quote from Mariela Castro, who is the president of the Cuban Center for Sexual Education, or CENESEX, and also the daughter of Vilma Espin, the founder of the Cuban Federation of Women (FMC). Mariela

Castro was interviewed by the Toronto Star in 2015 because she was in Canada as part of the World Pride Festival. The Toronto Star reporter asked her, "What can we learn from Cuba?" And she answered, "One of the things Canadians can learn is Cuba is a country that has done a lot for their population with very little. Solidarity is a process that has been instituted as a result of the revolution. Those are the resources I am using to bring more opportunities to LGBTQIA+ communities in Cuba. If the revolution has taught us to be just and have solidarity in many things, the revolution must also be responsible to demonstrate and teach the same themes related to LGBTQIA+ rights. Cuban society has to be interested in what needs to be changed. As Fidel said, revolution is everything that needs to be changed. And I think here we have a very good idea of what needs to be changed. We're ready to unite and to fight it."

Viva Cuba!

This article is based on a talk given by Alison Bodine at the 2023 International US-Cuba Normalization Conference, held in New York City on March 11 & 12, 2023, at the workshop "Women's Rights in Cuba Today." This workshop also featured Osmayda Hernandez, Director of Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) International Relations, Nancy Valiente, President of the Union of Cuban Jurists in Matanzas province, and Cindy Domingo, Chair, US Women and Cuba Collaboration and Co-chair, WILPF's Cuba and the Bolivarian Alliance Issues Committee. It was chaired by Erin Feely-Nahem of the International US-Cuba Normalization Conference and New York-New Jersey Cuba Si Coalition, and Anushka Sarkar from the Fordham University National Lawyers Guild.

Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette

MOTHER OF ALL STRUGGLES!

Indigenous struggle against colonialism



Lee Maracle

(July 2, 1950 - November 11, 2021)

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

"Above all it is connected to the continuous attempt by Canada and Canadians to marginalize us from inside our nations. To say feminism is foreign suggests we do not belong in the centre of feminist politics. We do. The foregoing statements are lame attempts to cosign us to a place on the edges of our nations, just outside the fort – an attempt to segregate and oppress us.

Even when we were confined to spaces outside the fort, we were never on capitalism's margin. Our wealth is the engine that keeps Canadian settlers privileged. Their failure to share what they have stolen makes us look as though we are on the margins, but without our wealth, Europeans would become the impoverished souls who arrived here four centuries ago. Colonialism is the centre of the capitalist economy. It is the foundations of capitalist imperialism, and we will no be marginalized inside our nations.

The beatings Indigenous people at Standing Rock continuously received over the pipeline under Obama's leadership show how central the natural-resource wealth of our lands is to the larger society. Tar sands and Kinder Morgan are the Canadian equivalent."

Excerpt from "Marginalization and Reactionary Politics" in My Conversations with Canadians (Book Thug, 2017)



Visit Cuba with 5th Calixto Garcia Solidarity Brigade!

November 26-
December 8, 2023

Email us for the 2023 brigade program, prices & information:
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Visit Cuba's beautiful "Oriente", the brigade will be visiting 3 provinces: Holguin, Santiago de Cuba & Granma.



STOP TARGETING ACTIVISTS!

■■■➡ TOGETHER WE CAN STOP IT



McCarthyism Is Back: Together We Can Stop It

We stand together against the rise of a new McCarthyism that is targeting peace activists, critics of US foreign policy, and Chinese Americans. Despite increased intimidation, **we remain steadfast in our mission to foster peace and international solidarity, countering the narrative of militarism, hostility, and fear.**

As the US government grapples with a major crisis of legitimacy, it has grown fearful of young people becoming conscious and organized to change the world. **Influential media outlets like The New York Times have joined right-wing extremists in using intimidation tactics to silence these advocates for change, affecting not only the left but everyone who supports free speech and democratic rights.**

The political and media establishments, both liberal and conservative, have initiated McCarthy-like attacks against individuals and organizations criticizing US foreign policy, **labeling peace advocates as “Chinese or foreign agents.”** This campaign uses innuendo and witch hunts, posing a threat to free speech and the right to dissent. We must oppose this trend.

Scientists, researchers, and service members of Chinese descent have been falsely accused of espionage and unregistered foreign agency, often with cases later collapsing due to insufficient evidence. Similar to the old “Red Scare” and McCarthy periods, when scores of

organizations and leaders like W.E.B Du Bois, Eugene Debs, Emma Goldman, Paul Robeson and Martin Luther King Jr and others were attacked with fact-less accusations, today, prominent organizations and individuals, **including CODEPINK, The People’s Forum, and Tricontinental Institute have been targeted, with smears and accusations propagated by outlets like The New York Times.**

Their strategy paints a sinister image of a secret network funding the peace movement. However, **there’s nothing illegal or fringe about opposing a New Cold War or a “major power conflict” with China,** views shared by hundreds of millions globally. Receiving donations from US citizens who share these views is not illicit.

Media outlets have tried to scandalize funding sources of several organizations that are on the frontlines working with anti-racist, feminist, anti-war, abolitionist, climate justice, and other movements throughout the United States and globally. Meanwhile, when white neoliberal philanthropists flood the non-profit complex with

significant funds to support their political agendas this is rarely scrutinized or made accountable to the communities they impact.

From The New York Times to Fox News, there’s a resurgence of the Red Scare that once shattered many lives and threatened movements for change and social justice. This attack isn’t only on the left but against everyone who exercises their free speech and democratic rights. **We must firmly resist this racist, anti-communist witch hunt and remain committed to building an international peace movement. In the face of adversity, we say NO to xenophobic witch hunts and YES to peace.**

INITIAL SIGNERS

CODEPINK • The People’s Forum • Tricontinental Institute for Social Research • ANSWER Coalition • Anticapitalism for Artists • Defend Democracy in Brazil • Families for Freedom • IFCO/Pastors for Peace • Mulheres de Resistencia do Exterior • Nodutdol • NYC Jericho Movement • NYC Young Communist League • Radical Elders • Abby Martin • Andy Hsaio • Ben Becker • Ben Norton • Bhaskar Sunkara • Brian Becker • Carl Messineo • Chris Hedges • Claudia de la Cruz • Corinna Mullen • David Harvey • Derek R. Ford • Doug Henwood • Eugene Puryear • Farida Alam • Fergie Chambers • Gail Walker • Geo Maher • Gerald Horne • Gloria La Riva • Hakim Adi • Heidi Boghosian • Immanuel Ness • James Early • Jeremy Kuzmarov • Jill Stein • Jim Garrison • Jodi Dean • Jodie Evans • Johanna Fernandez • Karen Ranucci • Kenneth Hammond • Koohan Paik-Mander • Lee Camp • Lisa Armstrong • Manolo de los Santos • Manu Karuka • Mara Verheyden-Hilliard • Matt Hoh • Matt Meyer • Matteo Capasso • Max Lesnik • Medea Benjamin • Michael Steven Smith • Nazia H. Kazi • Radhika Desai • Rania Khalek • Richard M Walden • Robin D.G. Kelley • Roger Waters • Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz • Ruth Wilson Gilmore • Salvatore Engel di-Mauro • Sheila Xiao • Stella Schnabel • Stella Schnabel • Vijay Prashad • Vivian Weisman

SIGN ON AT PEOPLESFORUM.ORG/SIGN-ON

Lift the U.S. Blockade on Cuba Now!

Join Vancouver Actions in Solidarity with Cuba

By Janine Solanki

For over 125 years, the U.S. military has illegally occupied Cuba's Guantanamo Bay. In recent history, Guantanamo Bay has been infamous as the site of a U.S. detention center known for torture, extraordinary rendition, indefinite, and arbitrary detention of prisoners. The U.S. occupation of Guantanamo Bay continues despite Cuba's demands to have the territory returned to them. Considering the "regime change" goals of the U.S. government against the Cuban revolution, the U.S. military occupation of Cuban territory is a constant threat to Cuba's sovereignty and self-determination.

On July 5, 2023, a nuclear-powered submarine arrived at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay where it remained for 3 days. This maneuver was a provocative escalation of the ongoing threat by the United States towards Cuba, which was condemned by the Cuban government and Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Alongside the U.S. occupation of Guantanamo Bay and this recent threat, Cuba has faced over 6 decades of a criminal U.S. trade and travel blockade. Under former U.S. President Trump, 243 new sanctions were imposed against Cuba, making the blockade the most restrictive it has ever been. Trump also placed Cuba on the U.S. State Department's List of State Sponsors of Terrorism, which makes Cuba's international trade even more difficult as banks and financial institutions often won't process transactions of countries on this list. Two years into his presidency, U.S. President Biden has failed to reverse this illegitimate and immoral designation.

Despite the enormous challenges imposed by the U.S. blockade, the Cuban revolution



Song by Coast Salish Elder Kelly White at Monada Day in Vancouver, July 26, 2023

continues advancing in the fight to build a better world!

Cuba's Moncada Day – the spark of the Cuban Revolution!

July 26, 2023, marked 70 years since Cuba's Moncada Day. On this day in 1953, Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro led an attack

against the Moncada Army Barracks in Santiago de Cuba, which sparked the Cuban revolution and led to its victory in 1959. To read more about the history and importance of Moncada Day, read our article on page 19 of this issue of Fire This Time.

On **July 26**, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) brought together Cuba supporters for a cultural evening and delicious BBQ to celebrate Moncada Day in East Vancouver's Trout Lake Park. The event was opened by Kelly White, Coast Salish Facilitator and Elder, who drummed and sang, leading participants in powerful chants of "Viva Cuba!" The coordinator of VCSC, Tamara Hansen, spoke about the significance of Moncada Day in sparking the Cuban revolution and the gains of the Cuban revolution which continue today. Participants were treated to the beautiful music of Maria Melendez, a multitalented Salvadorean musician who sang Latin-American classics with her guitar. The evening also featured moving poetry from Lucy Ortiz and Alejandro Mujica-Olea, two organizers with Proyecto Cultural Sur – Vancouver. Cuba supporter, Francisco Trujillo Avalos-Davidson, also recited a captivating poem by Pablo Neruda, the famed national poet of Chile. Participants also heard about important Cuba solidarity campaigns from Azza Rojbi, coordinator of Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver, and Andrew Barry, organizer of Vancouver's Monthly Car Caravan Against the U.S. Blockade on Cuba. The event also included an exciting raffle draw and a piñata and games for some of the younger Cuba enthusiasts! To close out the event, VCSC organizer Janine Solanki led a salsa lesson, and participants danced into the summer evening to the irresistible rhythm of Cuban salsa music!

Cuba solidarity on the streets!

The summer has brought Vancouverites outdoors, and Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) and Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver (FCAB-Vancouver) have also been on the streets protesting the U.S. blockade on Cuba!

Car Free Festival

On **July 29**, VCSC and FCAB-Vancouver joined the New Westminster Car-Free Festival with an information table and spoke to a constant stream of festival-goers curious to learn more about Cuba. Many people stopped to sign the new postcard campaign directed to U.S. President Biden, demanding that he remove Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism List. This postcard campaign was initiated by VCSC and endorsed by FCAB-Vancouver, IFCO/Pastors for Peace, NY-NJ Cuba Si Coalition, Seattle/Cuba Friendship Committee and Unblock Cuba.

Since the postcard campaign was launched in February, over 6000 postcards have been printed, and thousands have been handed out and mailed to groups and individuals around the world for distribution in their cities. If you would like to order postcards, please email: nobloqueovancouver@gmail.com

Car Caravan for Cuba

The next day, July 30, Cuba solidarity activists hit the streets again, but this time for the Monthly Car Caravans Against the U.S. Blockade of Cuba! This monthly action is organized in Vancouver by Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade-Vancouver and is part of a global campaign started by Cuban American activist Carlos Lazo and Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love). The Car Caravan rolled through Vancouver streets, cars decorated with Cuban flags and signs demanding "Lift the U.S. blockade on Cuba!"

Working with local U.S. Green Party



Car caravan against the U.S. blockade on Cuba, July 30, 2023

From on the street actions to online, Cuba solidarity is uniting activists across borders! On **July 5**, the Green Party of California and Missouri Green Party hosted a webinar about the U.S. healthcare crisis and the fight for affordable healthcare. The event featured many prominent speakers in the U.S. and was moderated by former Green Party presidential candidate, Dr. Jill Stein. The webinar was sponsored by Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver, whose coordinator, Azza Rojbi, spoke about the example of Cuba's renowned universal healthcare system.

Join us! ☺

Join us in the next event in solidarity with Cuba! Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba is online at www.vancubasolidarity.com, and you can follow us on Facebook @VanCubaSolidarity and Twitter and Instagram @vancuba_vcsc. You can also visit Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade at www.vancubavblockade.org and follow on Twitter and Facebook @NoBloqueoVan.

Follow Janine on Twitter: @janinesolanki

By Alison Bodine

Summer 2023 in Canada, and especially in British Columbia, has not only been characterized by extreme heat and raging wildfires but also a historic drought. July 3-10, 2023, was the hottest week since world temperatures were first recorded in 1850. As reported by the *Globe and Mail* on July 27, “two-thirds of British Columbia’s 34 water basins – regions that are used by the province to manage the levels and flow of water – are at Drought Level 4 or 5, the worst on the province’s scale.” These extreme weather conditions have impacted everyone, but poor and working people, farmers, immigrants and refugees, and Indigenous communities and people living in Northern BC have faced the most hardship.

Government Response to the Drought Emergency is Too Little, Too Late

In the face of this ongoing disaster, the response of the federal Liberal government and the BC NDP government has been grossly inadequate and unacceptable. Has the BC government issued a stop-work order on so-called “natural” fracked-gas projects that drain vital water sources? Has the federal government ended the construction of the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline (TMX), which threatens the Fraser and Coquihalla River systems that it crosses? What about halting commercial bottled water operations?

In early July, the British Columbia Energy Regulator suspended some of the previously approved water withdrawals for Northern watersheds. The BC government has also reported that they have “asked” the commercial water bottling operations to “reduce their use.” However, these small steps are far too little and far too late. Overall, the provincial and federal governments have not taken any effective

action to conserve and preserve essential water sources in preparation for a very predictable drought. Instead, they have continued with the same business-as-usual policies, which put the interests and profits of massive corporations and oil and gas companies first, neglecting the needs and rights of people and the planet.

Destruction of Water Sources Continues with Impunity

On top of this, oil and gas extraction projects and the Site-C mega-dam have been allowed to pollute and devastate BC’s lakes, rivers, and streams without consequence.

CLIMATE CONVERGENCE ON THE STREETS TO DEMAND "SYSTEM CHANGE NOT CLIMATE CHANGE!"



In May 2023, five stop work orders against the Coastal GasLink (CGL) fracked gas pipeline were issued by the BC Environmental Assessment Office for negatively impacting Anzac River and Wedzin Kwa (Morice River). This pollution of vital water sources by CGL is ongoing – and the fines imposed are a drop in the bucket. In January 2023, CGL was fined a mere \$213,600 by the BC government for “continued deficiencies with erosion and sediment.” The next month, that same government announced fee reductions that will save TC Energy, the corporation building the CGL pipeline, \$16 million dollars over the next 25 years. This destruction continues under the BC NDP government while the Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs and community members whose unceded land is crossed by CGL continue to face police attacks and brutality for their opposition to the pipeline and their peaceful defence of the land and water.



Middle: Climate Convergence Intersection Action in New Westminster. August 1, 2023.

Bottom: Climate Convergence Table at New Westminster Car Free Day. July 29, 2023.

As reported by Sarah Cox of the Narwhal (thenarwhal.ca) in August 2023, “The contractor building the Site C hydro dam in northeast B.C. was fined \$1.1 million this week after pleading guilty to discharging more than three million litres of contaminated wastewater into the

fish-bearing Peace River,” related to an incident nearly six years ago – in September 2023. Once again, this \$1.1 million fine is nothing compared to the \$1.75 billion price tag of the project. As with other climate crimes, the damage to the Peace River cannot be undone, and the CEOs and massive corporations that are responsible are getting away with nothing more than a small slap on the wrist.

These examples are just a few from the mountain of evidence demonstrating that the Trudeau Liberal federal government and David Eby’s NDP government in British Columbia have no

regard for Indigenous rights, people or the planet and no real plans to address the climate emergency. This gross neglect in the face of a climate catastrophe is exactly what makes building a more united and stronger climate justice movement necessary.

Join the Struggle in Defence of Water and Mother Earth!

The struggle in defence of water is directly tied to the fight to stop the TMX and CGL pipelines. It is also one of the many important fights that we have ahead of us in this time of climate emergency. We must work

together to end global warming, ocean acidification, species extinction, deforestation, pollution, and all the other ills that have been imposed on people and the planet by the capitalist economic system.

Throughout the summer, Climate Convergence Metro Vancouver has continued to join and unite with other grassroots organizations and climate justice fighters to educate, organize and mobilize people across the Lower Mainland in defence of Mother Earth and Indigenous rights:

July 1 – Climate justice tabling at Kitsilano Beach in Vancouver, at an art installation from local artist A.S. Dhillon exposing Canada’s ongoing genocide of Indigenous people and complicity in U.S.-led wars and occupations. Climate Convergence joined in tabling with Decolonial Solidarity – Vancouver

July 29 – Car Free Day in New Westminster. Climate Convergence had a table at the popular street festival. There was a great response from people passing by eager to sign the “Hey Trudeau: TMX Has Got to Go!” postcard and find out more about getting involved in the struggle for climate justice

August 1 – Climate Convergence action: No New Pipelines in a Climate Emergency! Stop the TMX and CGL Pipelines! Intersection Action and Decolonial Solidarity Adopt-a-Branch Action Demanding RBC Divest from

Continued on page 16

NO NEW PIPELINES IN A CLIMATE EMERGENCY! AS FOREST FIRES RAGE MONEY FOR HOUSING, EDUCATION, & HEALTHCARE NOT PIPELINES!

Climate
Convergence
banner drop,
May 2023.



By mid-June 2023, thousands of out of control forest fires across Canada had already burned 59,000 square kilometers. Tens of thousands of people had been forced to leave their homes and communities. A thick smoke and poor air quality covered much of Canada and parts of the United States. This fire season, not even half-over, is already the most destructive on record.

It is no coincidence that an increase in devastating forest fires in Canada has come at the same time as record high global temperatures and increasing climate chaos. Hotter overall temperatures and more drought, as well as the forest pests and diseases that thrive in these conditions, mean more fuel for fires to burn.

Despite the smoke that covered Ottawa and Parliament Hill, the Trudeau Liberal government continues to close their eyes and maintain their business-as-usual policies of climate destruction. This willful and criminal ignorance can be seen most clearly in their continued push to build the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion (TMX).

If built, the TMX pipeline will:

- ▶ Triple the amount of dirty tar-sands bitumen transported from Alberta to the coast of BC to 890,000 barrels per day. Bitumen is notoriously dirty and carbon-intensive to produce. According to the Sightline Institute, “producing the oil to fill TMX to capacity would release the equivalent of at least 15 million metric tons of CO₂ annually. That’s more than the annual emissions of 125 countries, including Panama, Senegal, Uruguay, and Tanzania.”

- ▶ Propel continued expansion of the tar sands in Alberta. National Geographic describes the open-pit mining of Bitumen North of Fort McMurray, along the Athabasca River as, “one of the world’s largest collections of tailings waste ponds—able to fill more than 500,000 Olympic swimming pools. These are so toxic, ducks and other birds have to be prevented from going near them...Air pollution, including acid rain, also plagues the remote region. One study found that acid rain would eventually damage an area

almost the size of Germany”

- ▶ Increase the number of tankers in the Burrard Inlet from five per month to 34 per month. This increased tanker traffic will cause severe harm to the already endangered Southern resident orcas as well as other marine life due to the increased noise. Increased tanker traffic also brings with it a higher risk of spills, and a bitumen would be devastating.

- ▶ Add 14 new tanks to the Burnaby Mountain tank farm and put more than 45,000 people living and going to school on Burnaby Mountain at further risk for a deadly fire. A 2015 report from the City of Burnaby Fire Department outlined many potentially deadly scenarios on Burnaby Mountain, including flammable crude leaks, poisonous gases, fires burning for days, and exploding tanks spraying molten crude, igniting other nearby tanks and the wildfires spreading from the tank farm. A previously suppressed report commissioned by the National Energy Board (NEB), uncovered in 2019, revealed that Trans Mountain’s plans for dealing with a fire emergency would see a response team arriving at least six hours after an emergency took place.

The Trudeau Liberal government has not only put an enormous burden on Indigenous nations, communities, and vital ecosystems in the path of the TMX pipeline, but also an overwhelming financial debt burden on people in Canada. The TMX pipeline was bought with tax-payers money, and despite hollow promises from Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland that “no additional public money will be invested,” the debt will fall on the shoulders of people in Canada.

In March 2023 the Trans Mountain Corporation (TMC), a Crown corporation, announced that the costs of construction for the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion (TMX) project have sky-rocketed to an outrageous \$30.9 billion. This represents a \$10 billion increase from the last time construction costs were announced in 2022. It is a 300% increase from estimated costs in 2018, when the federal Liberal government first bought the climate destroying TMX pipeline project and the

existing Trans Mountain pipeline. At the end of June 2023, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation (TWN), whose land is crossed by the TMX pipeline, filed an application to be an intervenor in the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) hearing regarding the tolls on the TMX pipeline. TWN found that the tolls, which are the fees per barrel that oil companies will pay to use the TMX pipeline, will only cover 48% of the construction costs. The Trudeau Liberal government is lying when they continue to claim that TMX will bring profits. TMX will only bring debt to the people of Canada who are already struggling more and more each day to make ends meet.

TMX is just one example of how the government of Canada continues to support the multibillionaires in the oil and gas industry boasting record profits, rather than provide adequate social services, healthcare, housing, and education for people in Canada. When the government of Canada puts profits, pipeline and environmental destruction before meeting the basic needs of people poor, working, and oppressed people, especially Indigenous and racialized people are most impacted.

However, TMX pipeline continues to face vigorous opposition from environmental activists and organizations and Indigenous nations whose territory it crosses. Due to this opposition, and to climate-fueled fires, floods, and landslides, TMX is now more than ten-years behind schedule.

In March 2023 the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released their Synthesis Report from their Sixth Assessment period. This report stated that “Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.” It concluded that it is likely that global warming will exceed 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels during the 21st century, and further detailed the devastating impact that this temperature rise will have on humanity and the planet.

From TMX, to the government of Canada’s approval of the Bay du Nord offshore oil drilling project, to the massive handouts to oil and gas companies to invest in unproven carbon capture adventures, the Liberal government of Canada is committed to climate destruction.

We have no choice but to fight back! We must work to build a more united and stronger movement for climate justice and Indigenous rights. In British Columbia, this means organizing, educating, and mobilizing against TMX, against the Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline on Wet’suwet’en territory in Northern British Columbia, and continuing to unite our voices with the cross-Canada and international climate justice movement.

Stop TMX!

System Change, Not Climate Change!

Climate Convergence Statement July 29, 2023

From: www.climateconvergence.ca

Alex Saab is a political prisoner in the U.S.



By Alison Bodine

Alex Saab is a Venezuelan diplomat, a businessman, and a father who has been held unjustly for over three years, first under house arrest and detention in Cape Verde, and now in jail in Miami, for his work to provide food, medicines, and much needed goods to people in Venezuela. He is Colombian, born to parents of Lebanese and Palestinian descent, and has been living and working in Venezuela for many years in support of various social development projects that are part of the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

Prior to his arrest, Alex Saab's main work was in securing contracts for the CLAP program in Venezuela, which provides subsidized food and basic supplies to over 6.5 million people in Venezuela. In order to carry out this work, he was appointed a Special Envoy of the Venezuelan government, a diplomatic position, in April 2018.

On the order of the United States, Alex Saab was arrested on June 12, 2020, in Cape Verde, Africa, where he had stopped to refuel his plane on his way to Iran, where he was negotiating these contracts. He was detained and held under house arrest in Cape Verde, where he was also tortured and denied visits with his family.

On October 16, 2021, Alex Saab was kidnapped by the United States. At the time he was kidnapped, there was no extradition treaty between the U.S. and Cape Verde. The U.S. government illegally extracted him from Cape Verde and brought him to a jail in Miami. Most recently, following a hearing in December 2022, United States district judge Robert Scola denied Alex Saab's assertion of diplomatic immunity. He ruled that the U.S. government doesn't recognize the democratically elected government of

President Maduro and Venezuela, and therefore, the U.S. court system does not have to recognize the diplomatic status of Alex Saab. This ruling completely ignores flagrant and gross violations of Alex Saab's human rights, international law, and the rights of diplomats. There is now an appeal of this ruling in process in front of the Georgia Court of Appeals.

Alex Saab is a Political Prisoner – the Case of Alex Saab is a Political Case

Alex Saab is a political prisoner. The arrest of Alex Saab in 2020 in Cape Verde was another attack on the U.S. government's interference and aggression against Venezuela. The entire reason that Alex Saab was appointed to a diplomatic position as a Special Envoy by the government of Venezuela in April 2018 was because of U.S. sanctions and blockade against Venezuela, which cut off Venezuela from international trade. This criminal and inhuman U.S.-led policy of blockade has resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people in Venezuela, bringing about the deaths of 40,000 people in 2017-2018 alone, as reported by CEPR in the United States (Centre for Economic Policy Research).

The blockade and sanctions against Venezuela are an attempt to cause people in Venezuela to suffer, to create chaos and discontent in the country and to bring about "regime" change in Venezuela. To overthrow the democratically elected government of Venezuela and reverse the gains made by poor and working people in Venezuela in the Bolivarian revolutionary process. This is a glaring and horrible violation of the human rights of the Venezuelan people.

The arrest of Alex Saab is significant because it also highlights that the trade between sanctioned countries is

a significant threat to U.S. world-wide hegemony. The development of economic and trade agreements that are independent of the United States, including ALBA, CELAC, Mercosur, BRICS, the Belt-and-Road Initiative, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are a blow against the U.S. government's influence in the region. By arresting Alex Saab, the U.S. government is threatening and bullying sanctioned countries from trading with one another.

The Urgency of Freedom for Alex Saab – Join the Campaign!

The illegal imprisonment of Alex Saab is a violation of his human rights and the right of self-determination of the people of Venezuela. He is being denied adequate medical treatment and has not been allowed any visits from Venezuelan diplomatic staff, which is his right under the Vienna Convention, which codifies international law as it relates to diplomats.

Everyday in Venezuela, thousands of people from many backgrounds are fighting for Alex Saab's freedom, led by the Free Alex Saab movement in Venezuela and the leadership and dedication of his wife, Camilla Fabri Saab.

In Canada, for more than two years, the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, Venezuela Peace Committee in Winnipeg and Just Peace Advocates have organized a monthly picket action online featuring speakers from the U.S., Canada, and Venezuela. This action has brought together hundreds of people from around the world in a united demand to free Alex Saab and end the blockade and sanctions on Venezuela.

Alex Saab Postcard Campaign

The Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice Venezuela Solidarity Campaign launched the Free Alex Saab international



Protest against U.S. sanctions and demanding the freedom of Alex Saab. Caracas, Venezuela, December 16, 2022

With a united campaign and our united efforts, Alex Saab will be free!

This article is based on a talk given by Alison Bodine at the "Defending Our Movements Against U.S. Government Attacks on Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights" Webinar organized by the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) in the United States. Other speakers at the webinar included Keyanna Jones, a Cop City protester in Georgia, Akile Anai of the African

People's Socialist Party, Lauren Pineiro, one of the "Tampa 5" from Students for a Democratic Society, and Jeff Mackler, an activist in defense of Julian Assange from the UNAC Administrative Committee and Socialist Action.

Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette

postcard campaign in March of this year. We have since been joined by the Antiwar Committee in Minnesota, and we are inviting other organizations in the U.S., Canada and internationally on board. These postcards are addressed to U.S. President Biden.

The postcard campaign has three goals:

1. It is a pressure campaign on U.S. President Biden and his administration to Free Alex Saab
2. It is an excellent public education campaign
3. It allows for broader participation of different layers of people in the campaign to Free Alex Saab -including engagement with social media

We have already distributed and sent out more than 1200 postcards to people in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America, and we hope to send thousands more and extend the campaign to Latin America, Europe and worldwide. I encourage everyone to join the postcard campaign and also to join in the ongoing work of the campaign in North America to free Alex Saab. We have the responsibility to make the case of Alex Saab a kitchen-table issue.

We must remember that the case of Alex Saab is proof that the influence of the United States is weakening in Latin America. This opens more space for people's movements and progressive governments. The United States has not been able to defeat the heroic people of Venezuela, and growing cooperation between independent countries is a big defeat and setback for the U.S. This includes the improvement in Venezuela-Colombia relations and Venezuela-Brazil relations and the Belt and Road Initiative from China that has been more active in Latin America since 2019.

**Watch the full UNAC webinar
"Defending Our Movements
Against US Government
Attacks on Civil Liberties and
Democratic Rights".**

Visit
<https://youtu.be/-ZLFe3mrhN8>
or scan the below QR code



Continued from page 13

the CGL Pipeline. This action was held at the intersection of 6th Avenue and 6th Street in New Westminster, where activists were greeted with lots of supportive honking and interested passers-by

August 7-9 – Protect the Planet, Stop TMX! Summer Campaign Kick-off event, endorsed by Climate Convergence. Activists gathered from 10 am-6 pm each day with banners and information in Hume Park in Burnaby to call attention to the ongoing construction of the climate-destroying TMX pipeline and invite people to get involved in further actions and events against TMX.

Join the September 15 Global Climate Strike and ongoing actions!

From September 15-17, 2023, people around the world are mobilizing for a Global Climate Strike. In Vancouver, the action is being organized by an ad-hoc coalition

of climate justice organizations, including Climate Convergence Metro Vancouver, For Our Kids-Vancouver, Fridays for Future – Vancouver, Protect the Planet, Stop TMX!, Canadian Parents for Climate Action, Doctors for Planetary Health - West Coast and many others. On September 15, people will gather at Vancouver City Hall at 11 am for a rally and march to the Vancouver Art Gallery, where there will be music and information booths.

For more information and to get involved in the Global Climate Strike action and ongoing work for climate justice in Metro Vancouver, contact Climate Convergence Metro Vancouver at: www.climateconvergence.ca, on Twitter: @climate604 and Instagram and Facebook: @climateconvergence

Drop all charges against land defenders!
No to the TMX and CGL pipelines!
System change, not climate change!

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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US/Canada Hands Off Venezuela!

Solidarity Activists Demand Free Alex Saab Now!

By Janine Solanki

For over 17 years, the United States government has been sanctioning and blockading Venezuela, with the aim of inflicting economic hardship on the Venezuelan people and fomenting "regime change." Venezuela's crime? The Bolivarian Revolution has defied U.S. hegemony and is instead developing their society to benefit poor, working and historically oppressed people in Venezuela.



Signs at a protest in Venezuela read, "Sanctions are a crime"

Part of the U.S. economic war against Venezuela is through seizing Venezuela's assets and bank accounts internationally, including \$1.5 Billion U.S. Dollars that have been frozen in Portugal's Novo Banco since 2019. In a huge victory for Venezuela and a step forward for justice, Venezuela's government won a court case and can now access its funds. This constitutes a clear victory of the Venezuelan people against the strategy promoted by U.S. imperialists and their allies to appropriate the country's resources and cause suffering to the population.

Solidarity Activists Demand U.S./Canada Hands Off Venezuela!

The Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice Venezuela Solidarity Campaign is encouraging Venezuela supporters to

sign a new postcard campaign!

The "Free Alex Saab!" postcard campaign demands freedom for Alex Saab, a Venezuelan diplomat currently held in a Miami jail. Alex Saab was kidnapped at the command of the U.S. government while stopping in Cape Verde en route to Iran to negotiate a trade deal, to alleviate the effects of U.S. sanctions. Alex Saab was illegally extracted to the U.S. and is

still unjustly held in a Miami jail. This postcard campaign aims to flood the White House with postcards demanding freedom for Alex Saab. This new postcard campaign

is also a public

education campaign, and supporters are encouraged to take selfies while mailing the cards to share on social media and to hand them out at actions and events. For more information and to participate in the campaign, send an email to fttvenezuelasolidarity@gmail.com or call/message +1-604-518-7361. To read more about the case of Alex Saab, turn to page 15.

On July 25, the latest virtual picket action was held demanding "U.S./Canada Hands Off Venezuela! End Sanctions

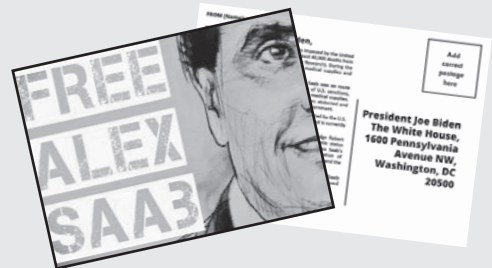
of Venezuela! Free Alex Saab! For over two years, Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, the Venezuela Peace Committee in Winnipeg, and Just Peace Advocates have organized monthly online picket actions in defence of Venezuela, demanding an end to U.S./Canada sanctions and freedom for Alex Saab.

On July 19, another important webinar was held, titled "Defending Our Movements Against U.S. Government Attacks on Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights," organized by the United National Antiwar Coalition. This webinar highlighted a number of political prisoner cases and the importance of exercising and expanding our human and democratic rights. One of the speakers was Alison Bodine, representing the Alex Saab Defense Campaign of North America and Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO). Alison focused especially on the case of Alex Saab and the movement demanding his freedom.

The struggle to free Alex Saab and to defend Venezuela against U.S. imperialist attacks continues! Find out how you can stand in solidarity with Venezuela! Upcoming events are listed on www.firethistime.net and you can register for the next monthly picket action at <https://tinyurl.com/handsoffvzla> or follow the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice Venezuela Solidarity Campaign on Instagram @ftt.venezuela

Follow Janine on Twitter: @janinesolanki

#FreeAlexSaab



Join the Free Alex Saab! Postcard campaign to U.S. President Biden!
email: fttvenezuelasolidarity@gmail.com

For over 74 years, the Palestinian people have been fighting for their right to self-determination and the right to return to their homes, which were brutally taken away by the Zionist Israeli regime. Decades over decades, the Palestinian people have faced forced expulsion from their cities and villages to refugee camps, which are some of the most densely populated settlements in the world. Ethnic cleansing and massacres, routine airstrikes on homes and infrastructure, deadly military assaults, home demolitions, checkpoints and blockades, arbitrary detentions, and lack of access to food, water and basic necessities are part of the ongoing Israeli racist regime's brutality and insults against Palestinians.

2023 has already become the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank since the United Nations began recording in 2005, with over 200 Palestinians killed at the hands of Israeli military forces and racist Zionist settlers. Jenin refugee camp has long been the site of brutal Israeli attacks and massacres, and so far, in 2023 has been devastated by two Israeli assaults. On January 26, Israeli military forces killed 10 Palestinians, including two children, in Jenin.

On July 3, Israeli forces invaded Jenin again and, for two days, terrorized Palestinians in Jenin with deadly airstrikes, hundreds of soldiers, helicopter gunships, rockets and armoured vehicles. Around 4,000 Palestinians fled the Jenin refugee camp during the assault and returned to find hundreds of homes destroyed and uninhabitable, the local water network destroyed, cutting off sewage and water access for a vast number of homes, and the destruction of roads and other infrastructure. The human cost of this criminal attack was 12 Palestinians killed, including four children, and 143 Palestinians injured. Around the world, this savage Israeli assault was condemned and protested. In Vancouver on July 5, an emergency action “We Stand With Jenin” banner drop was held at a busy overpass, called by the Samidoun, Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network (Samidoun.

Israel's occupation

Israel Hands Off

c o n t i n u e d
of Palestine



Self-Determination for Palestine!
United Front Against Israeli Occupation of Palestine!



would not be possible without the military, financial and political backing of the U.S. government and other imperialist countries, including Canada. The government of Canada has supported Israel since it was founded on Palestinian land in 1948, and today Scotiabank, one of Canada's largest banks, is the top foreign investor in Elbit Systems, an Israeli weapons manufacturer. Elbit Systems produces 85% of Israel's armed drones, which are marketed as "battle-tested," alluding to the fact that they are regularly used to assassinate and injure Palestinians.

On July 22, Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network held a protest action in downtown Vancouver in solidarity with Palestine and to demand “Shut Elbit Down!”, which activists and supporters from Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) and Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice supported and participated in. After leafleting to passersby, protesters marched to a nearby Scotiabank branch to hear from speakers and to demand Scotiabank divest from Elbit Systems. The action was also part of an International Day of Action in solidarity with six Palestine Action activists, who face imprisonment and court cases in response to their protests in Britain against Elbit Systems. One of the Palestine Action activists, Ronnie Barkan,

Activists in support of Palestine and in many other social justice struggles are facing increased attacks on their organizing from right-wing forces and imperialist governments. Recently the Alliance for Global Justice (AFGJ) faced attacks from Zionist media that have resulted in the company, which processes credit card donations to block AFGJ and its projects from use of this critical fundraising tool. This attack has impacted

Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, as well as over 140 organizations that are fiscally sponsored by AFGJ. Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) has signed on to the Alliance for Global Justice Resistance Campaign and encourages supporters to stand in solidarity and also sign on to the Resistance Campaign at www.afgj.org/resistance-campaign-sign-on

In Canada and around the world, we must continue standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people in a strong united front and demand self-determination for Palestine! Israel, stop brutalizing and killing Palestinians! Free all Palestinian political prisoners! Right of return for all Palestinians!

For upcoming events against imperialist wars and in solidarity with Palestine, visit www.mawovancouver.org or follow on Facebook @MAWOVancouver and Instagram and Twitter @mawovan

Follow Janine on Twitter: @janinesolanki

MAWO & Fire This Time movement for Social Justices have both signed on to the Alliance for Global Justice's (AFGJ) Resistance campaign sign on letter standing up against attacks on Palestine Solidarity organizing and those who promote liberation and justice worldwide! Read more on page 22.

CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF CUBA'S MONCADA DAY

A HISTORICAL REFLECTION

By Tamara Hansen

As I sat down to reflect on 70 years since Cuba's Moncada Day, I decided to once again read Haydée Santamaría's personal reflections from the events of July 26, 1953, in the book, "Moncada: Memories of the attack that launched the Cuban Revolution" (Lyle Smart Inc, 1980). Cuba's Moncada Day out of Cuba is often remembered and discussed as a defeat, a failure, a loss, a setback, etc. However, it is completely opposite!

Haydée Santamaría, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution and participant in the Moncada Day rebellion – who lost her fiancée and brother during the brutal torture by the Batista Dictatorship following their capture – expresses, "When I am asked how I felt after I knew that the attack on Moncada had failed, I reply, 'You may not believe this is the truth, but I tell you sincerely, it is: I never considered the attack on Moncada a failure.'"

How does one have such faith in the possibility of change and building a better world in the face of so much personal loss? This is the inspiring true story of Cuba's Moncada Day – where a working-class defeat was indeed turned into a great victory.

What is Cuba's Moncada Day?

In the early morning of July 26, 1953, a group of about 120 young revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro organized an attack on the cruel U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship's Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba and the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Garrison in Bayamo. Their goal was to take the garrisons which would allow them to gather weapons and begin the struggle to overthrow the U.S. puppet dictator, Batista.

In the city of Santiago de Cuba, Fidel led a group to attack the Moncada army garrison, Abel Santamaría (the brother of Haydée) occupied the civilian Hospital to attend to the wounded, while Raúl Castro led the occupation of the Palace of Justice. Two women, Haydée Santamaría and Melba Hernández, helped tend to the wounded in the civilian Hospital. The action was short-lived, as the rebels were discovered early, and some of their men were diverted from the route to the garrison.

Almost all of the rebels were captured in the days following July 26. As their plan had been



Top: Calendar art interprets the attack on the Moncada July 26, 1953, artist unknown.

Bottom: Sign at a mass rally in Cuba reads, "I am Fidel" along with a Cuban flag and a flag of the July 26th Movement.

so well coordinated, the Batista regime was convinced these rebels were professionally trained by its political opponents, and it tortured many of the young revolutionaries to death, looking for answers that did not exist.

Fidel Castro, Abel Santamaría, Haydée Santamaría, and Melba Hernández were all imprisoned. When Fidel was put on trial, he gave a famous speech where he condemned the corruption of the Batista dictatorship and proclaimed, "Condemn me. It does not matter. History will absolve me".

In that speech, he explained in detail the hardship and despicable torture suffered by

his comrades in jail. He said, "Throughout their torturing of our comrades, the Army offered them the chance to save their lives by betraying their ideology and falsely declaring that Carlos Prío [Cuba's ex-President and political rival of Batista] had given them money. When they indignantly rejected that proposition, the Army continued with its horrible tortures. They crushed their testicles and tore out their eyes. But no one yielded. No complaint was heard, nor a favor asked."

Fidel continues, "Frustrated by the valor of the men, they tried to break the spirit of our women. With a bleeding eye in their hands, a sergeant and several other men went to the cell where our comrades Melba Hernández and Haydée Santamaría were held. Addressing the latter and showing her the eye, they said: 'This eye belonged to your brother. If you will not tell us what he refused to say, we will tear out the other.' She, who loved her valiant brother above all things, replied full of dignity: 'If you tore out an eye and he did not speak, neither will I.' Later they came back and burned their arms with lit cigarettes until, at last, filled with spite, they told the young Haydée Santamaría: 'You no longer have a fiancé because we have killed him too.' But still imperturbable, she answered: 'He is not dead because to die for one's country is to live forever.' Never had the heroism and the dignity of Cuban womanhood reached such heights."

Despite his moving speech, Fidel knew the verdict before the trial began in a show trial. He was condemned to 15 years in prison. Haydée Santamaría and Melba Hernández were soon released and continued their clandestine work against the Batista regime. They printed thousands of copies of Fidel Castro's "History will absolve me" speech and set out to distribute it across the country. In 1955, there was an amnesty declared for political prisoners, and Fidel Castro and other Moncada fighters were released. Shortly after, he and other revolutionaries left for Mexico to regroup under the banner of the newly formed "July 26th Movement," named after the assault on the Moncada. It was in Mexico that Fidel met another important young revolutionary named Ernesto 'Che' Guevara.

Throughout this time, others in Cuba in the July 26th Movement carried out clandestine actions and continued working to educate the people



of Cuba on their revolutionary objectives. In December 1956, the Granma yacht brought Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, Juan Almeida Bosque, Camilo Cienfuegos, and others back to Cuba to begin a new uprising in the Sierra Maestra mountains. This fight was full of hardships, challenges, commitment, and dedication to their cause – and was victorious when the dictator Fulgencio Batista fled Cuba on New Year's Eve of 1958. The revolutionary was declared victorious on January 1, 1959.

Visiting Moncada

In 2018 on the Calixto Garcia Brigade, I visited the old Moncada army garrison. Part of it is now a museum, and another part is a school. Standing in one of the rooms where so many of the young fighters were tortured to death, you wonder if they could have felt what was to come. That 70 years later, this would be a building full of children studying, working, playing, and preparing themselves for life. It is a powerful and hopeful feeling while also being very bitter-sweet.

Reflecting on the aspirations of the Moncada fighters, Haydée Santamaría expresses in her memoir, "I am not going to say that we went to Moncada to make a socialist revolution. It is not so. We went there with the idea of making a change, so that better men might govern and so that men would not steal, but not exactly to make that change. Once there, I felt the change to be urgent. [...] We knew little about profound changes; we could not determine what the change would be when it came but we knew that Fidel would determine what it would be like, and that we would make it what our people wanted it to be."

This July 26, 2023, Cubans and international revolutionaries from around the world celebrate the 70th anniversary of Cuba's Moncada Day. Hundreds of thousands have gathered outside the former Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba. Together they listened to honoured guests and came together in celebration of this working class defeat, which the revolutionary people of Cuba have turned into an absolute triumph. Over the last 70 years – under the leadership of Comandante Fidel Castro, then Comandante Raul Castro, and today President Miguel Díaz-Canel – the Cuban people continue to make the Cuban revolution what they want it to be.

Revolutionary Cuba today

Today the Cuban Revolution is an important example for the world of what is possible with socialism. Throughout over six decades of revolution, Cuba has pushed forward to become a world leader in health care, education, music, sports, and sustainability, among other



Top: Melba Hernández and Haydée Santamaría in the Vivac cell in Santiago de Cuba after their arrest for participating in the events of July 26, 1953.

disciplines. This is in spite of Cuba being a so-called 'third-world' or developing country under a criminal U.S. economic blockade that has lasted over 60 years.

The revolutionary people of Cuba are consistently working to improve their society through their work in mass organizations, such as the Cuban Federation of Women (FMC), the Cuban Central Trade Union (CTC), and the Committees of the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs). Each of these institutions is working to include those who are traditionally marginalized in societies around the world under capitalism: workers, youth, elders, women, people with disabilities, people of colour, and the LGBTQAI+ community. Cuba is not perfect, but the government and society are working hand-in-hand towards important goals, such as integrating all of those traditionally marginalized people into dynamic politics, culture, and life on the island. Overcoming this is not an easy task and not something that could be accomplished in just 64 years of revolution. But the progress made and the government and institutional support of that progress is not only revolutionary but truly impressive.

As we celebrate 70 years of the Cuban revolution, let's go back once more to the words of Haydée Santamaría, "With every passing year, the event becomes greater, because the Revolution grows greater. The more this nation accomplishes, the greater Moncada will be. And so every day it will be harder to talk about Moncada. There is this to say: when I am asked how I felt after I knew that the attack on Moncada had failed, I reply, "You may not believe this is the truth, but I tell you sincerely, it is: I never considered the attack on Moncada a failure."

¡Viva la Revolución! ¡Viva Cuba!
Long live the Revolution! Long live Cuba!

Follow Tamara on Twitter: @THans01

IT WAS THE MORNING OF SANTA ANA

By: Jesús Orta Ruiz

(September 30, 1922– December 30, 2005)

it was the morning
of Santa Ana,
A July morning painted pink.
Nobody anticipated that the sun would rise
for the silenced
Tizol farm.
Santiago the Apostle, withered, slept
as if knocked down by the merriment
of Conga & brass band, celebration & alcohol.
it was the morning
of Santa Ana...
Oh the incubator
of the savior
Siboney farm!
What glorious roosters delivered the dawn
Hatuey's old & forgotten stances!

.....
They were determined on the road...
All over the landscape the flag spread.
On the caravan of the immortals
there were two women of stoic purity:
They also came from the heroic farm,
from the incubator of Mariana Grajales.
They were earlier suns that with their dawn
tore the fog from the Moncada barracks
The Homeland in darkness saw its clear paths
in the precise light of urgent shots.
it was the morning
of Santa Ana
The blood shed was not blood wasted.
.....
How blind were the hands of the one
who gouged out your eyes, your dreamy eyes
the eyes of Abel!
The eyes of Abel!
that are now stars in the smiling sky
and illuminate the triumphant path of Fidel!
The martyrs each invade the day,
They brighten cities, they liberate mountains...
Now I hear the songs of Gómez García
in rapid transfer from flower to mockingbird:
July 26: hurts
From where did the dawn emerge:
avenging start date
of the insulted dates.
The hot blood of lives
broken by heroism
when betrayal & cynicism
danced on a calvary...
Oh necessary dew
to the flower of patriotism!
....
It is the voice of the entire land of Cuba:
-Glory to the morning
of Santa Ana!

From:
<http://cartasdesdemacondo.blogspot.com>
(Translation by Tamara Hansen)

Era la mañana de la Santa Ana

Por: Jesús Orta Ruiz

(30 de septiembre de 1922- 30 de diciembre de 2005)

*** En Español ***

Era la mañana
de la Santa Ana,
mañana de julio pintada de rosa.
Nadie presentía que saldría el Sol
por la silenciosa
granja de Tizol.
Santiago el Apóstol, marchito, dormía
como derribado por la algarabía
de conga y charanga, locura y alcohol.
Era la mañana
de la Santa Ana...
¡Oh, la incubadora
de la redentora
granja Siboney!
¡Qué gloriosos gallos dieron a la aurora
viejas y olvidadas posturas de Hatuey!
.....
Iban decididos por la carretera...
Por todo el paisaje se abrió la bandera.
En la caravana de los inmortales
iban dos mujeres de pureza estoica:
también procedían de la granja heroica,
de la incubadora Mariana Grajales.
Eran soles previos que con su alborada
rasgaron las nieblas del cuartel Moncada
La Patria en tinieblas vio sus rumbos claros
a la luz precisa de urgentes disparos.
Era la mañana
de la Santa Ana.
La sangre vertida no fue sangre vana.
.....
¡Qué ciegas estaban las manos de aquel
que arrancó los ojos, los ojos de ensueño
los ojos de Abel!
¡Los ojos de Abel!
que ahora son estrellas de un cielo risueño
y alumbran el paso triunfal de Fidel!
Los mártires todos invaden el día,
alegran ciudades, liberan el monte...
Ya escucho los cantos de Gómez García
en rápido tránsito de flor a sinsonte:
-26 de Julio: heridas
por donde surgió la aurora:
alta fecha vengadora
de las fechas ofendidas.
Caliente sangre de vidas
rotas por el heroísmo
cuando traición y cinismo
bailaban sobre un calvario...
¡Oh, rocío necesario
a la flor del patriotismo!
....
Es la voz de toda la tierra cubana:
-¡Gloria a la mañana
de la Santa Ana!

Desde:
<http://cartasdesdemacondo.blogspot.com>

CUANDO AFRICA FUE CONQUISTADA Y COLONIZADA

*** En Español ***

Discurso pronunciado por el Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz, en el Memorial "Héctor Peterson", por la matanza de Soweto, Sudáfrica, el día 5 de septiembre de 1998

"El apartheid no comenzó en 1948, el apartheid comenzó desde el mismo siglo aquel, hace 500 años, en que los habitantes de estas tierras, como América o como una gran parte de Asia, fueron conquistados y colonizados; cuando África fue conquistada y colonizada, desde hace siglos, porque no puede



olvidarse jamás que de este continente arrancaron de sus aldeas y de sus hogares a millones y millones de africanos; se dice que 12 millones, sin contar los que murieron de enfermedades en las travesías o naufragaron por aquellos mares. Doce millones de africanos fueron encadenados, vendidos en subasta por unas miserables pesetas para trabajar como esclavos en un tiempo que duró siglos. Así que allá en América no solo hubo exterminio y esclavización de los que allí vivían, sino que allí llevaron a muchos africanos como esclavos, que hoy forman parte de nuestra sangre, de nuestra identidad y de nuestros pueblos."

WHEN AFRICA WAS CONQUERED & COLONIZED

Speech by Commander-in-chief Fidel Castro at the Hector Peterson Memorial in Soweto, Soweto, South Africa. September 5, 1998

"Apartheid didn't begin in 1948. Apartheid began in that same century, 500 years ago, when the inhabitants of these lands, like America or a large part of Asia, were conquered and colonized. It began when Africa was conquered and colonized centuries ago. It can never be forgotten that millions and millions of Africans were snatched from their villages and their homes in this continent. There are said to have been 12 million, not counting those who died of disease on the crossings or drowned in those seas. Twelve million Africans were put in chains and sold at auction for a few miserable pesetas to work as slaves for a period that extended for centuries. So, in America, it wasn't just the extermination and enslaving of their natives. They also took over there as slaves many Africans who are now part of our blood, our identity and our peoples."

Frente Intercontinental del FMLN

En Español: Una plataforma de la militancia del FMLN en el exterior con entrevistas, noticias y programas especiales sobre diferentes luchas por la justicia social en todo el mundo.

Sigue la página de Facebook del Frente Intercontinental del FMLN para ver sus videos y entrevistas en español. Escanea el siguiente código QR o visita www.facebook.com/FrenteInterContinentaldelFMLN



In English: A media platform in spanish by the Salvador's FMLN party militants living abroad with excellent spanish videos & interviews about different social justice struggles around the world.

Follow the Facebook page of Frente Intercontinental del FMLN to see their videos and interviews in spanish. Scan the QR code or visit www.facebook.com/FrenteInterContinentaldelFMLN



Resistance Campaign Sign-On Statement

We, the undersigned, join the Alliance for Global Justice, an alliance that nurtures organizations seeking fundamental change in international and national conditions in its Resistance Campaign. **We stand with AFGJ reaffirming our commitment to people-centered solidarity: from the Palestinian people who struggle for national liberation and against unjust occupation, to its work for immigration justice and human rights for all.**

AFGJ and one of its fiscally-sponsored projects, Samidoun, a Palestinian prisoner solidarity network working to build solidarity with Palestinian prisoners in their struggle for freedom, were attacked by Zionist media. Desperately trying to intimidate, silence, and neutralize AFGJ in its effectiveness growing and supporting movements for liberation and justice worldwide, they've convinced the company that handled AFGJ's credit card donations to block AFGJ and its projects from use of this critical fundraising tool.

This far-right rag made false and dangerous accusations about AFGJ and Samidoun. AFGJ has refused to exceptionalize the Palestinian human rights movement, as these right wing publications are desperately seeking to do. If they come for Samidoun or AFGJ — then they have come for all of us. AFGJ is an international organization that through its fiscal sponsorship of Samidoun supports the thousands of Palestinians unlawfully imprisoned by the far-right Israeli government. Hundreds of these prisoners are children under the age of 12. The right wing has tried to shut Samidoun down previously but the organization has successfully defended the legality of its work. This attack has not only impacted Samidoun and AFGJ but also its network of 140+ fiscally sponsored organizations that rely on its credit card processor to fund their work. This is yet another attempt to damage work in defense of Palestinian human rights.

Attacks and false accusations come and go — however, rhetoric and ramifications can come in hard. This isn't the first time they've come for one of us. Every time people of conscience push back against fascism, our values come under attack.

While this is an attempt to distract from our collective pathway to freedom and human rights, it presents an opportunity to strengthen and renew AFGJ's movement for global justice. While AFGJ has been temporarily deplatformed, we remain unified and steadfast in our consistency to grow and support movements for liberation and justice worldwide, including the fight for freedom for the Palestinian people.

We affirm commitment now more than ever: to stand in unbreakable solidarity with the Palestinian people, to push back against the forces of imperialism and repression, and continue working relentlessly for our collective liberation. That dream is worth defending, and we are ready to do so. We are calling on AFGJ's supporters to stand in solidarity with us by joining its Resistance Campaign. For more information, check out the campaign landing page here.



Scan to read & sign the Palestine Statement
or visit: <https://afgj.org/resistance-campaign-sign-on>

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OUR HERITAGE



Haydée Santamaría
1922-1980

Haydée Santamaría is a fundamental leader of the Cuban Revolution. She and Melba Hernandez were the two women who participated in the assault on the Moncada Army Barracks on July 26, 1953. Led by Fidel Castro, the assault was a military failure, but it is credited as the spark that lit the flame of the Cuban Revolution. Haydée survived prison and was a founder of the 26th of July Movement, which led the Cuban Revolution to victory in 1959. She founded and directed, "La Casa de las Américas", which became the most important cultural institution in Latin America. Haydée was also an original member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

"I AM NOT GOING TO SAY that we went to Moncada to make a socialist revolution. It is not so. We went there with the idea of making a change, so that better men might govern and so that men would not steal, but not exactly to make that change. Once there, I felt the change to be urgent. But if we went there without intending to make a radical change, it was to make some change, and it was to tell our people, our country: "There are those who die for the flag," for the same flag we have today, for the flag we love today.

We knew little about profound changes; we could not determine what the change would be when it came; but we knew that Fidel would determine what it would be like, and that we would make it what our people wanted it to be.

And we knew that our flag would continue to be our flag.

We went to Moncada as disciples of Martí. Today we are Marxists, but we have not abandoned Martí, for there is no contradiction."

From "Moncada: Memories of the attack that launched the Cuban Revolution" (Lyle Smart Inc, 1980)

Continued from page 5

by the United Nations as one of the poorest countries in the world.

Sanctions which deprive the people of power sources can only worsen the already existing humanitarian crisis inside the country.

ECOWAS defense ministers began a two-day conference on August 2 in the Nigerian capital of Abuja to map out its strategy for Niger. Former Nigerian military leader General Abdulsalami Abubakar is leading an ECOWAS delegation to Niamey for further talks with the CNSP.

Ousted President Mohamed Bazoum has not been harmed by the military government since he was taken down from office on July 26. Photographs of Bazoum with the Chadian transitional President Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno were released over numerous international news agencies on July 31.

Meanwhile, the government of Burkina Faso received a delegation from Niger to the capital of Ouagadougou where the transitional head-of-state Captain Ibrahim Traore pledged the government's backing of the CNSP in Niamey. A communique from the Burkina Faso government said of the talks:

"A CNSP delegation was received by the Head of State (Ouagadougou, August 2, 2023). The President of the Transition, Head of State, Captain Ibrahim TRAORE received this Wednesday (Aug. 2) at the end of the afternoon, a delegation from the National Council for the Safeguarding of the Fatherland (CNSP) of Niger headed by General of army corps, Salifou MODY.

Discussions with the President of the Transition focused on the situation in Niger, which is calm and under control according to the head of delegation. We also talked about support. It must be said, we received very strong support from Burkina Faso."

Intervention Could Further Destabilize Entire West Africa Region

France has already been forced to depart Mali after the transitional administration leader Colonel Assimi Goita suggested the presence of foreign forces were related to the escalation in rebel violence against civilians and the state. In addition, Burkina Faso has been the scene of anti-French demonstrations which enjoy widespread grassroots support.

The anti-French organization known as the M62 Movement has been operating in Niger. They have been credited with the mobilization of youth and workers against the continued military presence of France in Niger.

In demonstrations since the early days of the CNSP coup, people have been burning French flags, attacking symbols of colonial and neo-colonial rule while many carried both the Nigerien and Russian flags. Although there is no indication that the Russian Federation or the Wagner Group had a hand in the ascendancy of



the CNSP to power, President Vladimir Putin recently announced his opposition to a western-backed military intervention in Niger. Putin urged the resolution of the conflict in Niger through dialogue and negotiations.

Overall, throughout the Sahel and other areas within the West Africa region, the economic situation is worsening. In Nigeria, which is the most populous state in Africa and designated as the continent's largest economy, a food emergency was declared by President Tinubu.

The specter of sharply rising prices and food shortages prompted the two largest worker organizations, the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC), to stage a national day of protest across the oil-rich state on August 2. President Tinubu met with the leadership of the union federations and agreed to grant some of their demands. Reports in the Nigerian press suggest that the mass actions by the unions will not continue as previously threatened by the NLC and TUC.

Therefore, the newly inaugurated administration of President Tinubu in Nigeria could very well be aggravating the social situation inside the country by threatening to deploy troops to Niger. Even the Italian Foreign Minister, Antonio Tajani, whose country has troops along with Germany, France and the U.S. in Niger, proclaimed that a military intervention by the West to bring down the CNSP would result in charges of re-colonization.

Anti-imperialist and antiwar forces in the western industrialized states must oppose the military interventions by France, the U.S. and other NATO countries in Niger. Another disastrous invasion and occupation by the Pentagon and NATO will only create more displacement, underdevelopment and political divisions.

Abayomi Azikiwe is the editor of the Pan-African News Wire. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

The original source of this article is Global Research www.globalsearch.ca

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