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Quebec Bill 62

National Assembly Blames Women and Youth to Cover Up Its Own Cowardice

- Marxist-Leninist Party of Quebec (PMLQ) -

A Pyrrhic victory is a victory which is only achieved with heavy losses on one's own side. Such is the conclusion which can be drawn from the passage of Bill 62 by the Quebec National Assembly on October 18. The bill is justified on the grounds that the less than one per cent of women in Quebec who wear a face-covering garment are somehow responsible for blocking society's path to progress because they are somehow depriving 100 per cent of the population of the enjoyment of their rights.

The government's claim that it is defending public right and a civil democracy is based on a convoluted notion of separation of church and state called an "unfinished" struggle. This struggle is presented in the most out of context and absurd way. That separation of Church and State was settled in Quebec in 1874 when the British Privy Council decided the case of Joseph Guibord. It

stopped the interference of the Church in matters pertaining to the civil authority thereby settling the issue that the state was secular not ecclesiastic and the civil power, not the ecclesiastic power of the Church, prevailed over temporal affairs.[1] Despite this, the Church continued its oppressive rule over temporal affairs because it served the ruling circles to maintain feudal relations in the countryside. This continued until it was smashed in the 1950s and 1960s in order to create a massive pool of cheap labour to serve U.S. imperialist expansion into Canada at which time Quebec provided the highest returns on investment. That period of economic expansion and social and cultural changes in Quebec was called the Quiet Revolution.

The problem today is not of some church power controlling the state and temporal affairs but that private interests have seized control of that aspect of the civil power which previously served what was called the public good. To blame a tiny number of women who wear a face-covering garment for allegedly oppressing other people who do not share the beliefs this garment allegedly represents is pathetic. It is a miserable attempt to divert attention from what is blocking the progress of society as well as from their own cowardly refusal to address the real issues facing the economy and society. Several years back it was the "criminal" construction workers who were "using violence" on the construction sites and so-called depriving other construction workers of their rights, all while the rights to association and collective bargaining of the entire collective of construction workers were under brutal attacks by private monopolies and governments in their service. Two years ago it was the "non-law-abiding municipal workers" who were "invading and vandalizing" city council and depriving the residents of Montreal of their right to municipal services, all while services were being privatized with a noted deterioration for users and the City of Montreal was transferring huge amounts of public money to private promoters.



In the case of Bill 62, attacking those women who are the most vulnerable shows cowardice indeed. That's why Liberal MNAs always have to preface their interventions with a phrase about how they stand for "women's equality," just like the old habit of those who say "I'm not a racist but..." before launching into racist epithets. These parties use their positions within government and state to pay the rich at the expense of the very public good they claim to defend with this bill.

The attempt to blame this tiny number of women for the problems facing Quebec society is not only absurd, it is cowardly. These women need the backing of the state to defend them, not attack them and everyone knows it. For this reason, the Liberals ploughed ahead by concocting a second reason to justify this huge diversion. They used the passage of this bill as an occasion to wreak revenge on students who dared defy them in 2012. The students struck hard against the real corruption involved in the privatization of education and the construction of facilities in the education sector and the government hit back by providing a new wretched definition of minority rights according to which those who stand up to defend the right to education are a minority whose actions are depriving the majority of the enjoyment of their rights. Scraping the bottom of the barrel, the Liberals' wretched argument claimed that the Student Associations have no legal persona and are therefore not representative of the student bodies despite being elected. The revenge motive

is evident in the fact that when intervening on Bill 62 in the National Assembly, Liberal MNAs never miss an opportunity to say that "face-covering garment" will also apply to those wearing masks when participating in protests, such as during the broad student movement of the Spring of 2012 against the Liberal government's tuition fee increases. The Liberal municipal government of Montreal attempted to criminalize the wearing of face-covering garments by students with bylaw P-6, but in June 2016 the Superior Court of Quebec struck down P-6 as unconstitutional.



Criminalizing the fighting students and blaming them for all the problems in the education sector was used to divert attention from the fact that there is money for education but it is used to pay the rich -- stolen by corrupt private arrangements the government is making with its cronies in the construction industry and other sectors which provide services for private gain.

Always people are blamed for oppressing the rest of the people and depriving them of their rights. But arguments in defence of rights are not legitimate so long as they cover up the role of the state and who controls the decision-making power and the role of governments to pay the rich and to deprive the people of what belongs to them by right.

It all goes back to the Bouchard-Taylor Commission whose mandate was to examine "the cause of a malaise" existing in Quebec because of "tensions" between "dyed-in-the-wool" Quebecois and "newcomers." The Couillard government is pushing the same racist anti-people line as the Marois and Charest governments before it, even though when they won the elections in 2014 the Liberals declared that "diversity" had won over "disunity." The aim is to divert from the problems of the economy and society in the 21st century. There is no desire to sort out anything, just to find ever more wretched ways to pay the rich. Keeping in mind that the Quebec election is scheduled for 2018, it is clear the people have to formulate their own demands so as not to fall into the trap of taking sides on the "opposing views" of diversionary issues. This is the main way the rich and their representatives depoliticize and marginalize the people to ensure they make no headway in putting forward their own demands and affirming the rights of all.

The ruling elite resorts to diversion, like this one that there is a problem with the religious neutrality of the state and so-called divisions amongst the people, to split the people, create incidents for which the people are being blamed so as to justify the use of police powers and smash any attempts to create a political movement which empowers the people. The fact that by an amendment that was presented by the Liberals the bill extends to public transportation -- the space in which it says that delivery and reception of public services must be done with uncovered faces -- shows that this is a deliberate policy to cause trouble and divert the people from uniting on the basis of fighting for new arrangements that defend the rights of all and solve economic and political problems.

The attempt to hide and divert from the problems facing the affirmation of rights in Quebec and Canada will fail because the striving of the people for empowerment takes the form of their defence of the rights of all. The passage of this bill by the Couillard Liberal majority government in the National Assembly brings them nothing but shame. It will be a Pyrrhic victory indeed.

Note

1. Montreal printer Joseph Guibord was denied ecclesiastic burial by the Catholic Church when he died in 1869. He had been excommunicated because he was a member of the Institut Canadien de Montréal which promoted works blacklisted by the Church, including the writings of the French Enlighteners such as Diderot and Voltaire. Under Montreal Bishop Ignace Bourget who was acting in concert with the Papacy in Rome under Pope Pius IX, the denial of burial was part of a bid by the ecclesiastic forces to become the authority in all matters of a temporal nature. On November 21, 1874, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council ruled Guibord would be buried in Côte-des-Neiges Cemetery whether or not the Church agreed. This ruling put an end to the pretense of the Church as the supreme authority over temporal affairs in Quebec.



Bill 62 Is Irrational and Should Be Repealed

- Georges Côté -

On October 18, the Liberal government of Philippe Couillard adopted Bill 62 by a vote of 66 to 51 with no abstentions. Bill 62, *An Act to foster adherence to State religious neutrality and, in particular, to provide a framework for requests for accommodations on religious grounds in certain bodies (modified title)*, was first introduced in June 2015 by Justice Minister Stéphanie Vallée. Vallée said that Bill 62 is aimed at "laying the foundations for a cohesion that is needed in Quebec." It is part of what successive Quebec governments for more than 10 years now have called working out "living together" ("le vivre-ensemble"). Eight sessions of special hearings and eight meetings of the Committee on Institutions were held prior to the bill's adoption.



When the Liberals were brought back to power in 2014, defeating the Parti Québécois (PQ) government of Pauline Marois, government leader Philippe Couillard proclaimed that the election was "a victory of diversity over disunity." The reference was to the PQ's *Charter of Quebec Values*, introduced in the National Assembly at the end of 2013, and said to be one of the main reasons for the PQ's defeat in the election. Since then, the Liberal government has been working on one version after another of Bill 62.

The charter of values or a law to codify what are called "reasonable accommodations" and what people wear, how they behave and how they express their beliefs is being used to incite passions in Quebec to divert people from uniting in action to change the direction of the economy and deal with the serious problems Quebec is facing as a result of the anti-social offensive launched to pay the rich.

In 2007-2008 the Liberal government of Jean Charest created the Bouchard-Taylor Commission to investigate what it called a "malaise" and "tensions" between Quebecers of immigrant and French-Canadian origin. This was a regurgitation of the old British divide and conquer tactics which opposed the creation of a Quebec nation based on all its inhabitants and declared that Quebec was

"two nations warring in the bosom of a single state" in a struggle "not of principles, but of races." This was said at a time when people of different nationalities, languages and religions had united in the rebellions of 1837-1839 against colonial rule. Similarly today, "tensions" and "malaises" are created to prevent the people from taking any initiative.

When the Couillard government took power, it mandated the Quebec Commission on Human and Youth Rights to hold a year-long consultation on "systemic discrimination and racism in Quebec" but announced on October 19 that the mandate has been withdrawn due to a "crisis" it had caused amongst the personnel of the Commission. It has instead decided to launch a forum to "increase the value of diversity and fight against discrimination," the details of which are yet to come.

The entire law is presented according to the liberal outlook of balance between the rights and freedoms recognized by the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* and the limits imposed by social cohesion or "living together," including what the law calls the need for communication between people, the need for identification and for security.

The preamble states, "[T]he Québec State and its institutions are founded, among other things, on the principles of the rule of law, separation between the State and religious institutions, and the State's religious neutrality." The *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* recognizes fundamental freedoms such as freedom of conscience, religion and expression, and values such as equality between men and women. It adds that "the rights and freedoms of the person are inseparable from the rights and freedoms of others and from the common well-being." It then says that religious neutrality is necessary to ensure that all are treated without discrimination on the basis of religion. In this respect it directly addresses the conduct of public service personnel, who are specific targets of this law.

At no point in the deliberations on the bill, whether in committee or in a session of the National Assembly, was any example provided of the alleged discrimination committed by public service personnel on a religious basis. No facts were given that would illustrate that this problem exists. Furthermore, nowhere is it said why a law is required to govern such situations should they take place. Public service bodies already have codes of ethics for cases of discrimination. The Human Rights Commission can also be called upon; workers have unions to defend them, and other measures. The law introduces a solution to a problem without showing that the problem exists in order to justify the use of arbitrary powers of the state to intervene against employees and public service personnel and against the organizations themselves in the name of non-discrimination.

Services with Face Uncovered

On this topic the law simply states, "Personnel members of a body must exercise their functions with their face uncovered.

"Similarly, persons who request a service from a personnel member of a body referred to in this chapter must have their face uncovered when the service is provided."

Despite the minimalist text, the discussion on this subject in the various circles of power has been long and convoluted and, once again, no data is presented on the phenomenon of providing or receiving public services with a covered face, nor on why it is a problem for Quebec society if it exists. Why a law is required when the different public services have norms that govern things like clothing is not raised. It is hard to imagine a person renewing their driver's license or health insurance card, which requires a photo, without revealing their face.

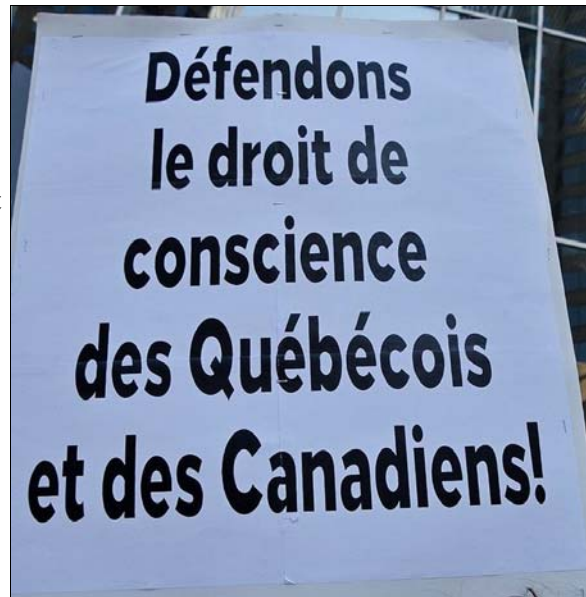
All of it goes to show that the aim of the law is not to ensure the proper functioning of public services, despite what the law and Couillard government representatives say. If this were the case,

the government would not be so hell bent on destroying them with neo-liberal funding cuts and privatization.

According to the law, the measures concerning the uncovered face for public services aims "to ensure quality communication between persons and allow their identity to be verified, and for security purposes."

Let's take an example. On August 15, Minister Vallée adopted amendments that, among other things, extended the application of the law to public transportation. Here is what she had to say in the National Assembly on October 4, when that body debated the Committee on Institutions' report on Bill 62.

"The obligation to have one's face uncovered in our society is, for me, quite logical, and fits precisely with these values of living together and the importance of ensuring quality in our communications... Just recently history has shown how uncomfortable people are when people voluntarily hide their faces. Remember, on August 20 [a demonstration in Quebec City to support welcoming Haitian refugees following the



regressive measures of Trump in the United States] ... the incidents that took place here, nearby in Quebec City, people were wearing hoods, sunglasses, with scarves covering their faces, completely obscuring who they were. This does not signal integration into society, on the contrary ... Some of those people used public transportation, and that caused some fears. So, the obligation to have one's face uncovered is simply an obligation that falls within the framework of living together and is completely legitimate."

In this way she reveals not only a deeply disturbing racist outlook but the intention to declare whatever the government wants to declare as the "delivery and reception of a public service," which comes under the category of the criteria of "communication, identification and security." The police powers will decide when and under what conditions these criteria apply, because "fears are aroused" among the public.

In the case of youth wearing masks at demonstrations, why the youth have to protect themselves from the criminalization and repression of the state is passed over in the name of "living together."

By extending the application of the law to public transportation, the government shows its intent to create maximum tensions by making everything arbitrary, hoping that this prevents people uniting in action in defence of the rights of all.

Confronted with the accusation that the government is seeking to criminalize the use of the public space, the government has invented the concepts of "interaction" and "extension of public space." It says Bill 62 would apply only in the case of an interaction of a person of authority in a public service with a person who receives a public service. When the person moves in the "extension of the public space" the ban does not apply.

The Minister said at an October 24 press conference, "Take, for example, public transit ... To achieve the aim of identification, an employee of a transportation company can ask a person to uncover their face to check the validity of their ticket if the fare requires a photo. As we know, in

the vast majority of cases, tickets are magnetic without photos. Take, for example, the OPUS card in Montreal. On the other hand, in Montreal certain tickets, for example, discounted tickets, are provided with a photo and identification is required at the outset by the Montreal Transport Service. So this interaction, which is the verification of identity, can be required and obviously must be done with face uncovered. However, once you have taken your seat on the bus or the subway, you are moving into the extension of the public space. The law does not intend to govern the extension of the public space."

The example is given of how this would function in the context of a library. "In the library, for identification and communication purposes, a person who comes to a public library must have his or her face uncovered when interacting with an employee of the library. Such a requirement is not required when moving through library aisles when viewing a document."

The simple fact that people in positions of power consider such situations while saying they do not want to criminalize the use of the public space shows that this is precisely what they have in mind. This alleged protection of the "extension of the public space," ceases to exist when a person of authority interacts with the person for reasons of "communications, identification and security." This means that youth who are gathered in a park and have their faces covered stop being part of the "extension of the public space" if a person in a position of authority decides to interact with them because he interprets their clothing as a security or communication problem, which "raises fears" among people. The same thing applies with regard to Muslim women who wear a face veil. A difference is interpreted as a justification for creating conflicts and deploying police powers against the people.

Early Childhood Services

An entire section of Bill 62 is devoted to early childhood educational services. Here, the obligation to provide and receive services with the face uncovered includes a series of obligations to ensure that "children's admission is not related to their learning a specific religious belief, dogma or practice and that the activities organized by subsidized childcare providers do not involve learning of a religious or dogmatic nature."

Claiming that the obligation of the state is to promote religious neutrality, this section of the act is a near word-for-word replica of the Parti Québécois' *Charter of Values* which banned wearing the veil in these services. In this regard, Bill 62 and the deliberations on it among those in power were marked by the assertion that the role of the State as guarantor of rights and freedoms is threatened or disturbed by the power of a religious institution or belief. There is no evidence that either Quebec or Canada are threatened by the return of ecclesiastic state power. There is plenty of evidence, however, that the direct usurpation of state power by private monopolies and oligopolies and their supranational institutions are a matter of serious concern for the workers and the people. Yet the parties which have formed a cartel in the National Assembly do not agitate for the state to stop representing these private interests in its relations with the people and their well-being.

The very act of passing laws and other measures that aim to "settle" differences between people by means of arbitrary police powers shows that it is the act of an authority that refuses to address problems of society and of the economy which are at the basis of divisions and insecurity for different sections of the people.

The "principles" and "parameters" that the Liberal government and the National Assembly as a whole are trying to enshrine in law, are in fact the acceptance, in the form of "values," of the Islamophobia that comes from the wars of aggression and regime change that are led by the United States and in which Canada is participating. These "principles" and "parameters" set the terms

under which the State is to manage and criminalize behavior. People's behaviour, dress codes and beliefs are hypocritically being made the issue and a notion is peddled that security lies not in the defence of the rights of all but by controlling how people behave, dress and relate to each other. This can never create a "living together" that is secure and peaceful for the people. Quite the contrary; the persistence of the ruling elite to "sort out" these matters through police powers leads to one crisis after another and it must be stopped.



Bill 62 is irrational and creates all sorts of problems for the people and should be repealed. It is a reminder to the workers and the people of Quebec of how much the Liberal government and the National Assembly are in conflict with the demands of society, with the need to sort out the problem of building a modern Quebec that takes up the challenges of harmonizing individual interests with collective interests and both individual and collective interests with the general interests of society. There is zero chance that such a reckless and self-serving approach as that of the Liberals and their claims to defend

rights as abstractions can even begin to sort out the problems of society today. What is required is to firmly defend the rights of all and to provide a new direction to economic, political and other affairs.



Trudeau Liberals Pass Transport Modernization Act

Workers Reject Liberal Attack on Their Dignity and Rights



The House of Commons on November 1 passed the Trudeau Government's Bill C-49, *An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and other Acts respecting transportation and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts*. The bill, essentially unchanged since its

introduction on May 16, was sent to the Senate for adoption.

The bill increases the allowable percentage of foreign ownership of Canadian airlines from 29 to 49 per cent. This provision in the bill also states that a single investor can hold up to 25 per cent of the voting interests of a Canadian carrier, and an international carrier can own up to 25 per cent of a Canadian carrier.

The bill includes the new mechanism of Long-Haul Inter-switching for rail shipments denounced by many as further U.S. annexation of Canada's economy. Inter-switching allows shippers of goods served at their home location by a single rail carrier to use another carrier to perform the longest part of the journey starting from a recognized interchange point. Under previous legislation, inter-switching was available to shippers located 160 km from a recognized interchange point. Bill C-49 extends this distance up to 1,200 kilometres, placing interconnection or Long-Haul Inter-switching within the reach of railway monopolies now operating mostly in the U.S. thus increasing their access to the Canadian railway network.

Bill C-49 also maintains without change the section requiring railway monopolies to install audio-video recorders in locomotives, Locomotive Voice and Video Recorders (LVVRs), that also gives them access to the recordings. This section has been kept despite railway workers' strong opposition to this attack on their dignity and privacy. Workers consider constant audio-video recordings of them at work an additional weapon for the railway monopolies to use to spy on them and take arbitrary disciplinary measures against them to undermine their defence of their rights. The recordings, which would include private conversations with fellow workers, become yet another attack on workers' ability to do their job with peace of mind, on which the safety of the railway and the public depend. Furthermore, the aim is to make criminalizing workers' behaviour the issue in rail safety, rather than the deregulation, self-monitoring and crew reductions demanded by the railway monopolies.



The Trudeau government has maintained throughout the process its neo-liberal imperialist mantra according to which a bill allowing deregulation, privatization and attacks on workers is a "modernization" of the transportation systems to make them more competitive and profitable. The government pushes the imperialist mantra of balancing the competitiveness of the railways and their aim for maximum profit with the safety of workers and the public. Workers' privacy concerns apparently have to be addressed within the employers' outlook and rights, and not according to the workers' outlook and rights. That is not balance

but rather dictatorial and arbitrary.

Rail workers reject the Trudeau Liberals' fraudulent balance in which monopoly right trounces workers' rights. Teamsters Canada Rail Conference National Legislative Director Don Ashley told *Workers' Forum*: "The Liberals just voted down all the amendments that have been proposed to

restrict the scope of the use of the recordings. They are talking about safeguards but there are no safeguards in the legislation. They have left it to be handled by regulation. But we know that the bureaucrats favour the employers more so than the governments. We have no faith in any regulation to protect our rights. Transport Canada is not favourable to the unions. They haven't even developed the regulations, so they can't tell us how they are going to mitigate the impact of the bill."

The rail workers organized in the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference and Unifor have pledged to continue to defend workers' rights and public safety. They are calling on all workers to join them in this struggle. They are also lobbying members of the Senate to oppose the railways' access to the content of the recordings and intend to launch court actions against this section of the Act.

The Rail Section of Unifor has launched a petition calling on Senators to amend Bill C-49 to eliminate any requirement for LVVRs. The petition points out that the installation of LVVRs violates the privacy rights of rail workers and is likely to increase the stress level of those who are being monitored, which could in turn reduce safety. It says the LVVR technology will likely be used by the railways as a disciplinary tool. It also points out that no discussion has taken place and no plan has been presented as to how the Transportation Safety Board intends to maintain the integrity of the LVVR data once locomotives enter U.S. territory. Finally, the petition says Bill C-49 will open the door for other transportation employers to adopt LVVRs, making privacy violations a government-sanctioned norm and standard.



Opposition to Blackmail by the Monopolies in Transportation Sector

Nation-Wrecking in Northern Manitoba

Increasingly troubling events are happening in Churchill and throughout Northern Manitoba. U.S. rail company Omnitrax refuses to repair the damaged rail line connecting the municipalities of Gilliam and Churchill, isolating the North and damaging the economy. Also, the Port of Churchill has been closed since the summer of 2016 for which Omnitrax is responsible. The people of Northern Manitoba denounce this situation where a foreign private company can cause such havoc and damage to their lives. They demand the federal and provincial governments assume their social

responsibility and organize the immediate repair of the rail line, reopen the Port of Churchill and hold Omnitrax to account for liabilities.[1]

With insufferable arrogance, Omnitrax informed the municipality of Churchill on November 1 that it would now charge up to 30 per cent more for fuel being transported to the beleaguered community by ship even though the necessity to bring in fuel by ship is a direct result of its refusal to repair the rail line. The price of fuel at the pump is expected to rise from about \$1.70 per litre to over \$2.

The main rail line of the Hudson Bay Railway Company (HBRC), which Omnitrax owns and controls, runs from The Pas to Churchill. The northernmost part of the line was severely damaged by spring flooding and neither Omnitrax nor any government agency has mobilized workers and resources to repair the line. Further exacerbating the situation, Omnitrax informed those Northern Manitoba municipalities serviced by HBRC on rail lines still in operation that fuel shipments would be reduced. Reduction of fuel shipments by rail means a large increase in fuel trucks on the highways of the area, a major safety concern particularly in winter.



The Omnitrax attacks have extended to its Manitoba workforce with reports of layoffs of rail line personnel in operations, maintenance and local company offices, and the movement of equipment south possibly into the United States. The Omnitrax owners do not deny these facts, calling them ways to "limit their losses" from a rail line and a port they claim are not economically viable. Many see it as preparations to move all its equipment and assets out of the province and abandon its responsibilities altogether.

For their part, the Trudeau and Manitoba governments have denied any social responsibility for the Omnitrax wrecking and refuse to take decisive action to defend the people. Calls are becoming louder and louder insisting the two governments seize Omnitrax assets, remove the company from the operation of the rail line and port, mobilize state resources to repair the rail line immediately and restart operations, reopen the port, and pursue Omnitrax for damages.

Instead of taking action to change the situation, all the Trudeau government has done is issue impotent threats of legal action and probes, while Omnitrax continues to wreck the economy, interfere in the lives of the people with impunity and block them from having a say and the control necessary to solve problems.

The people demand action not lawsuits that resolve nothing in practice, such as Trudeau's threat last month to sue Omnitrax for \$18.8 million if it does not fix the rail line by November 12. Mr. Trudeau, no repairs have started and your deadline is upon us! Rail cars do not travel on lawsuits in court; they travel on viable rail lines! What does Trudeau intend to do now? Where is he headed with this?

The \$18.8 million refers to a pay-the-rich scheme in 2008 for Omnitrax to repair, upgrade and maintain its Manitoba northern rail line, which is the only land connection to the subarctic community of Churchill on the coast of Hudson Bay. The Manitoba government also poured massive amounts of state funds into Omnitrax. The U.S. owner was supposed to reciprocate with a

similar level of investments to upgrade the line but never did.



Like a broken record, Omnitrax replies to all legal threats with a refusal to fix the rail line and operate the railway and Port properly without continuing state funds that guarantees maximum profit for its U.S. owners. Omnitrax also warns that it would not consider selling any of its Manitoba assets and "rights" without state funds buying them at a price it dictates. It declares no social responsibilities come with its ownership of vital infrastructure and furthermore the state has no right to interfere with its ownership rights without paying dearly. It bought the rail utility and port in Northern Manitoba years ago because it believed the utilities would turn a handsome profit but now say they are "not economically viable" and wants to be compensated for the lower rate of profit on its investment.

The people demand the government burst Omnitrax's bubble of imperialist arrogance! They demand the state seize Omnitrax's rail, port and other assets in Manitoba. They demand the government establish a state enterprise to run the vital rail and port infrastructure in Northern Manitoba in cooperation with the people who live and work in the area and under their control. The federal and provincial governments should hand over to the state enterprise all available Omnitrax assets and make available any additional human resources, material and equipment necessary to repair the damaged rail line and operate the railway and Port of Churchill according to the say, demands and needs of the people.

Note

1. In further developments regarding Omnitrax, on November 16 it was reported that Toronto-based investment firm Fairfax Financial Holdings will partner with two Manitoba ownership groups to attempt a purchase of Omnitrax's assets in the province, including the Churchill rail line and port. The federal government and its negotiator, former clerk of the Privy Council Wayne Wouters, have structured a deal with a consortium of two potential ownership groups -- One North and Missinippi Rail LP. Omnitrax signed a memorandum of understanding with Missinippi Rail in June this year to purchase the rail line and port for \$20 million. Missinippi was later joined by One North to consolidate interests in buying Omnitrax's Manitoba assets. Both groups represent First Nations and communities along the rail line to Churchill.

Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr, also the MP for Winnipeg South, said in a November 16 press release that this partnership "would enable a sustainable business approach that results in a safe and reliable rail line." In the same press release, Fairfax President Paul Rivett claimed that Fairfax has "deep experience in infrastructure projects" and has "the necessary operational expertise to run shortline railways in partnership with our investee company AGT Foods. The key is that the plan has to be viable and profitable in the long term as a business."

The Canadian Press reports that the announcement of the possible deal came two days after Omnitrax issued notice on November 14 of its intent to file a complaint under NAFTA alleging unfair treatment by the Canadian government. The notice said the federal government's decision to

end the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly on western wheat and barley in 2012 drastically cut grain shipments along the rail line and through the Port of Churchill. It said the open market allowed producers to use southern rail lines and Canadian-owned ports.

"Article 1102 of the NAFTA requires that Canada provide to investors or investments of the other NAFTA Parties treatment that is 'no less favourable' than it provides to its own," the 22-page notice from Omnitrax states.

"Through the steps it has taken to undercut the [rail line] and its market position relative to Canadian-owned railways, the Government of Canada has *de facto* discriminated against Omnitrax to the benefit of its Canadian competitors."

Readers of *TML* will recall how the Harper government imposed a phony plebiscite on farmers in the name of providing them with a "choice" of how to ship and sell their grain, to then justify legislating the Wheat Board's public monopoly out of existence, in the service of various private agricultural monopolies. Ironically, Omnitrax's Canadian president, Merv Tweed, was a backbencher in the Conservative government when it made that decision, the Canadian Press points out.

The federal government later on November 14 retaliated with a lawsuit against Omnitrax, alleging the monopoly "failed to repair and maintain the rail line in violation of a 2008 agreement that saw the company receive \$18.8 million in federal aid for maintenance and upgrades." While the lawsuit seeks repayment of the money, news reports make no mention of redress for the harm to residents of Northern Manitoba by Omnitrax's neglect of the line, nor the problems caused by neo-liberal free trade agreements that do not permit Canada to exercise control over its infrastructure and economy.



Deeds Not Words Needed to Reverse Nation-Wrecking

The people demand action not words to stop nation-wrecking of their region!

The Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) informed Omnitrax on November 3 of the start of a formal probe to determine whether its subsidiary Hudson Bay Railway has breached sections of the *Transportation Act* that cover service obligations and discontinuation. This formality began the stage of legal adjudication called pleadings, in which the company and state complainant will submit written documents to explain their sides of the story.

The media quote an email from a CTA spokesperson, "The CTA will strive to resolve this case within 85 business days from the date of the letter." That would mean, at best, February 27, 2018 and in all likelihood much later, assuming that



the probe leads to anything at all. These words and legal manoeuvres do nothing to address the burning issues of a damaged rail line that Omnitrax refuses to fix and the Port of Churchill it refuses to reopen. The people demand deeds not words and legal probes!

The Trudeau government is stalling while the people are demanding immediate action that removes the wrecker Omnitrax from the picture and re-establishes these vital instruments of the economic life of the area. Rail workers in the region note that when it comes to declaring certain public services "essential services" for purposes of breaking workers' struggles to defend their rights and public services, governments do not spare a moment to pass back-to-work legislation. Such self-serving definitions and high-sounding concerns underscore the illegitimacy of governments that serve private interests and not the people's needs, as rail service to Northern Manitoba is without a doubt an urgently needed essential service that governments must ensure.

The people of Northern Manitoba demand that economic and social life be invigorated in Churchill and the region based on local needs, say and control. For example, a consortium made up mainly of First Nations and municipalities has proposed to acquire the Omnitrax rail line and port. This could be the basis of a state enterprise to control and run these vital utilities. The Trudeau government, besides stalling and refusing to break the impasse with Omnitrax, dismisses local initiatives and says instead it wants "long-term solutions" within its Arctic Policy Framework. The people reply angrily that this framework is not fixing the problem in the here and now. The delays are endangering their lives, well-being and economy.

The federal government's Arctic Policy Framework seems intended to prevent local communities from taking initiatives to build their regions. The Framework goes over the heads of the people with plans to build trade corridors in the North to serve imperialist empire-building and military preparations. The Framework negates nation-building and replaces it with imperialist control, privatization as experienced with Omnitrax, deregulation and negation of the people's right to exercise control over those issues that affect them.



The people point out that changes to state arrangements since the 1990s for purposes of privatization and deregulation have led to the current disastrous situation where those in the north find themselves without their critical means of production. The region's mill, rail and port infrastructure sit idle and cannot be used because of some faraway imperialist dictate.

Nation-building in the 21st century requires a new direction and aim for the economy to serve the people not the imperialists. Nation-building cannot proceed unless the imperialists, such as Omnitrax are deprived of their power to impose their dictate on the people. For the people of Northern Manitoba, nation-building must begin now with deeds not words to rebuild their vital

infrastructure and put it under their control to serve their needs not the aim and demand of some profit-mad foreign imperialist.



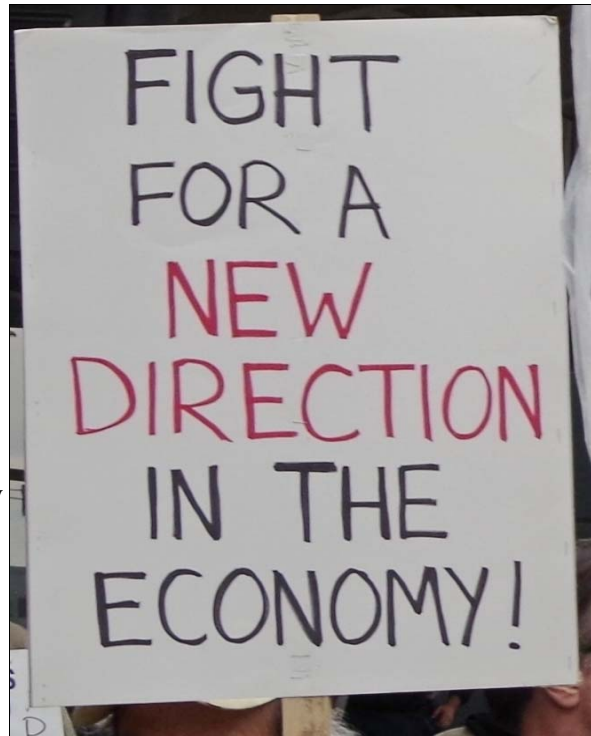
U.S. Owners Threaten to Shut Down Huron Central Railway

Time for a new pro-social direction and aim for the economy!

Industrial workers in Northern Ontario and elsewhere are discussing the necessity for a new direction for the economy. The current direction under the control of competing private interests is not working. Dysfunctional is a word often used to describe the state of affairs. Competing private interests are unwilling to allow the actual producers, and others directly affected in the North, to plan their economy in a rational way with a common aim to develop the overall interrelated economy in an all-sided way to meet the well-being and economic security of the people and guarantee the economy's extended reproduction.

The aim of private profit for competing parts is wrecking the economy and social fabric of the region. A modern interconnected economy of industrial mass production needs cooperation, overall planning and a common pro-social aim to be successful. The foreign-owned Algoma Steel mill in Sault Ste. Marie is in bankruptcy protection under the *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* (CCAA) for the third time in the last twenty years with no end in sight even after three years. Now the foreign-owned Huron Central Railway is threatening to close if it does not receive state funds to serve its private interests. This is nation-wrecking not nation-building.

Huron Central Railway is privately owned and controlled by the U.S. imperialist monopoly Genesee & Wyoming (G&W).[1] It has threatened to shut down unless the federal and provincial governments grant it state funds to repair and maintain the railway line's infrastructure. G&W leases the line from CP Railway, which does not pay for the line's upkeep. G&W says the income from transporting industrial goods the 292 kilometre stretch between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury is insufficient to meet its aim and goal for company profit and ensure the rail line is in a good and safe condition according to federal standards. G&W pleads that the revenue necessary to maintain its operating infrastructure is draining money from private company profit and the U.S. owners do not accept lightly any lowering of their rate of profit, which they consider their monopoly right.



To cease railway operations would negatively affect the economy along the line including the operations of three major industries: the Algoma Steel mill in the Sault, Domtar paper in Espanola, and Eacom lumber operations in Nairn Centre. These three companies account for 88 per cent of the line's traffic, amounting to 12,000 carloads annually. Huron Central is considered the only viable transport option for those operations and many others along the line. It discontinued passenger service some time ago.

To meet its aim for private corporate profit, G&W says it needs millions of dollars per year in "survival funding" from the federal National Trade Corridor Fund matched by a similar amount from the Ontario government. If the pay-the-rich state funds are not provided, the monopoly says it

will cease operations in 2018.

This is not the first time G&W has asked for funds and threatened to shut down if state money was not given to them. The City of Sault Ste. Marie and the federal and Ontario governments handed over \$33 million to G&W in 2009 for "track bed improvements, rail replacement and bridge upgrades."



Pay-the-rich schemes and attacking the claims of the working class on the value it produces using weapons such as CCAA are the norm of the economy's present direction under the control and narrow aim of the imperialist monopolies. Industrial workers and other Canadians are questioning this direction with its aim for maximum private profit at the expense of the economy, its actual producers and others. To operate smoothly without crises, the modern socialized economy of industrial mass production needs cooperation amongst all its interconnected parts and a modern aim that favours the working people and general interests of society. The

present direction of state interventions to pay the rich to maintain and increase their private profits under threat of liquidation is destructive to the economy and leads to no good as do the attacks on the working class using the CCAA and other state-organized weapons.

Taking value out of the economy to serve and meet the aim of private profit does not work. Pay-the-rich schemes, theft of what belongs to workers by right through state-organized weapons such as CCAA and other anti-worker legislation, extorting concessions from workers with threats to close operations, and forcing state anti-social austerity on the people and society with cutbacks to social programs and public services amount to nation-wrecking. A new pro-social direction and aim for the economy is necessary to serve the common good and nation-building.

Note

1. Genesee & Wyoming Inc. is a U.S. holding company that owns or maintains interests in railroads throughout the world, including the United States, Canada, Mexico, Bolivia, Australia, Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In addition to its ownership of Freightliner, G&W controls more than 24,900 km of owned and leased track, with more than 5,300 km under additional track-access arrangements. It owns controlling interests in 122 freight railroads, either directly or through subsidiaries, including Genesee & Wyoming Canada Inc. acquired in 1997. A subsidiary called Rail Link Inc. provides industrial switching and related customer logistics services in 11 U.S. states and operates an additional 26 short line railroads serving 10 major U.S. ports.

Freightliner in Britain was originally part of state-owned British Rail. Privatization in the 1990s transferred Freightliner into private hands, eventually falling under the control of G&W in 2015. Freightliner operates freight rail service throughout Europe, West Asia, North Africa and Australia.

G&W is headquartered in Connecticut. Before its big expansion with the purchase of Freightliner in 2015, the company had a gross income in 2014 of U.S.\$1.639 billion and company profit of U.S.\$261.0 million.

The company annually receives state funds from pay-the-rich schemes from most of the jurisdictions where it operates, mainly said to repair and replace fixed value in its railway lines.

These pay-the-rich schemes boost its annual company profits and allow it to grow its empire through takeovers of other companies and new operating contracts.

(With files from Northern Ontario Business, myespanolanow.com, Wikipedia and company websites)



U.S. Warmongering in Asia

Anti-War Protests Greet Trump in Korea

- Philip Fernandez -



Several days of militant protests against Trump's visit to Korea begin November 4, 2017.

On November 7 and 8, U.S. President Donald Trump visited the Republic of Korea (ROK) for the third U.S.-ROK Summit as part of an 11-day Asian tour which included visits to Japan, China, Vietnam and the Philippines. Trump's visit to south Korea was opposed by more than 200 organizations which demanded peace on the Korean peninsula. On November 4, the groups held a "No Trump, No War People's Rally" at the U.S. embassy in Seoul to launch their protests. Despite their attempts, the Seoul police were unable to prevent the protesters from getting to the U.S. embassy. In their joint press conference the organizers pointed out: "Who can possibly welcome a foreign leader who talks about the possibility of a war on their land? We should take the path of peace, not war. We cannot help but protect peace on our land and our livelihood for ourselves." The demonstrators demanded that the U.S. stop the aggressive military exercises that threaten the Korean Peninsula, cease pressuring and imposing sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and remove all terminal high altitude area defence (THAAD) missile installations from Korean soil. They also demanded that the U.S. stop forcing the ROK to purchase larger and larger amounts of U.S. weapons.



Seoul, November 5, 2017

Many of the protests also called for the scrapping of the onerous U.S.-ROK Free Trade Agreement (KORUS) which has permitted the domination of the south Korean economy by U.S. monopolies at the expense of the livelihoods and economic future of the people.

While the monopoly media in Canada and elsewhere sensationalized Trump's provocative and irresponsible comments against the DPRK during his visit, less mentioned was that Trump's visit to south Korea was aimed primarily at strengthening the aggressive U.S.-south Korea military alliance. To make that point clear, U.S.-south Korea-Japan military drills involving three aircraft carriers -- the USS *Ronald Reagan*, the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* and the USS *Nimitz* -- were timed to coincide with Trump's visit. These war exercises continue with air and naval manoeuvres near the Northern Limit Line, the U.S.-imposed maritime border on the West Sea dividing north and south Korea.

It is important to note that throughout all these aggressive military acts and crimes against the peace on the part of the U.S., the ROK and Japan, the DPRK has exercised restraint and soberly called for the U.S. and its allies to end these provocative acts while at the same time taking defensive measures against possible attacks.





Activists force Trump's motorcade through Seoul to reroute, November 7, 2017.

One of the outcomes of the summit was that ROK President Moon committed to purchasing billions of dollars more of U.S. weapons -- including F-35A Joint Strike Fighters, KF-16 fighters, Patriot PAC-3 ballistic missile upgrades, Apache heavy attack helicopters, Global Hawk high-altitude drones and Aegis combat systems. Moon's pledge to buy more weapons goes beyond the commitment already made under the previous Park Geun-hye government to increase imports of U.S. weapons by \$215 billion between 2016 and 2020. President Moon has pledged to increase south Korea's defence spending by seven per cent annually to 2022. Next year alone the defence budget will be increased by almost U.S.\$40 billion.



Two members of south Korea's National Assembly refuse to applaud Trump's warmongering speech, November 8, 2017, while a mass demonstration takes place outside.

All this does not bode well for peace on the Korean peninsula. The strengthening of the U.S.-south Korea military alliance through increased war exercises aimed at regime change in the DPRK, and increased purchases of U.S. weapons, the strengthening of the U.S. military occupation of south Korea and the continuing imposition of U.S. military command in the event of war on the Korean peninsula, is a crime against the Korean people and a violation of their right to live in peace.

The U.S. imperialists have been a curse on the Korean people. Since the unilateral and forced division of Korea by the U.S. in 1945, the Korean people have not had a moment's peace. It is noteworthy that from the time of the division of Korea, the Korean people in the north and south have worked tirelessly for peace on the Korean Peninsula and the reunification of their nation. The reception given Donald Trump on his recent Korean visit shows the whole world that the Korean people, despite all the obstacles put in their way since 1945, through the U.S.-instigated Korean War to the present, have not for a moment given up their just struggle for peace, reunification and self-determination.

It is vital that the peace-loving Canadian people and peoples around the world do their duty and step up their actions against the U.S. war drums being beaten once again on the Korean Peninsula under the pretext that the DPRK is a threat to peace. By taking a stand for peace on the Korean Peninsula, the Canadian people will assist the Korean people in their just struggle to oust the U.S. imperialists from their country and achieve the peace and reunification they so ardently desire.



U.S. Troops Out of Korea!
U.S. -- Sign a Peace Treaty with the DPRK!
No to THAAD Missiles in South Korea! Hands Off the DPRK!





(With files from Hankyoreh, www.commondreams.org. Photos: Voice of the People, news agencies)



Joint Statement of International Associations of Lawyers



Seoul, November 7, 2017

On the occasion of the visit of U.S. president Trump to Japan and South Korea, we demand an end to the U.S.-DPRK escalation in military threats.

On September 19, 2017, in his first appearance before the United Nations, President Donald Trump threatened to totally destroy North Korea [Democratic People's Republic of Korea -- *TML* Ed. Note] showing absolute contempt and disregard for all the reasons the peoples of the world united in 1945 to establish the United Nations. In the preamble of the Charter, the peoples of the United Nations state:

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS

- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
- to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

In furtherance of these purposes "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered." And "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

The only exception to the use of force is in self-defense in response to an armed attack from another country, and only until the Security Council can act to restore international peace and security.

With respect to Korea, the United States has never complied with the terms of the 1953 armistice. The Armistice called for the parties to meet to conclude a formal peace treaty. This has never happened.

The armistice called for the removal of foreign troops from the peninsula. The Chinese troops left in the 1950s. The United States still has 28,500 troops in South Korea and South Korea has built the world's largest U.S. military base on Jeju Island.

In fact, contrary to the initial promises that the base would not be used as a strategic outpost by the U.S. military, U.S. naval vessels often enter ports at the Gangjeong Naval Base. The armistice called for no new weapons being introduced into either country.

The United States put nuclear weapons in South Korea and although they were later removed, the United States has been selling billions of dollars of arms to South Korea each year. The United States over opposition of peace and other progressive activists in South Korea has promoted the installation of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense or THAAD system in South Korea using as cover the current war of words.

There needs to be a permanent peace treaty on the peninsula.

The International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), the Japan Lawyers International Solidarity Association (JALISA), the U.S. Military Issues Committee of Lawyers for a Democratic Society (MINBYUN) and the Confederation of Lawyers of Asia and the Pacific (COLAP), support the development of a peace treaty between North and South Korea as a main way to promote peace and stability in the region.

Furthermore, we demand of President Trump of the U.S., President Moon Jae-in of South Korea, Prime Minister Abe of Japan, as follows:

1. Stop acting recklessly with continuing threats of war.
2. Do not use the military bases in South Korea and Japan to threaten North Korea to heighten the crisis on the Korean peninsula.
3. President Moon Jae-in and Prime Minister Abe Shinzo should not allow the deployment of strategic assets such as U.S. nuclear carriers, strategic bombers, and nuclear submarines, including the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) deployment.
4. In addition, the U.S.-ROK joint military exercises that deploy a U.S. strategic weapon in accordance with a pre-emptive nuclear strike threatening North Korea must be stopped immediately.
5. Moon Jae-in should act as a mediator to promote dialogue and negotiations that will permanently end the military confrontation between North Korea and the United States. In the process, it will be necessary to revive the 7.4 South-North Joint Statement, the 6.15 South-North Joint Statement, and the 10.4 South-North Declaration, and end the worn-out confrontation in accordance with that spirit and achieve the improvement of inter-Korean relations.
6. Abe Shinzo should give up the strategy to deter North Korea with the U.S. and be a fair mediator to promote dialogue with the spirit of Article 9 in the Japanese peace constitution.

We call on the international community to raise its voice against these provocations and drills with mighty U.S. military power generated by the U.S. military bases in Asia, the Pacific and in the world.

(November 6th, 2017)



Protest in Canada



Hope 21, an organization of patriotic overseas Koreans that is part of the struggle for peace and justice on the Korean Peninsula, on November 15 joined the weekly picket in Toronto organized by the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) and the Korean Federation in Canada against U.S. war preparations on the Korean Peninsula.

The participation of Hope 21 with their signs and banner across from the U.S. Consulate drew the attention of many passers by who stopped to sign the Peace Petition against War and Aggression on the Korean Peninsula. Almost 60 signatures were collected bringing the total number of signatures to over 1,000 in three weeks of pickets and related actions in Toronto. Hope 21 activists pledged to take up this work as their own to contribute to the success of the campaign.



In light of the ongoing military exercises being conducted now in Korean waters by the U.S.-south Korea-Japan military alliance that threatens the Korean Peninsula and the region, the organizers of the pickets and the peace petition call on everyone across Canada to organize similar pickets and collect signatures for the Peace Petition. By everyone taking their stand for peace on the Korean Peninsula and to stay the hand of the U.S. imperialist warmongers and their allies in the Canadian Parliament, Canadians can find a way for Canada to be a genuine force for peace in the world and remove itself from its entanglements in any and all U.S.-led aggressive military alliances.

Copies of the Peace Petition Against War and Aggression on the Korean Peninsula can be found [here](#).

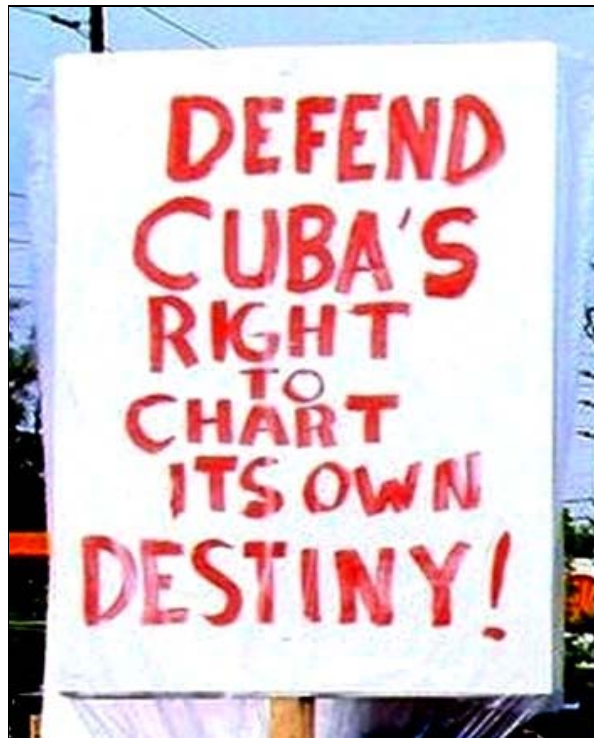


End the U.S. Blockade of Cuba!

U.S. Announces New Restrictions on Trade and Travel to Cuba

The United States government announced on November 8 new restrictions on U.S. citizens wishing to do business with or travel to Cuba, as part of implementing Donald Trump's June 16 "Presidential Memorandum of National Security on Strengthening U.S. Policy towards Cuba," which reversed key aspects of the process of rapprochement between the two countries. The U.S. Departments of State, Commerce and the Treasury announced "coordinated actions" that include blacklisting 180 state-owned entities and restrictions on travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens and residents.

Meanwhile, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), and the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security, announced amendments to the Cuban Assets Control Regulations and the Exports Administration Regulations. These include changes to the list of sanctions originally announced in June that came into force November 9, when they were officially published in the Federal Register. Complementary measures by the State Department also came into force November 9.



One example of the sanctions being put in place is that "persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction will now be prohibited from engaging in certain direct financial transactions with entities and subentities" on the State Department's "List of Restricted Entities and Subentities Associated with Cuba (Cuba Restricted List)." These include more than 100 hotels, marinas and retail outlets linked to Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces and national intelligence and security organizations, according to a press release by the Treasury Department's Office of Public Affairs.

Regarding travel, the press release notes that "all people-to-people non-academic educational travel be conducted under the auspices of an organization that is subject to U.S. jurisdiction and that sponsors such exchanges to promote people-to-people contact. [...] Individual people-to-people nonacademic educational travel will no longer be authorized as announced by the President."

TML Weekly condemns these actions against the people of Cuba and their leadership and calls on people in Canada and Quebec to step their actions in support of Cuba's right to independence and sovereignty and to oppose any moves by the Trudeau government to change Canada's longstanding stated policy of non-interference in Cuba's internal affairs and opposition to the U.S. embargo.

New U.S. Measures Against Cuba Are a Setback

Josefina Vidal Ferreiro, General Director of the United States Division of Cuba's Foreign Ministry pointed out on November 8 that the new U.S. restrictions constitute a serious setback to bilateral relations. These measures reinforce the blockade and blatantly aim to subvert the Cuban

Revolution. She also pointed out the arbitrariness of the list of targeted entities: "It even includes soft-drink brands (like Tropicola and Cachito) and rums, as well as photography services like PhotoService."



Vidal pointed out that the measures will also affect U.S. businesses, who will lose out to their competitors on attractive opportunities in Cuba.

However, she noted that the new regulations on business and travel exclude businesses and agreements established before the measures came into effect. Therefore, various links between the two countries implemented just before Barack Obama left office remain in place, such as the authorization of direct commercial flights between the two countries and visits by cruise lines to Cuba, as well as memorandums of understanding in the fields of telecommunications and hotel management signed with U.S.

companies.

"[The latest restrictions are] related to a small group of businesses," stated Vidal, who noted that further progress was, and is, limited by the continued application of the blockade.

New Restrictions Opposed from Within U.S.

The new U.S. measures were widely rejected by broad sectors of U.S. society, including many who oppose impediments to U.S. companies doing business with Cuba.

The United States National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) described the new restrictions as counterproductive. NFTC Vice President Jake Colvin said that restricting U.S. companies from participating in the Mariel Special Development Zone prevents those in the U.S. from engaging in activities "that could potentially benefit Cuban workers and the Cuban people."

James Williams, president of the Engage Cuba coalition, which is working to end the blockade, noted, "Anyone with knowledge of how the Cuban economy works knows that these additional regulations on U.S. companies will simply make it harder to do business in Cuba." He added that "these new restrictions on U.S. businesses could hinder that progress which could cost the U.S. economy billions and affect thousands of jobs."

Democrat Senator Dianne Feinstein tweeted, "Isolating the Cuban people didn't serve our interests before, and it certainly won't do so now." Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy highlighted the hypocrisy of the Trump administration, noting that Cuba does not represent a threat to the United States. He described the new restrictions as "onerous and petty," adding "These new regulations will hurt fledgling entrepreneurs and the rest of the Cuban people by discouraging Americans from traveling there."

Republican Congressman Mark Sanford (South Carolina) tweeted, "The ban on travel to Cuba, which was enacted at the height of the Cold War and Communist threat, is both outdated and an unjust limitation on American freedom."

The *New York Times* quoted Obama-era White House advisor Daniel P. Erikson as saying "the rules

would probably confuse American visitors, who will have trouble figuring out which transactions are banned." Ben Rhodes, another Obama advisor and one of the main architects of his Cuba policy, stated: "Trump won't restrict what kind of assault weapons Americans can buy but he will tell you what kind of soda you can buy in Cuba."

(Prensa Latina, Granma)



United Nations Issues Another Massive and Resounding Rejection of U.S. Economic Blockade of Cuba

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



For the 26th consecutive year, the world on November 1 massively and resoundingly repudiated the U.S. economic war against the people of Cuba. By a vote of 191 to 2, the member countries of the United Nations overwhelmingly condemned the U.S. economic blockade of that heroic island nation by voting in favour of the resolution, "Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial and Financial Embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba." Only two voted against the resolution: the United States and Israel.

Since 1992, the international community has rejected the ongoing economic aggression of the United States against Cuba in these annual affirmations of the inalienable and inviolable right of all peoples to self-determination and independence.

The rejection of Washington's diktat, once again graphically underscores the isolation of the empire in world public opinion. The UN vote not only demonstrates the unflinching opposition of the world to the criminal U.S. policy, but also the depth of global support and respect for Cuba.

Washington's decision to vote against the resolution, as opposed to abstaining as it did in 2016, signals the refusal of the Trump regime to accept the failure of U.S. imperialism to impose its will on Cuba.

The struggle continues to finally bring an end to the U.S. economic war against Cuba, which is a flagrant violation of international law, constituting the principal obstacle to the island's social and economic development.



In this struggle, the nations and the peoples of the world, representing the immense majority of humanity, have declared in one voice that they stand with Cuba.



U.S. Blockade Is the Main Obstacle to Scientific Development in Cuba

- Yenía Silvia Correa -

The United States economic, financial, and commercial blockade of Cuba has caused around U.S.\$1.5 million in losses to the country's higher education sector in the last year alone.

This figure includes increased costs associated with sourcing supplies from distant markets, problems with bank transfers, lost revenue, and obstacles to accessing globally renowned publications.

One of the most significant consequences of the policy is the technological blockade, which forces Cuba to purchase technologies and equipment from distant markets such as China, resulting in significantly higher shipping costs.

Meanwhile, the blockade also prevents Cuban researchers from accessing over 200 websites, and makes it difficult for international experts and professionals to travel to the island, given the extraterritorial nature of the policy, which also limits Cuba from exporting its services and obtaining vital sources of revenue.

In regards to its impact on higher education, the blockade encourages Cuban professionals to emigrate, thus depriving the country of some of its top professionals and years of investment dedicated to training them.

In addition to the aforementioned damages, production and services are also affected by blockade regulations which restrict the island's access to certain supplies and materials essential to the development of teaching staff.

Regarding the impact of the United States' criminal policy against Cuba, María Victoria Villavicencio, director of International Relations at the Ministry of Higher Education stated, "Today, many of the problems caused by the blockade affect a significant number of opportunities

for our development and progress."

Just One Click Away

In the case of the University of Computer Sciences, the blockade is just one click away. Thus far this year, the institution has identified 209 websites which are readily accessible worldwide, but blocked from the University's IP address -- a significant increase from the 116 registered last year.

The institution has also been unable to access professional certifications needed to prepare and develop software.

Havana's Agrarian University meanwhile, has also suffered the impact of the United States' genocidal policy. For example, every article in its agriculture and livestock magazine must have a digital identifier, however the blockade prevents Cuba from accessing such services.

Likewise the policy has a significant impact on the work of staff and scientific research at the University, above all those linked to agriculture and livestock degrees. The institution is currently unable to acquire equipment for its laboratories, or farming supplies and materials from U.S. firms, making the cost of obtaining such products very expensive.

Impact on Revenue

One of the ways the National Center for Agricultural and Livestock Health acquires financing, to continue its work on scientific development, is through exports.

Since 2015 the institution has faced serious problems transferring funds from Nicaragua after technology exchanges with establishments in that country, with losses currently estimated at U.S.\$50,000.

What is more, this also deprives the institution of the vital resources it needs to continue carrying out its main line of work, which includes the identification, control, and prevention of exotic diseases that affect animals, as well as undertaking initiatives linked to the development of the country's economy.

Recently the blockade has made it extremely difficult for Cuban scientists to participate in international congresses, which constitute an opportunity for the country to present its results in the field of Agriculture and Livestock Sciences, and exchange with international experts.

The University of Havana

The University of Havana, Cuba's oldest higher education institution, meanwhile, also faces financial damages and obstacles to accessing technologies and other vital resources, as a result of the U.S. blockade.

For example, the criminal policy prevents the institution's Chemistry, Physics, and Biology faculties and research centers not only from obtaining equipment but also basic supplies.

Meanwhile, restrictions regarding financial transactions and money transfers also make organizing visits and exchanges between professionals difficult.

Furthermore, the United States' new Cuba policy announced by President Donald Trump could significantly reduce academic exchanges and visits by students, professors, and researchers from the U.S.

Despite such difficulties, the Cuban government has maintained its commitment to continually raise the quality of higher education, and support university students and professors, [as it has] ever since the triumph of the Revolution.

According to María Victoria Villavicencio, "The only reason that the damages are not more severe today, is because we have an important number of incredibly creative, dedicated, and highly professional professors and researchers, with a strong commitment to our institutions and country, who create ways to mitigate the effects of the blockade."

(Granma, November 6, 2017)



Actions in Canada in Support of Cuba's Resolution at UN

Several actions were held in Canada by Cuba friendship and solidarity organizations, to express the support of people in Canada and Quebec for the UN vote on Cuba's resolution against the U.S. blockade. These actions affirmed Cuba's right to be, free from outside interference, especially the U.S. hostile policy that includes the blockade and many extraterritorial laws that affect many countries from having normal trade relations with Cuba. A global Twitter campaign also took place.

Montreal



Ottawa



Toronto



Vancouver



Event with renowned Cuban singer-songwriter Gerardo Alfonso.

(Photos: TML, J. Fonseca, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba)



"We Will Persevere, with the Consensus of Our People and Especially the Patriotic Commitment of the Youngest Cubans"

- Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla -

Full text of speech by Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, on the "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba," at United Nations headquarters, New York, November 1, 2017.

Mr. President;

Your Excellencies permanent representatives;

Distinguished delegates;

U.S. citizens and Cubans resident in the United States who are present in this hall:

I would like to express to the people and government of the United States; Mayor Bill De Blasio; Governor Andrew Cuomo; and other authorities in New York; as well as its citizens and especially families of the victims, our most heartfelt condolences, in the name of the Cuban people and government, for the terrorist attack which occurred yesterday afternoon.

I also express our sincere condolences to the peoples and government of Argentina and Belgium.

Mr. President:

I express the most energetic condemnation of the disrespectful, offensive, and interventionist statements made by the United States Ambassador to the United Nations against Cuba and against the Cuban government, a few minutes ago.

I recall that the United States, where flagrant violations of human rights are committed, of deep concern to the international community, does not have the slightest moral authority to criticize Cuba, a small, solidary country, with an extensive, recognized international record; an honorable, hard-working, and friendly people.

She spoke in the name of the head of an empire that is responsible for most of the wars in progress on the planet today, and which murders innocent people, and is the decisive factor in instability worldwide and the very serious threats to peace and international security, trampling international law and the United Nations Charter, which she has just cynically evoked.

It has not been 55 years, Madam Ambassador, you erred in your first sentence; it has been 26 of these sessions, and more than half a century since the events being discussed today originated.

She lies, uses the same style that predominates in U.S. politics today. This all began before the Cuban nation even existed. When the Cuban people, for the first time rose up in arms in 1868, the appetite for annexation and domination, of what was and is today U.S. imperialism, had already been unleashed.

In 1898, using a pretext -- as is characteristic of the modern history of the United States -- the explosion of the ship, the *Maine*, in a Cuban port, they entered as allies of Cuban independence

forces and then occupied the country as invaders, and imposed the *Platt Amendment*, cutting short the independence and sovereignty of Cuba. They conducted three military occupations, imposed 60 years of total domination that ended January 1, 1959, with the entry of the Rebel Army into Havana and the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, that continues to this day, carrying on the same struggles that have inspired our people for over 100 years. (*Applause*)

She lies, she used a phrase, attributing a statement on the so-called October or Missile Crisis to a supposedly Cuban source. I invite her to state the source, to state its author, to present evidence. It sounds like one of the tweets proliferating in this country, in these times of hate, division, and dirty politics. (*Applause*)

When the Cuban Revolution triumphed, the United States set regime change as its objective. The policy announced by President Trump on June 16 is not new; it is the same policy, it is an old policy anchored in the past.

She mentioned the illustrious U.S. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson. She forgot to say that he was the person who, deceived by his own government, had the unfortunate duty during a session of the Security Council, to show photos of supposed Cuban aircraft, actually of U.S. origin, bearing the emblem of the Cuban Air Force, that on April 15 bombed the city of Havana, caused numerous casualties, and was the prelude to the attack, the invasion, at Playa Girón or the Bay of Pigs.

These bombings and the involuntary lie of Ambassador Stevenson, who had been deceived by his government, occurred even before the declaration of the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution. These bombings took place prior to the declaration of the socialist character of our Revolution [April 16, 1961].

She has spoken of the October Crisis.

She has spoken of the days of President Kennedy's assassination, and the declassification of documents. They have really been hidden from the U.S. people too long. Declassify them all.

But if she wants to talk about these issues, I suggest she read the book *Trained to Kill: The Inside Story of CIA Plots against Castro, Kennedy, and Che*, by CIA agent [Antonio] Veciana, in which he recounts his meeting with CIA agent David Phillips and with Lee Harvey Oswald, in Dallas, during the third week of September, 1963.

It has been a history of lies and aggression: Operation Northwoods, Operation Mongoose. Information was just declassified showing that at that time the United States had prepared 261,000 soldiers, ready for a direct invasion of Cuba. Functioning in Florida was the CIA's largest base in history, until that time, with more than 700 agents, until the creation of the even bigger CIA base in Saigon.

She uses a style reminiscent of the trial of Alice in Wonderland: sentence first, trial later.

I speak for my people, and I also speak for those who cannot call President Trump or the U.S. Ambassador by their name, but feel and think like me.

At least she has recognized the total isolation of the United States in this hall and in the world. You are alone on the issue of the blockade of Cuba! (*Applause*) She ignores the power of the truth, underestimates the strength of an idea at the bottom of a cave, which is more powerful than an army, as José Martí said, who wrote, carrying it on his chest, in an unfinished letter with the following phrase: "Every day I am in danger of giving my life for my country, for my duty... to prevent in time, with the independence of Cuba, that the United States extends itself into the

Antilles and falls, with this added strength, upon the lands of our America."

Ambassador, everything began much more than 26 years ago, much more than 55 years ago. Along with the military aggression, the fabrication of pretexts, plans for a direct invasion, measures taken to strangle our economy, state terrorism, destabilization, and subversion, they proposed -- and I quote the infamous letter by Undersecretary of State Lester Mallory, signed April 6, 1960 -- promoting "... disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship... all possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba ... denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages..."

The blockade of Cuba was created "to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

Nonetheless, when President Raúl Castro Ruz and President Barack Obama made those surprising, hopeful announcements, December 17, 2014, President Obama described the blockade as failed and obsolete, ineffective in achieving its objectives, causing harm to the Cuban people and the isolation of the U.S. government. Later he described it as useless in advancing U.S. interests, failed, senseless, not viable, and a burden for citizens.

But the blockade was never recognized as a flagrant, massive, and systematic violation of the human rights of Cubans, which the United States Ambassador cynically omitted a few hours ago, nor was it recognized as inconsistent with international law or as an act of genocide, as defined by the Geneva Convention, nor was its goal of subjugating our people renounced.

Nonetheless, the President of the United States at that time repeatedly stated his intention to use his executive powers, and work with Congress, to lift the blockade.

A concrete reflection of this intention was the U.S abstention, in 2016, during the vote on this resolution, which the United States Ambassador has just mocked.

During this period, substantive progress was made in terms of diplomatic relations, dialogue, and cooperation in areas of mutual interest and benefit; but during these last two years, the blockade was maintained, in all fundamental aspects, although some executive decisions were made to modify its implementation in a very limited fashion, but moving in a positive direction. The way in which the use of travel licenses was expanded was significant, given the legislative prohibition on travel to Cuba, that constitutes a violation of the rights and civil liberties of U.S. citizens, which she also failed to mention. Tangible results were also achieved in bilateral cooperation, to our mutual benefit, in such important arenas as confronting terrorism, drug trafficking, and digital crime.

Mr. President:

This past June 16, President Donald Trump proclaimed the blockade the fundamental axis of his anti-Cuban policy, and announced a series of measures meant to reinforce it.

In an antiquated, hostile anti-Cuban speech, reminiscent of the Cold War, and before an auditorium composed, among others, of rancid Batista henchmen, annexationists, and terrorists, the U.S. government returned to worn-out allegations of supposed human rights violations in Cuba to justify the tightening of the blockade. From this podium, heard this morning was his echo, his echo chamber.

President Trump does not have the slightest moral authority to question Cuba.

He leads a government of millionaires who intend to implement brutal measures against the poor

and low income families of this country, minorities and immigrants. He follows a program which encourages hate and division, and promotes a dangerous idea of exceptionalism and supremacy disguised as patriotism, and which will lead to more violence. He ignores the will of voters: two-thirds of U.S. citizens and Cuban residents in the United States, as well, support an end to the blockade.

Current U.S. policies harm citizens; corruption reigns in politics which have been hijacked by so-called special interests, that is, by the interests and the money of corporations: no support for education, health, or social security; restrictions on union organizing; and terrible gender-based discrimination.

Deserving of condemnation are the use of torture; police murders of African-Americans; civilian deaths caused by its troops; the indiscriminate, racially motivated death penalty; the murders, repression, and police surveillance of immigrants; the separation of families; the detention and deportation of minors; and the brutal measures threatening the children of undocumented immigrants who grew up and were educated in the United States.

This is the government that lost the popular vote.

The United States Ambassador has expressed her dream. I prefer to repeat that of Martin Luther King, when he said, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." Let freedom ring. (*Applause*)

She has come to tell us that she recognizes that the future of the island rests in the hands of the Cuban people. She is telling an absolute lie. It was never this way, throughout history. It has been a history of domination and hegemony over Cuba.

The announced policy proposes turning back relations to a past of confrontation, to satisfy the spurious interests of extremist circles within the U.S. right and a frustrated, aging, minority of Cuban origin in Florida. The Presidential Memorandum establishing the policy toward Cuba includes, among other measures, new prohibitions on economic, commercial, and financial relations between U.S. companies and Cuban enterprises.

It additionally restricts the freedom to travel of U.S. citizens with the elimination of individual trips under the so-called category of "people-to-people" exchanges, and increased surveillance for the rest of visitors from that country.

In recent weeks, President Donald Trump has reiterated on four separate occasions (including before this Assembly this past September) that his government will not lift the blockade on Cuba unless it makes changes to its internal order.

Today I reiterate that Cuba will never accept preconditions or impositions and we remind the President and his Ambassador that this approach, applied by a dozen of his predecessors, has never and will never work. It will be just one more example of a policy anchored in the past.

More recently, under the pretext of the health conditions of some diplomats in Havana, without the slightest evidence of their cause and origin -- because they lie when they speak of attacks or incidents -- or the results of ongoing investigations, the government of the United States adopted new measures of a political nature against Cuba, which intensify the blockade and affect bilateral relations in their entirety.

Among them, it suspended the issue of visas for Cuban travelers and emigrants at its consulate in

Havana, which undermines the right of citizens to travel freely and visit that country for short periods, as more than 163,000 Cubans have done this year, and seriously hinders the family reunification of others, under the bilateral agreement to grant no less than 20,000 immigrant visas per year. The requirement of an in-person interview with Cuban travelers in U.S. consulates in third countries, and with emigrants in the U.S. consular section in Bogotá, will greatly increase the cost of the procedure and make them unfeasible for a large number of them. Where are their rights in the United States' discourse?

There is no way to justify harming people and families to try to achieve political objectives against the constitutional order in Cuba.

The U.S. government, with the political purpose of limiting travel and damaging international tourism to Cuba, also issued an unfounded and utterly dishonest warning to U.S. citizens to avoid visiting our country.

Through the unjustified expulsion of personnel at our Consulate General in Washington, the only one in the United States, the capacity to provide services to U.S. travelers and especially to Cuban residents here, who have the absolute right to visit and interact normally with their nation, has been severely limited.

Equally, the U.S. arbitrarily and groundlessly reduced the personnel of our Embassy, which has caused, among other consequences, the dismantling of its Economic-Commercial Office, with the malicious political aim of eliminating dialogue with the U.S. business sector, genuinely interested in exploring existing business opportunities, even within the restrictive framework of blockade regulations.

Nor is it surprising, considering what the Ambassador has said here, or her leaders previously, that the President of the United States ignores the unanimous international support for the progress that he is now reversing, or the similar demand for an immediate, total, and unconditional end to the blockade.

Mr. President:

As President Raúl Castro Ruz expressed, on July 14, "We reaffirm that any attempt to destroy the Revolution, whether through coercion and pressure, or the use of more subtle methods, will fail... Cuba is willing to continue discussing pending bilateral issues with the United States, on the basis of equality and respect for the sovereignty and independence of our country, and to continue respectful dialogue and cooperation in issues of common interest with the U.S. government.

"Cuba and the United States can cooperate and coexist, respecting our differences and promoting everything that benefits both countries and peoples, but it should not be expected that, in order to do so, Cuba will make concessions essential to its sovereignty and independence... nor will it negotiate its principles or accept conditions of any kind, just as we have never done throughout the history of the Revolution." (*Applause*)

Mr. President:

Cuba presents today, for the 26th consecutive time before the United Nations General Assembly, the draft resolution (entitled) "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

In the current situation, this text acquires special relevance in the face of the setback that the actions of the new government of the United States against Cuba signal.

The blockade constitutes the greatest obstacle to the country's economic and social development and the implementation of the National Plan, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda. It is the main obstacle to the development of economic, commercial, and financial relations between Cuba and the United States and the rest of the world.

According to calculations rigorously conducted by Cuban institutions, the blockade caused, in the year from April 2016 to April 2017, losses to the Cuban economy on the order of \$4.305 billion.

This figure is about double what would be needed as annual direct foreign investment for the Cuban economy to advance substantially toward development.

The accumulated damages reached the enormous figure of \$822.280 billion, calculated considering the devaluation of the U.S. dollar *vis-à-vis* the price of gold. At current prices, this is the equivalent of \$130.178 billion.

Dozens of banks in third countries have been affected in the last period by the extreme and tenacious persecution of Cuban financial transactions.

The blockade is contrary to International Law and its aggressively extraterritorial application damages the sovereignty of all states. It also harms economic and business interests in all latitudes.

Mr. President:

The Ambassador of the United States failed to mention that the blockade is a flagrant, massive, and systematic violation of the human rights of Cubans, and constitutes an act of genocide under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It is also an obstacle to the international cooperation that Cuba provides in humanitarian areas to 81 countries of the South.

The human damages caused by the application of this policy are incalculable. There is not a Cuban family or social service in Cuba that does not suffer the deprivations and consequences of the blockade. Cuban émigrés also suffer discrimination and prejudices.

Over the last year, the Cuban importer and exporter of medical products, Medicuba S.A., made requests to purchase supplies from 18 U.S. companies that refused or never responded.

Others, such as the U.S. corporation Promega, recognized for the production of diagnostic kits to determine viral load in patients with HIV-AIDS, hepatitis C, or kidney diseases, refused in June 2017 to sell its products to Medicuba S.A., alleging that the Treasury Department maintains commercial sanctions that prohibit the sale of its products to the island.

On that same date, and with the same argument, the refusal to supply to Cuba was received from the company New England Biolabs Inc., which markets a wide range of enzymes, such as Proteinase K, which is a reagent that permits the diagnosis of viral diseases such as dengue, zika, and chikungunya, as well as other enzymes with multiple uses for the diagnosis of congenital malformations of fetuses, and to determine compatibility between organ donors and patients who are to undergo kidney, bone marrow, or liver transplants, among others.

Using the same argument, this company refused to provide supplies of a totally humanitarian nature to Cuba.

In April 2017, the German supplier Eckert & Ziegler Radiopharma GmbH, refused to supply to the same Cuban medical enterprise the Ge-68/Ga-68 Generator, or its components, which is a device

used to diagnose prostate cancer. According to the company, it was not possible to directly supply the product to Cuba, or through a third country, because the blockade prevented it from doing so.

The cardiology service of the Hermanos Ameijeiras Clinical and Surgical Hospital urgently requires a circulatory assist device to treat cardiogenic shock, for interventional cardiology and electrophysiology, allowing for the recovery of patients suffering from heart failure and prolonging their lives. The U.S. company Abiomed, global leader in this market, supplies the Impella system, ideal for treating these conditions. In September 2016 and February 2017, Medicuba S.A. contacted the company in order to study the possibility of incorporating the product into the Cuban health system, which to date has refused to respond.

Mr. President:

We are deeply grateful to all the governments and peoples, parliaments, political forces and social movements, civil society representatives, and international and regional organizations that have contributed with their voice and their vote, year after year, to support the justice and urgency of the abolition of the blockade.

We also extend our gratitude to the vast majority of the American people for their support of this commendable goal.

It offends humanity's conscience that the Ambassador of the United States has referred to the Bolivarian government of Venezuela in an unacceptable and interventionist way. She offends the heroic Venezuelan people, their civic-military union, and the Bolivarian Chavista government, led by President Nicolás Maduro Moros.

The government of the United States lies when it declares Venezuela a threat to its national security, which has, curiously, the largest certified hydrocarbon reserves on the planet.

As the Liberator Simón Bolívar wrote, "...the United States appear destined by Providence to plague America with misery in the name of liberty." I respond to the Ambassador with Bolívar's words.

We are in the midst of a clean, constitutional electoral process in Cuba, where seats are not bought, nor do special interests prevail, where there are no deceptive campaigns where money rules; elections in which the will of voters is not manipulated; elections in which division and hatred are not incited.

Mr. President:

We especially commend all those who have expressed concern and their rejection of the coercive measures announced by the current U.S. government.

The Cuban people will never give up building a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation. *(Applause)*

We will persevere, with the consensus of our people and especially the patriotic commitment of the youngest Cubans, in the anti-imperialist struggle and in defense of our independence, for which tens of thousands of Cubans have already fallen and we have run the greatest risks, as we demonstrated in Playa Girón and in the face of all threats.

We will maintain eternal loyalty to the legacy of José Martí and Fidel Castro Ruz. *(Applause)*

Mr. President:

Distinguished permanent representatives;

Esteemed delegates:

Our people are following this debate with hope. On their behalf, I request that you vote in favor of draft resolution A/72/L.30, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

Many thanks. (*Prolonged applause*)

Exclamations of: "Viva Cuba!" "Cuba sí, bloqueo no!"

(Council of State transcript /Granma International translation)



Hands Off Venezuela!

Oppose Trudeau Government's Continued Interference in Venezuela! No to U.S.-Led Attempts at Regime Change!

In defiance of the people of Canada and Canada's duty to uphold the rule of international law and the principle of sovereignty of all nations, the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau and its Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland continue their nefarious service to U.S. imperialism and its attempts at regime change in Venezuela.

On November 3, the Liberal government wielded its new law, the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act* (Sergei Magnitsky Law)[1], as a weapon against 19 individuals in Venezuela it claims are "responsible for, or complicit in, gross violations of internationally recognized human rights or acts of significant corruption." The sanctions "place an asset freeze in Canada on all listed people, and render listed persons as inadmissible to Canada under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*." These sanctions follow an earlier round issued by the Trudeau government on September 22 against 40 individuals for allegedly engaging in "activities that directly or indirectly undermine the security, stability or integrity of democratic institutions of Venezuela." [2]



The first round of sanctions, imposed before the government had the Magnitsky Law in its "toolbox," found Canada resorting to a sinister manoeuvre with the United States for the purpose of satisfying requirements under existing Canadian sanctions legislation at the time, the *Special Economic Measures Act* (SEMA). Before the Magnitsky Law expanded its reach, SEMA allowed for only two scenarios in which Canada could apply sanctions unilaterally against another country. One was where "a grave breach of

international peace and security" had occurred and had or was likely to "result in a serious international crisis." The other was if an international organization or association of which Canada is a member called on its members to take economic measures against a foreign state.

After failing to get the Organization of American States or the United Nations Security Council to provide a mandate for international intervention against Venezuela despite their best efforts, on September 5 the U.S. and Canada cooked up an "international association" between the two of them that immediately called on its "members" to "take economic measures against Venezuela and persons responsible for the current situation in Venezuela." This connivance behind closed doors can only be seen as Canada being given and accepting its marching orders as the U.S. already had sanctions in place against Venezuela.

The Trudeau government, following the U.S. lead, is doubling down on the Nazi technique of the "big lie"-- the ceaseless repetition of falsehoods and slanders about Venezuela until people's thinking is overwhelmed and the lies are accepted as truth. It must not pass!

This is similar to how the U.S. orchestrated the 2003 invasion of Iraq when it tried but failed to get a mandate from the UN Security Council and shows the most nefarious role the Trudeau government is playing on behalf of the U.S. The self-declared "Lima Group" of 11 Latin American countries plus Canada came up with a declaration on August 8 calling for measures to be taken against Venezuela and now Canada is doing so in concert with the U.S. as if based on some legitimate mandate when this is anything but the case.

This latest attack on Venezuela's sovereignty also constitutes a violation of Canada's sovereignty and the need for an independent foreign policy. It is an affront to the dignity and independent thinking of working people in Canada who, as a starting point reject any Canadian subservience to U.S. imperialism. Furthermore, for the Trudeau government to pontificate to other countries while it equivocates on the most elementary of human rights issues in Canada and the situation facing workers, retirees, women, youth and Indigenous peoples becomes more dire, is utmost Liberal hypocrisy.

Strengthening of police powers to permit Canadian and U.S. spy and police agencies to investigate suspected financial, economic and political links between Canadians and their organizations and those it has targeted for sanctions has as its aim to strengthen the instruments of suppression of Canadians and to expand the arbitrary powers of political police to suppress the right to conscience. That Freeland never ceases to claim it is all to defend democracy reveals how in contempt of any notion of democracy she and those she speaks for are.

That Canada imposed a second round of sanctions against Venezuela right after the successful holding of regional elections in which the majority of voters expressed their support for the direction Venezuela is taking under President Nicolás Maduro, electing candidates of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) as governors in 18 of the country's 23 states is telling. It shows that the Canadian government is not backing down on its determination to contribute to U.S. imperialism's desire for regime change in Venezuela no matter what.

It is likely not coincidental that Canada is engaging in all this nefarious activity with the U.S. while NAFTA is being renegotiated. The NAFTA renegotiations involve getting Canada to give up even more of its sovereignty and putting itself at the disposal of the U.S. in different ways to be used as a weapon against other countries and peoples.

TML Weekly calls on everyone to step up opposition to Canada's interference in Venezuela, ensure that disinformation about Venezuela and the Bolivarian nation-building project cannot take hold in Canada, and organize for an anti-war government that upholds international law and the

sovereignty of all countries.

***Oppose Canadian Sanctions Against Venezuela!
Hands Off Venezuela!
Uphold the Sovereignty of Peoples and All Countries!***

Note

1. "House of Commons Adopts U.S. Sanctions Legislation," *TML Weekly*, October 14, 2017
2. See "Oppose Canadian Sanctions Against Venezuela!" by Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), *TML Weekly*, October 21, 2017.



Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Strongly Rejects Decision of Canadian Government

- Venezuelan People's Power Ministry for Foreign Relations -

1. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela strongly rejects the decision made by the Government of Canada that intends to impose unilateral coercive measures against high-ranking officials of the Venezuelan State, including the Constitutional President of our country, Nicolás Maduro Moros, in open violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the international law and the rules which ought to govern the friendly and cooperative relations between the States.
2. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela denounces before the international community such hostile and unfriendly measures of the Canadian regime against our country, which, besides, lessen the principle of due process and the right to defence. They are punitive actions by a regime that is absolutely and shamefully subordinated to the interests of the U.S. empire, which are aimed at ousting the constitutional government of Venezuela.
3. The purpose of this aggression is to undermine peace and social stability in Venezuela as it attempts to sink the country back once again into a spiral of chaos, which has been overcome and that can only bring about pain and suffering to the Venezuelan people. With its actions, the Canadian regime -- one of the conspirers of the self-proclaimed Lima Group -- continues to support the violence unleashed by extremist groups that are protected and defended by such regimes, even in international fora.
4. In reaffirming its independence and sovereignty, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela denounces the fake progressive discourse of the Canadian regime and urges it, in turn, to stop its interventionist, unfriendly and hostile behaviour and to fully respect the rules of international law. We reiterate that the People and the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela shall not yield to threats, blackmail, sanctions or aggressions if what is at stake is the defence of our sovereignty and independence.

(Caracas, November 4th, 2017)



Toronto Meeting on "Resolving the Venezuelan Crisis" Denounced



Global Affairs Canada, with the Munk School of Global Affairs and the Canadian Council for the Americas, held a meeting October 26 at the University of Toronto to discuss how to intervene in Venezuela's internal affairs. Billed as a panel discussion on "Resolving the Venezuelan Crisis," the public event at the Isabel Bader Theatre followed a meeting of the foreign ministers of the so-called Lima Group in Toronto. The Lima Group, formed in August at a meeting in Peru is comprised of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru. It backs "opposition" forces in Venezuela that are hell-bent on regime change and is involved in creating public opinion for international intervention for this purpose. It is noteworthy that the U.S. is not part of the group, and that Canada is leading the charge in its place.

The keynote speech at the forum was given by Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland, who has been front and centre in promoting the so-called opposition forces in Venezuela which have engaged in terrorist activities against the Maduro government and openly call for U.S. intervention to topple the constitutionally and legally elected Venezuelan government. Other guest speakers included Irwin Cotler, former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and a member of a fraudulent Panel of "Independent International Experts" on Venezuela created by Organization of American States Secretary General Luis Almagro for the purpose of trying to associate the Bolivarian government with supposed "crimes against humanity" based on the testimonials of its sworn enemies. Cotler is anything but independent when it comes to the situation in Venezuela. He serves as an advisor to and advocate for opposition elements he calls "political prisoners" despite their having been convicted of criminal acts carried out as part of attempts to overthrow the Maduro government by force, including through the incitement to violence that resulted in the deaths of dozens of Venezuelans. Also given a platform to spout her anti-Maduro vitriol was the former Attorney General of Venezuela Luisa Ortega who fled the country after being fired by the National Constituent Assembly and is wanted for corruption and treasonous activity.



A militant protest outside the meeting raised the slogans: "Hands Off Venezuela," "U.S.-Canada Out of Venezuela," "Dismantle the Lima Group! It is Illegal" amongst others. A group of protesters also disrupted the proceedings to demand that Canada and the other Lima Group countries uphold international law and stay out of the internal affairs of the Venezuelan people.

In Ottawa that same day, activists with the Hugo Chavez People's Defense Front -- Ottawa held a picket in front of Parliament to denounce the presence of the Lima Group in Canada and inform the public of Canada's unacceptable interference in Venezuelan affairs.





(Photos: TML)



Prime Minister Trudeau, Let the Venezuelan People Live in Peace

- Hugo Chavez Foundation -



As concerned Canadians, we call on the Trudeau Government to stop interfering in Venezuela's sovereign affairs. Chrystia Freeland, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated, "Canada has taken a leadership role in addressing the crisis in Venezuela," and announced that Canada will host the third ministerial meeting of the so-called "Lima Group," in Toronto, on October 26, 2017. History has taught us that such actions are a pretext for foreign military intervention, regime change and looting of natural resources.

On October 15, Venezuelans went to the polls for the second vote this year, this time to elect Regional Governors. The outcome, recognized by observers and the majority of the opposition leaders, was a resounding victory for the governing United Socialist Party of Venezuela in

18 of 23 states.

Earlier this year, 8 million Venezuelans voted for a constituent assembly to rewrite the country's constitution. This unique mechanism enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of that nation may be

difficult to understand for a country that does not have a constitution and does not afford its population a direct role in remaking its laws. For Venezuelans, it is a right they approved almost 20 years ago.

These events happened on the heels of violent, opposition-led protests that claimed the lives of over 100 Venezuelans -- including assassinations of police and social leaders -- and injured hundreds more.

Despite these events, Canada has issued dozens of statements against the Venezuelan government and in support of the country's opposition leaders. Now, Canada has issued a visa to the former Attorney General of Venezuela, Luisa Ortega, who is currently wanted in Venezuela to face charges related to corruption and extortion.

We call on our Government to respect Venezuela's sovereignty and not follow [U.S. President] Trump's interventionist agenda. Canada should devote its energy to strengthening the social fabric against racism and all forms of oppression, as well as to fostering respectful relations with other nations in these delicate and hostile times.

Mr. Trudeau, Canada has many issues yet to be resolved. Many people in this country don't want to be involved nor be accomplices of interference against another country and people.

(October 26, 2017)

Supplement
Amazon Pay-the-Rich Scheme
To Be or Not to Be in Control of Their Lives
Confronts the Working Class
- K.C. Adams -



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