

July 25, 2020 - No. 27

The Need to Renew Democracy
The Fight for Societies that
Uphold the Rights of All



Private Banks Profit from Pandemic Measures
in the U.S. and Canada

- Paying the Big Banks to Do Government Work
- Big Banks Reaping Hefty Fees from U.S. and Canadian Pandemic Programs

Alberta Premier's Latest Economic Plan

- Massive Transfer of Public Funds to the Wealthiest Investors
- Dougal MacDonald -*

Actions in U.S. Continue

- Strike For Black Lives
- City Council in Asheville, North Carolina Calls for Reparations
 - Reparation Measures Adopted in California, Rhode Island and Illinois

**See Also
Supplement**

**Security in the U.S. Lies in the People's
Defence of the Rights of All**

- **People in Portland, Oregon Fight Trump's Imposition
of Federal Forces to Suppress Protests**
 - **Attempts to Impose Federal Control
Over Conflicting Authorities**
- Kathleen Chandler -
- **What Trump Seeks to Accomplish by Sending Federal
Police Forces to Chicago Already Armed to the Teeth**
- Voice of Revolution -

For Your Information

- **Mayors Call for Removal of Federal Forces**
- **Oregon Attorney General Files Lawsuit to
Block Suppression of Protest by Federal Forces**
- **Chicago Organizers File Lawsuit**

Day of Rage Against Annexation of Palestinian Land

- **Vigorous Action in Windsor**
- **Vancouver Stands with Palestine**

The Battle for Democracy in Bolivia

- **Cuba Makes Its La Paz Clinic Available to the Bolivian People**
- Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs -
- **People's Forces Battle for Their Democratic Rights**
- Margaret Villamizar -

Important Anniversaries

- **"Moncada Taught Us to Turn Setbacks into Victories"**
- Fidel Castro -

Private Banks Profit from Pandemic Measures in the U.S. and Canada

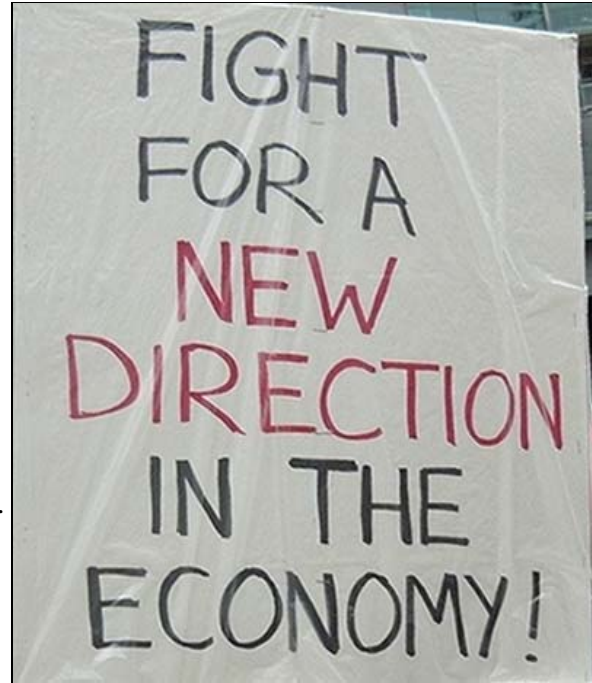
Paying the Big Banks to Do Government Work

During the economic crisis and even during "normal" times governments are paying the big banks to do public sector work as a matter of course. The banks and other financial institutions and their rich owners profit handsomely from fees for administering government borrowing and other tasks. None of the work they do for governments, including the lending to them of money, could

rightly be considered something in the realm of private enterprise but rather "legal" corruption to pay the rich which is in fact criminal in nature.

In the imperialist world, powerful private interests have usurped the state and profit at the expense of the people. Governments are used by these powerful private interests to borrow from the rich to pay the rich and in the process the private banks of the rich seize the role of administering the scams for which they are paid fat fees by the very same governments that borrow from the rich to pay the rich.

Paying the big private banks to do work that in fact should belong in the public service is a major problem facing the people and their society. It is a call for the people to organize for renewal and set a new direction for the economy. Private banks have long since seized functions that belong in the public sector. They escape the control of a public authority which no longer exists, including when it comes to the issuing of new money and deciding which projects merit investments.



The private financial institutions expropriate interest profit from the economy greatly weakening any development that favours the people and blocking a path forward to a new pro-social direction for the economy and governance. They take money out of the economy and invest it globally according to their narrow private interests. No social or natural problem can be resolved when the public finances are robbed in this manner.

In the modern era, banking itself should be a public service organized for the betterment of all and nation-building not parasitic private expropriation of social wealth the working people produce and need. Functions such as banking and investing in development projects, infrastructure and in the basic sectors should be under public control, with new forms that allow the people to decide the direction of the economy and to participate in making the decisions on major investments and development and other matters of concern related to the well-being of the people and nation-building. The necessity has arisen to bring public finances under the control of the people and accountable to the public.



Big Banks Reaping Hefty Fees from U.S. and Canadian Pandemic Programs

Handing government fees to private banks to administer public programs which serve private anti-social aims, in ways similar to the WE Charity scandal, and paying the rich in general from public funds, is yet another example of how private interests have seized control of governments to enrich themselves and their private enterprises. Government resources are used to prop up private business instead of investing in public enterprise for the benefit and stability this brings and for the security and good of all. Canada and the U.S. need a new pro-social direction including public banks under the control of the people and held to account for their actions.

In the present crisis, governments are paying large fees to the big banks to administer public pandemic handouts to private businesses. For the banks, the fees are a blessing as other revenue from investments has shrunk with bankruptcies and bad loans on the increase, especially among smaller businesses. Apart from hefty profits, government fees to administer the payouts allow the private banks to meet their regular expenditures for rent and electricity etc, retain staff and continue their private businesses. These payouts to private enterprises and fees to private banks have become normal practices to prop up an economic system that has run its course and needs a new direction.



Up to \$24.6 Billion Paid in Fees So Far

Many Canadian financial institutions operate throughout the United States of North American Oligopolies. Four of the largest Canadian banks are profiting from both U.S. and Canadian government fees paid to administer state pandemic payments to private businesses. The U.S. government has contracted the subsidiaries of Canadian banks among others to administer public loans through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) launched by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The PPP has the authority to hand out \$660 billion in loans to private enterprises. Rather than have a public service do the job, including public banks, the U.S. government offers the big private banks processing fees of up to five per cent to administer the loans for two to three years with the fees paid throughout the period. U.S. and Canadian banks have collectively handled \$520 billion through the PPP so far both administering the loans and collecting government fees for themselves.

Toronto-Dominion Bank has been the most active Canadian bank. Its U.S. arm, TD Bank, has already racked up processing fees of \$238 million to \$398 million so far this year. The fees are estimates only as they have not yet been fully acknowledged or made public. TD Bank has administered PPP loans worth at least \$8.2 billion and as much as \$12.1 billion through its extensive retail banking network across the eastern United States.

BMO Harris Bank, a subsidiary of Bank of Montreal, has collected between \$91 million and \$175 million in fees.

The Royal Bank of Canada's wholly-owned City National Bank is estimated to have taken in \$89 million to \$177 million in fees.

CIBC Bank USA, the U.S. arm of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce has collected anywhere from \$29 million to \$64 million in fees.

When PPP funds are disbursed to businesses, the banks receive a processing fee of five per cent for loans under \$350,000, three per cent for loans from \$350,000 to \$2 million, and one per cent for loans of more than \$2 million. The estimates for fees are based on possible ranges for PPP loans as the U.S. government data only provide exact amounts for loans of less than \$150,000.

The size of the fees paid to the big U.S. banks handing out funds from the PPP are estimated to be between \$14.3 billion and \$24.6 billion so far. These billions of dollars in fees have drawn

criticism, especially the amounts seized by the three largest U.S. banks -- JPMorgan Chase & Co., Bank of America Corp. and Wells Fargo, although the amount taken by the TD Bank does not lag far behind those big three.



The private banks argue they need the large fees to cover their costs of administration with Bank of Montreal spokesperson Paul Gammal going so far as to say, supposedly with a straight face, that the banks need the fat fees "to help support our increased charitable giving and ongoing commitment to minority-owned businesses and underserved neighbourhoods." The propagation of charities has become a preferred sanctimonious self-serving pursuit of the imperialist oligarchy. They preach the gospel of philanthropy using their own vast private wealth and control of the people's collective wealth to displace all government-run social programs and public services. Charities are both a form and ideology used to block any tendency towards the people's control over the economy and a new pro-social direction to stop paying the rich and increase investments in social programs, public

services and public enterprises under the control of the working people.

Fees from the Canadian Government

In Canada, the total fees doled out so far to private banks and credit unions administering the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) are estimated at \$110 million. The government through CEBA has to date handed out business loans worth \$27.6 billion to thousands of private enterprises. The CEBA program allows businesses to borrow up to \$40,000 interest-free until the end of 2022, with one quarter of the loan forgivable. Banks are paid 0.4 per cent of the outstanding balance of each CEBA loan per year. Whatever the private banks receive in administration fees for public programs props up their private enterprises and control of the economy.

(With files from Wall Street Journal.)

Alberta Premier's Latest Economic Plan

Massive Transfer of Public Funds to the Wealthiest Investors

- Dougal MacDonald -

On June 29, Alberta Premier Jason Kenney announced the components of his latest "economic recovery plan." This was supposedly based on the findings of the premier's Economic Recovery Council, composed of various corporate hacks, including former Prime Minister Stephen Harper. There is nothing new in the plan; it is the same old neo-liberal nonsense that the United Conservative Party and similar governments all over the world have peddled for decades. In essence, it is "trickle down" economics, the idea that increasing the profits of the corporations will somehow result in more wealth making its way down to ordinary working people. This has long been exposed as a complete lie, yet the Kennys of this world continue to promote it as the solution to our economic ills.



**Demonstration outside the UCP policy convention, Calgary, November 30, 2019, opposed
Kenney government's neo-liberal cuts to social programs.**

Certainly, there is a need for a comprehensive economic plan in Alberta but this latest mish-mash proposed by Kenney just will not do. It is just one more pay-the-rich scheme which will further damage the economy rather than start to rebuild it. It has nothing to do with consulting the people of Alberta or involving them in important decision-making and everything to do with adding to the profits of the private foreign corporations that control Alberta's economy and Kenney's government. The fact that the plan is the same old, same old is indicated by its two main and tired components, corporate tax cuts and infrastructure spending.

The corporate tax cuts component of Kenney's recovery plan is a further cut from 10 per cent to 8 per cent. This follows Kenney's initial cut from 12 per cent to 10 per cent. Note that under Conservative Ralph Klein the rate was 15.5 per cent or almost twice what Kenney has now set it at! Further, Kenney seems to be the only person left in the world still peddling the myth that corporate tax cuts attract investment and create jobs. In contrast, the general consensus among financial experts is that corporate tax cuts make corporations richer by increasing the huge amount of cash they sit on. Also, make no mistake, the energy corporations still have plenty of cash. For example, Imperial Oil reports it had a cash balance of \$1.4 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2020 and, in its own words, "strong liquidity."



Experience shows that corporations will use the money they save by the tax cut, not to create jobs, but mainly to buy back their own stock, greatly enriching the shareholders, including upper management who often have large holdings. For example, in January 2019, Murray Edwards, CEO and founder of oilsands giant CNRL, held almost 22 million shares of the company, currently worth about half-a-billion dollars. Shareholder enrichment is what occurred in the U.S. after Trump's 2017 tax cut. CNN reported on August 22, 2019: "The 2017 corporate tax cut left U.S. businesses flush with cash. S&P 500 companies responded by rewarding shareholders with record amounts of buybacks in 2018, with each quarter setting an all-time high." Instead of enriching workers corporate tax cuts will only further enrich the owners of capital.

It is also well-known that many corporations already pay little or no tax anyway through such tax-dodging strategies as shifting profits to foreign subsidiaries, accelerating depreciation, and giving stock options to employees. As well, the corporations take advantage of every "legal" loophole in the tax laws to use strategies such as sheltering their money in offshore accounts, as revealed by the "Panama Papers" in 2016. According to Revenue Canada, in 2014 (latest available figures), Canadian companies managed to avoid paying up to \$11.4 billion worth of taxes they should have paid in that single tax year. And when all else fails, a corporation can simply declare

bankruptcy and walk away from all its financial responsibilities, for example, stiffing landowners and leaving orphan wells in a mess.

As for the infrastructure component of Kenney's latest scheme, he boasts that this year Alberta will spend \$10 billion on such projects, supposedly creating 32,000 to 50,000 jobs. No evidence is given for this jobs claim and no mention is made of the thousands of jobs the Kenney government has already destroyed, nor of the fact that jobs constructing infrastructure are temporary. There is also no mention of the fact that what infrastructure spending really entails is the financial oligarchy lending money to governments and then profiting from the government projects and payouts many times over. Much of the economic activity is arranged through government contracts to global cartels, often in the form of public-private partnership (P3) agreements where public governments take the risk and private foreign corporations reap the profits.

Edmonton's \$1.8 billion Light Rapid Transit Valley Line SE is a prime example of such a P3. In 2016, TransEd Partners was selected to design, build and operate the Valley Line SE. The private partners in TransEd are Bechtel (U.S.), EllisDon (Ontario), Bombardier (Quebec), Fengate Capital Management (Ontario), Arup Canada (London, England) and IBI Group (Ontario). Bechtel, the lead contractor, is a huge enterprise, notorious for its close involvement with the U.S. government, particularly the Department of Defense and the CIA. Its executives Casper Weinberger and George Schultz served as Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State respectively under former President Ronald Reagan. Bechtel co-founder John McCone headed the CIA from 1961-65 at the height of the Cold War.

Nowhere, however, does Kenney explain where that \$10 billion for the infrastructure projects will come from, certainly not out of his back pocket. As has been previously pointed out, it is borrowed from the financial oligarchy and then a portion is put toward financing infrastructure projects. This becomes the seed money to begin construction. Private construction cartels are financed by the money the government borrows, which includes allowance for a healthy profit. Everything is guaranteed by the government including the exorbitant prices the private construction cartels charge to complete the projects. Once built, the big private enterprises are the main users of the infrastructure, e.g., roads, bridges, electricity, for which they are charged lower concocted "industrial rates."

Albertans are "directed and browbeaten not to object to this direction for the economy, as it 'provides jobs and the infrastructure.' ... But a new direction is exactly what is needed to bring the economy under the control of the people who do the work and prevent recurring crises and solve other social and natural problems. A new direction for the economy would prohibit government borrowing from private institutions. A new direction would construct, maintain and manage public infrastructure using permanent public construction enterprises. It would ensure that the value from the infrastructure is fully realized by the public and private enterprises that use and consume the value and that this value would be poured back into the economy and not be taken out by the rich to some tax haven or other faraway place." [1]

Note

1. See ["Public Infrastructure Spending Programs to Pay the Rich and Sustain Class Privilege and Control,"](#) by K.C. Adams, TML Weekly, June 27, 2020.



Actions in U.S. Continue

Strike For Black Lives



Teamsters, Brooklyn, New York.

"Even before George Floyd's life was so horrifically taken, the 'normal' everyone keeps talking about going back to wasn't working for us. From racially motivated attacks to being forced to go to work without protective equipment or hazard pay in the name of the economy, our lives have not been valued. We cannot go back to that. We must move forward."

- Glen Brown, Airport Wheelchair Attendant, j20strikeforblacklives.org

On July 20 over 60 unions and social justice organizations organized a strike of essential workers in cities across the U.S. Workers walked off their jobs and took to the streets to demand an end to racism, police impunity and "business as usual" as part of a nationwide "Strike for Black Lives." Tens of thousands of people with front-line jobs in health care, transportation, food services and other sectors staged walkouts and protests throughout the day.

The action call read:

"This is a moment to transform our economy and democracy but until we dismantle racism and white supremacy, we cannot win economic, climate or immigration justice. On July 20, workers demand:

"1. Justice for Black communities, with an unequivocal declaration that Black Lives Matter, is a necessary first step to winning justice for all workers. To win higher wages, better jobs, and Unions for All, we must ensure that Black workers can build economic power. To win Healthcare for All, we must address disparities in accessibility and quality of care. Action on climate change must center communities of color. Immigrant communities stand in solidarity with Black workers to build power together. Education, housing, and criminal justice reform must start by listening to Black workers and leaders. We will support and align with Black-led organizations and their demands.



"2. Elected officials and candidates at every level use their executive, legislative, and regulatory authority to begin to rewrite the rules and reimagine our economy and democracy so that Black communities can thrive. They must ensure fair and safe voting in-person and by mail so everyone can fully participate in our democracy. As we continue to address the COVID-19 pandemic, we must protect the health and safety of all workers, returning people to work and into public spaces with a rational, safe, well-managed plan designed with workers and community stakeholders.

"3. Corporations take immediate action to dismantle racism, white supremacy, and economic exploitation wherever it exists, including in our workplaces. This includes corporations raising wages, allowing workers to form unions, providing healthcare, sick leave and expanded healthcare coverage to people who are uninsured or have lost coverage as the result of losing their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic, child care support and more, to disrupt the multigenerational cycle of poverty created by their anti-worker attacks. Workers must have ample personal protective equipment (PPE) and have a voice in the plan to create safe workplaces during and after the pandemic.

"4. Every worker has the opportunity to form a union, no matter where they work. Every worker in America must have the freedom that comes from economic security and equity in opportunity. We demand the immediate implementation of a \$15/hour minimum wage, fully-funded healthcare coverage and paid sick leave for all."

"All over the United States, farmworkers, nurses' aides, hotel housekeepers, Uber, delivery, truck and bus drivers, airport cabin cleaners, Amazon warehouse workers, Walmart associates, and more walked off the job to demand an end to police violence against Black people and call on companies to move beyond tweeting that Black Lives Matter and take real action to improve Black lives," organizers said.

Photo Review

Massachusetts



Connecticut



Hartford, Connecticut



Edison, New Jersey



Trenton, New Jersey

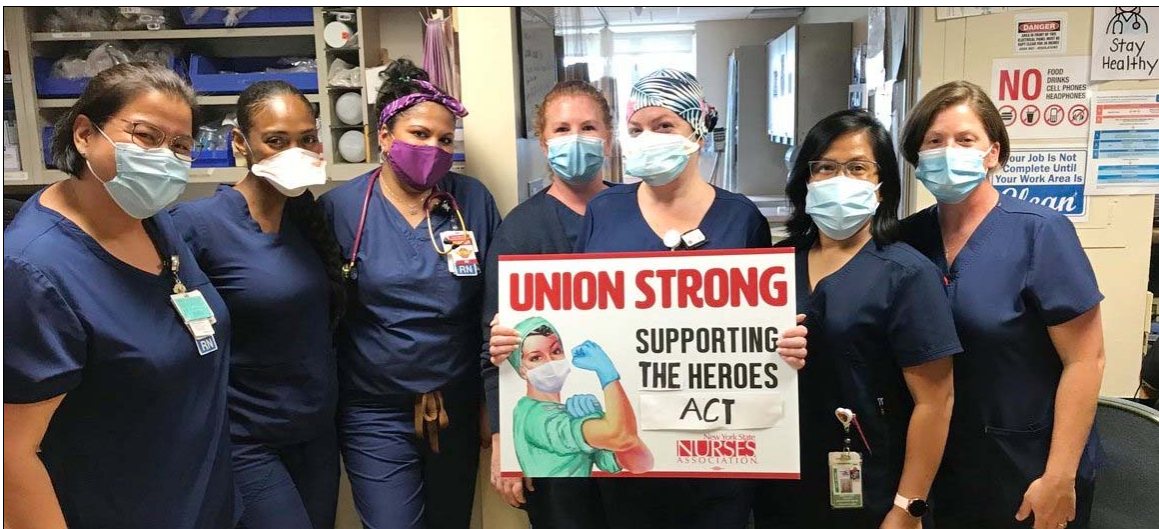


New Jersey



New York City





Long Island, New York



Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

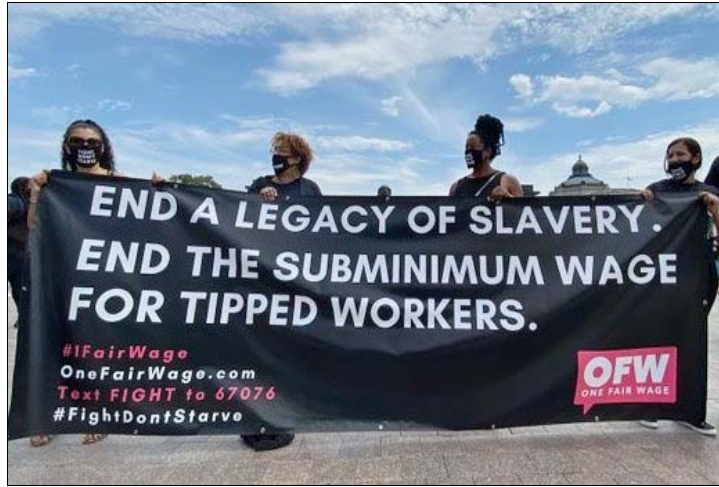


Toledo, Ohio



Washington, DC





Minneapolis, Minnesota



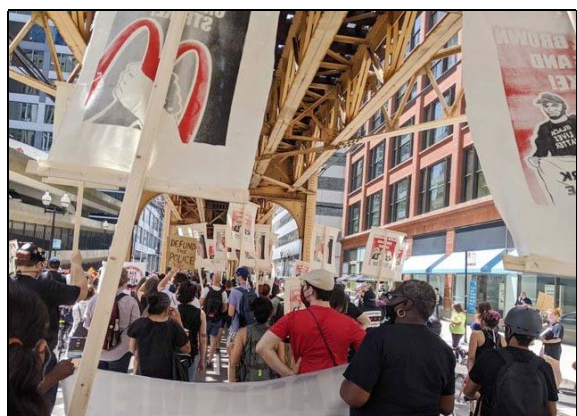
Iowa



St. Louis, Missouri



Chicago, Illinois





Detroit, Michigan



Durham, North Carolina



Memphis, Tennessee



Houston, Texas



Oakland, California



Los Angeles, California



San Francisco, California



Seattle, Washington



Yakima Valley, Washington



(Photos: Teamsters, Teamster Locals 1, 813, 350, United Farmworkers, SEIU, SEIU Locals 509, 1, 721, New York Nurses Assn, Greenpeace, AFL-CIO, S. Williamson, EO White, D. Bouscher, A. Azikiwe, B. Karp, IUPAT, Friends of the Earth)



City Council in Asheville, North Carolina Calls for Reparations



Demand for reparations painted on a street in Richmond, Virginia, June 2020.

On July 14, Asheville, North Carolina City Council passed a resolution that apologized for the city's historic role in slavery and the discrimination and violation of rights of African Americans in the period that followed the end of slavery in 1863 to the present.^[1] It also called for reparations in the form of investments in areas where Black residents face disparities (see full resolution below).

"Hundreds of years of Black blood spilled that basically fills the cup we drink from today," said Councilman Keith Young, an African American and the measure's chief proponent, who noted that simply removing statues is not enough.

Asheville City Council's resolution comes amidst the ongoing demands across the U.S. to end racial injustice, including thousands who protested in Asheville calling for redirecting funding for police toward social programs.

Reparations for slavery are a longstanding demand across the U.S. that is receiving renewed attention and impetus from the nationwide protests following the unjust police killing of George Floyd.

Resolution Supporting Community Reparations for Black Asheville

WHEREAS, Black People have been unjustly Enslaved; and

WHEREAS, Black People have been unjustly Segregated; and

WHEREAS, Black People have been unjustly Incarcerated; and

WHEREAS, Black People have been denied housing through racist practices in the private realty market, including redlining, steering, blockbusting, denial of mortgages, and gentrification; and

WHEREAS, Black People have been denied housing, displaced and inadequately housed by government housing policies that include discriminatory VA/FHA practices, Urban Renewal, and a variety of local and federal "affordable" housing programs; and

WHEREAS, Black People have been consistently and widely impoverished by discriminatory wages paid in every sector of the local economy regardless of credentials and experience; and

WHEREAS, Black People have experienced disproportionate unemployment rates and reduced opportunities to fully participate in the local job market; and

WHEREAS, Black People have been systematically excluded from historic and present private economic development and community investments and, therefore, black-owned businesses have not received the benefits of these investments; and

WHEREAS, Black People have been segregated from mainstream education and within present day school programs that include AG, AP, and Honors; and

WHEREAS, Black students have experienced the denial of education through admission, retention and graduation rates of every level of education in WNC and through discriminatory disciplinary practices; and

WHEREAS, Black People historically and presently receive inadequate, if not detrimental, health care as exemplified by disproportionate morbidities and mortality rates that result from the generational trauma of systemic racism, discriminatory treatment by medical professionals, and discriminatory medical practices such as involuntary sterilizations, denial of adequate testing, denial of preventative and curative procedures; and

WHEREAS, Black People have been unjustly targeted by law enforcement and criminal justice procedures, incarcerated at disproportionate rates and subsequently excluded from full participation in the benefits of citizenship that include voting, employment, housing and health care; and

WHEREAS, Black People have disproportionately been forced to reside in, adjacent to, or near Brown Zones and other toxic sites that negatively impact their health and property; and

WHEREAS, Black People have disproportionately been limited to the confined routes of travel provided by public transportation; and

WHEREAS, Black People have disproportionately suffered from the isolation of food deserts and childcare deserts;

WHEREAS, systemic racism was created over centuries and will take time to dismantle;

WHEREAS, state and federal governments have a responsibility to adopt programs, policies, and funding to address reparations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The City Council of the City of Asheville:

- (1) apologizes and makes amends for its participation in and sanctioning of the Enslavement of Black People;
- (2) apologizes and makes amends for its enforcement of segregation and its accompanying discriminatory practices;
- (3) apologizes and makes amends for carrying out an urban renewal program that destroyed multiple, successful black communities;
- (4) calls on other organizations and institutions in Asheville that have advanced and benefitted from racial inequity to join the city in its apologies and invites them to address racism within their own structures and programs and to work with the city to more comprehensively address systemic racism;
- (5) calls on the State of North Carolina and the federal government to initiate policymaking and provide funding for reparations at the state and national levels;
- (6) directs the City Manager to establish a process within the next year to develop short, medium and long term recommendations to specifically address the creation of generational wealth and to boost economic mobility and opportunity in the black community;
- (7) fully supports its equity department, staff and its work, and encourages the city manager to utilize their talents when forming policy and programs that will establish the creation of generational wealth and address reparations due in the black community as mentioned above;
- (8) seeks to establish within the next year, a new commission empowered to make short, medium and long term recommendations that will make significant progress toward repairing the damage caused by public and private systemic Racism. Other local government community organizations may also be invited to have representation on the Commission. The task of the Community Reparations Commission is to issue a report in a timely manner for consideration by the City and other participating community groups for incorporation into their respective short and long term priorities and plans. Accountability for achieving equity will be enforced in the appropriate offices. The report and the resulting budgetary and programmatic priorities may include but not be limited to increasing minority homeownership and access to other affordable housing, increasing minority business ownership and career opportunities, strategies to grow equity and generational wealth, closing the gaps in health care, education, employment and pay, neighborhood safety and fairness within criminal justice;
- (9) calls on the city manager to give, at minimum, a bi-annual update to the city council on the progress of work performed pursuant to this resolution.

Read, approved and adopted this 14th day of July, 2020.

Note

1. Asheville is located in Buncombe County. According to 1860 census records, Buncombe County had 1,907 enslaved people who were "owned" by 283 enslavers, of whom 54 owned 10 or more enslaved people.

The number of enslaved people in North Carolina increased from 100,783 in 1790 to 351,059 in

1860, about one-third of the state's population. The percentage of population that was slaves varied by county. There were 19 counties in 1860 where the slave population was greater than the free white population in 1860. These counties were in agricultural areas producing cotton, tobacco, rice and naval stores and where larger plantations and farms existed in the coastal plains, Piedmont, and counties bordering Virginia.

Segregation was officially in practice until the 1960s for North Carolina's Indigenous peoples and 1970s for the Black population.

(With files from New York Times, Mountain Xpress, Wikipedia, www.ncpedia.org. Photo: Shots from Richmond)

Reparation Measures Adopted in California, Rhode Island and Illinois

California

In California in June, a bill creating a task force to develop reparation proposals for African Americans was passed in the State Assembly and is now being considered by the Senate. The Legislative Counsel's Digest of the bill reads:

"Existing law requests the Regents of the University of California to assemble a colloquium of scholars to draft a research proposal to analyze the economic benefits of slavery that accrued to owners and the businesses, including insurance companies and their subsidiaries, that received those benefits, and to make recommendations to the Legislature regarding those findings.

"Existing law requires the Insurance Commissioner to request and obtain information from insurers licensed and doing business in this state regarding any records of slaveholder insurance policies issued by any predecessor corporation during the slavery era. Existing law requires insurers to research and report to the commissioner on insurance policies that provided coverage for injury to, or death of, enslaved people.

"This bill would establish the Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans, Americans who are descendants of persons enslaved in the United States, consisting of 8 members, appointed as provided. The bill would require the Task Force to, among other things, identify, compile, and synthesize the relevant corpus of evidentiary documentation of the institution of slavery that existed within the United States and the colonies. The bill would require the Task Force to recommend, among other things, the form of compensation that should be awarded, the instrumentalities through which it should be awarded, and who should be eligible for this compensation. The bill would require the Task Force to submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the Legislature. The bill would authorize reimbursement of the members' expenses only to the extent an appropriation is made in the *Budget Act*. The bill would state that any state level reparations authorized under these provisions are not to be considered a replacement for any reparations enacted at the federal level. The bill would repeal these provisions on July 1, 2023."



Rhode Island

In Providence, Rhode Island, on July 15, Mayor Jorge Elorza signed an executive order to pursue a "truth-telling and reparations process." The *Providence Journal* reported: "The process in Providence, Elorza said, will start with members of his administration and a group of African-American advisers meeting with historical societies and researchers to come up with a plan for sharing the state's role throughout history in the institution of slavery, genocide of Indigenous people, forced assimilation and seizure of land. The history could be shared through methods such as exhibitions, community conversations and guest speakers, he said.

"City leaders will also review local and state laws as part of this process, particularly those that result in discrimination against Black and Indigenous people in the public and private sectors, according to the city.

"The city will then engage in a broad community conversation on the state's history and the ways in which historical injustices and systemic racism continue to affect society today.

"Determining what form reparations will take will be the last step of the process."

Illinois

In Illinois the process of reparations began in 2019. The city of Evanston's website states:

"The City of Evanston's reparations planning process began in June 2019 following the City Council's adoption of a resolution affirming the City's commitment to end structural racism and achieve racial equity. The City Council's Equity and Empowerment Commission held two community meetings to gather public input on reparations in July, and summarized input and recommendations in a report to the City Council. In September, the Council accepted the Equity and Empowerment Commission's report and authorized the creation of a City Council subcommittee to begin the planning process.

"In November, a Reparations Fund was created and adopted a resolution as part of the City's 2020 Budget. The City Council committed to utilize tax revenue collected from sales of recreational cannabis to support reparations in Evanston.

"Following the City Council's adoption of the 2020 Budget, Ald. Robin Rue Simmons hosted a Reparations Town Hall Meeting at First Church of God in Evanston on December 11. Actor, humanitarian and Ambassador for the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent Danny Glover was the keynote presenter. Representatives from the National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC) also participated."



Day of Rage Against Annexation of Palestinian Land

Vigorous Action in Windsor

On July 18, Windsor youth and students held a Day of Rage organized to oppose all attempts to extinguish the rights of the Palestinian people whether by annexation or through what is called "negotiation."

Around 75 people rallied on the riverfront then marched, shouting slogans, through downtown to City Hall Square for speeches.



Four activists addressed the crowd each emphasizing different aspects of the fight for Palestinian human rights. An organizer with the University of Windsor Palestinian Solidarity Group opened by explaining how Israel's attempts at unilateral annexation of even more Palestinian territory than it has already seized end any pretense that a two-state solution is possible, saying that although it may not seem clear yet, this opens the door to the only democratic solution, which is one state with equal rights for all.



A young woman activist rejected the attempts to criminalize support for the rights of the Palestinian people and did so in the context of opposing colonialism in Canada against the Indigenous peoples and national minorities. She also condemned the criminality of the Israeli occupation which labels the people who have been dispossessed of their lands as terrorists and threats. Meanwhile, those responsible for the dispossession and occupation claim to be acting in self-defence and in the interest of "security."

An activist of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) noted that the Israeli and Canadian states have longstanding economic, political and security ties and that these must be ended in order for Canada to be able to contribute to peace in the Middle East. She hailed the initiative of the youth to call the rally noting that a new generation of anti-imperialist youth who are speaking and acting for themselves is proof that the colonial project of the Israeli state will not succeed and that the memory of the Palestinian people cannot be extinguished. She called on everyone to oppose any attempts to criminalize opposition to Israeli state violence as anti-Semitic, which governments in Canada at all levels are doing.



The final speaker, an activist with the Revolutionary Student Movement, explained that their own

entrance into political activism was through joining the work to stand up for Palestinian human rights at the University of Windsor. They noted that many of the activists they worked and stood shoulder to shoulder with were of Palestinian origin, and this inspired them to get involved in speaking out and actively standing up to injustice as well.



Vancouver Stands with Palestine



On Sunday, July 12, student organizations in Vancouver, including Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights at the University of British Columbia (SPHR UBC), Independent Jewish Voices UBC and the Arab Students Association, along with Vancouver Allies, organized a demonstration outside the Vancouver Art Gallery as part of the global "Day of Rage" protests against Israeli annexation of the occupied Palestinian West Bank. A number of organizations participated in the protest, including Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, Sulong UBC (a Filipino national democratic student organization), the Canada Palestine Association and BDS Vancouver.

Speakers highlighted the settler colonial nature of the Israeli state and the Zionist project, emphasizing the connections with settler colonialism in Canada and the genocide of Indigenous nations and the Canadian government's decades of complicity with Zionist colonialism in Palestine. Protesters emphasized that they were part of a global movement against racism and oppression. They demanded an end to Canadian government support for Israeli occupation, apartheid, settler colonialism and genocide.

They joined in spirited chants for justice and liberation in Palestine, raising Palestinian flags and signs denouncing annexation.

Speaking on behalf of Sulong UBC, Lara Maestro expressed solidarity with Palestinian student prisoners in Israeli jails, highlighting the cases of Mays Abu Ghosh, Tareq Mattar and Layan Kayed. She also noted the ongoing solidarity between liberation movements in Palestine and the Philippines, highlighting the similarities between the Netanyahu regime in Israel and the Duterte regime in the Philippines.



Speakers representing SPHR UBC discussed Palestinian identity, organizing and resistance inside and outside Palestine, even as Palestinians have faced over 70 years of ongoing Nakba -- and ongoing resistance. The speaker representing Independent Jewish Voices emphasized that Israel is a colonial project, emphasizing support for Palestinian and Indigenous resistance.

Charlotte Kates, the international coordinator of Samidoun, spoke at the protest, focusing on the situation of Palestinian political prisoners, including the widespread use of torture by Israeli interrogators, the arrest and imprisonment of Palestinian children and the targeting of Palestinian students.

She emphasized the global, anti-imperialist nature of the Palestinian struggle and the importance of standing and struggling together with all movements confronting racism, imperialism and oppression. She closed with the chant, "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!"

On behalf of the Canada Palestine Association and BDS Vancouver, Alan Roberts emphasized the ongoing complicity of the Canadian government in Israeli crimes, expressed solidarity with the Black liberation movement and Indigenous struggles and called for the boycott of Israel and complicit corporations.

The event concluded with several cultural performances, highlighting ongoing Palestinian cultural resistance. Malak Musik sang Palestinian national songs, while poets Diana and Luay highlighted Palestinian experience, identity and ongoing struggle through their powerful concluding words.

The protest followed an earlier street picket organized on June 26 by the Canada Palestine Association and BDS Vancouver. Protesters lined up at the crowded rush-hour intersection of Broadway and Clark in Vancouver with large signs, banners and Palestinian flags, chanting loudly and denouncing Israeli annexation while demanding justice and liberation for Palestine.

Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network has called for Days of Resistance to continue these actions between August 7-9 in cities and communities around the world.



(Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, July 12, 2020. Photos: Samidoun)



The Battle for Democracy in Bolivia

Cuba Makes Its La Paz Clinic Available to the Bolivian People

- Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs -

De facto authorities in Bolivia, on the afternoon of July 21, publicly reported that the building known as the "Clinica del Colaborador," owned by the Republic of Cuba, which was violently raided by police on November 15, 2019, would be made available, in the next few days, to treat Bolivian citizens with COVID-19.

This unilateral decision, which is presented as a humanitarian act, constitutes a violation of the rights of the Republic of Cuba as the legal owner of the aforementioned property, preceded by disregard for international law and an incessant campaign of lies and distortions about Cuba, particularly directed against the medical cooperation that our country provided in Bolivia, a campaign that this Ministry denounced in a statement, January 25, 2020.



It must be recalled that, in November of 2019, Bolivian authorities, with the leadership and support of the U.S. Embassy in La Paz, arrested several Cuban health collaborators under false pretenses and conducted searches and raids of their homes, while publicly inciting violence against our health personnel. This campaign has not stopped and is being used for internal electoral purposes.

The facility occupied by the Clinica del Colaborador was purchased and expanded by the Cuban State, in strict compliance with Bolivian law. It is located at 163 22nd Street, on the corner of Enrique Herson in the Achumani area of the city of La Paz. In accordance with Resolution 0410 of April 4, 2007, the Bolivian Ministry of Health, in accordance with the powers conferred by Act No. 3351 of February 21, 2006, the Ministry authorized the operation of the center to provide care for Cuban professionals working in the health and education sectors in the country.

The facility includes a 2-story house and a 3-story building. The small facility has 13 hospital beds, 6 for inpatient cases, 4 for observation and 3 for intensive care. It was one of the 158 health facilities where, by virtue of the 1985 Scientific-Technical Cooperation Agreement in the area of health between the governments of Cuba and Bolivia, and its subsequent updates, 18,015 Cuban health professionals offered the sister Bolivian people 73,557,935 medical consultations, performed 1,533,016 surgeries, of which 727,138 were ophthalmological, and assisted 60,792 births. As part of this collaboration, 5,184 young Bolivians have graduated from medical school in our country.

In Bolivia, Cuba's health collaborators provided their services in 34 Community Integral Hospitals, 119 Community Integral Centers and 5 ophthalmologic centers, in nine departments, 28 provinces and 42 municipalities in the country.

Since the above-mentioned raid, Bolivian authorities have arbitrarily denied personnel from the Cuban embassy access to the Clinica del Colaborador.

The Cuban government has demanded the immediate restoration of its rights as the legitimate owner of the aforementioned property, through diplomatic notes No. 1079/20, from the Republic of Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Relations, April 13, 2020; and No. 26/20, dated June 18, 2020, from

the Cuban embassy in La Paz, respectively, to which no response has been received

We have attentively followed the tragic events the sister people of Bolivia are facing, suffering more than 60,000 SARS-COV-2 infections and more than 2,000 deaths from COVID-19, according to official data. Bolivia's health system has not been able [to] effectively confront the pandemic, and is on the verge of collapse. Unfortunately, doctors and health workers have been infected and died, among them several young Bolivian graduates of the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Cuba, who have honorably done their duty.

In this context, many Bolivian organizations and citizens have addressed Cuba, both publicly and privately, requesting support from Cuban health personnel and medicines that have proved effective with COVID-19 patients. Many have noted the contribution that would have been made by the Cuban Medical Brigade that was providing services in Bolivia before the coup, if it had been present.

The generous Cuban people have not renounced their altruistic vocation. Aware that the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic requires urgent joint efforts of cooperation and solidarity and, without relinquishing ownership of the Clinica del Colaborador property or our rights as the legitimate owner, the Cuban government makes its use available to the sister Bolivian people to assist COVID-19 patients, as long as the crisis situation generated by this pandemic continues in Bolivia.

(Havana, July 23, 2020)



People's Forces Battle for Their Democratic Rights

- Margaret Villamizar -



July 14, 2020 demonstration in La Paz, Bolivia.

Workers, women, and Indigenous peoples and their organizations along with other social movements have returned to the streets to demand an end to the wrecking of the coup government and the right to elect a president and government of their choosing without further delay. Demonstrations are being held especially in places where the workers have fighting traditions, such as Cochabamba and El Alto, a suburb of the capital city of La Paz.

Over the past nine months the coup government of the self-proclaimed "interim" president Jeanine

Áñez has been busy ruling by decree, dismantling longstanding national projects and public social programs initiated by previous Movement Towards Socialism-Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (MAS-IPSP) governments led by President Evo Morales. It is also engaging in all-out persecution and revenge-taking against MAS leaders, members and supporters. It did away with the Plurinational State of Bolivia's proudly independent foreign policy in order to align Bolivia with the hegemonic aims of its U.S. masters for the country and the region. It dutifully joined the Lima Group and the failed U.S. campaign to do to Venezuela what it had just done to Bolivia. It withdrew from the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America-People's Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP), expelled the Cuban medical mission from the country at the worst possible moment and suspended diplomatic relations with Cuba.

It has also recently come to light that the coup government obtained an "emergency" loan of U.S.\$327 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in April, supposedly to help it deal with COVID-19 by covering medical expenses and providing support for the most vulnerable. The money, disbursed through the IMF's Rapid Financing Instrument, came with a raft of conditions, committing Bolivia to drastically reduce public expenditures and to eventually "flexibilize" (i.e. devalue) the country's currency. This package of harsh measures is similar to those agreed to by the neo-liberal government of then-President Mauricio Macri in 2018 that sent Argentina's economy into a tailspin and left large swathes of the population unemployed and destitute. The IMF loan to Bolivia, which has already been deposited in the country's central bank, was obtained illegally as it was done without the approval of the Legislative Assembly as called for in Bolivia's constitution. Only now, after the fact, and with a "health bond" equivalent to around U.S.\$70 earmarked for the most vulnerable members of Bolivian society hanging in the balance, is the legislature being asked -- or more to the point, being blackmailed -- to give the odious deal its blessing. It remains to be seen how the legislature, in which MAS holds two-thirds of the seats, will respond. Information is also coming to light of the corruption related to the use of these funds.

Demonstrations Resume in Bolivia



La Paz, July 8, 2020.

Between March and June it was mainly doctors and other hospital workers who protested in the streets, blocking traffic in major cities to back their demands that the coup government provide them with urgently needed equipment to protect themselves and to treat the growing number of COVID-19 patients being seen in under-funded and under-staffed hospitals. Associated Press reported on July 8 that 50 per cent of Bolivia's doctors had contracted the virus.

The first big protest since the pandemic hit took place on July 8 in La Paz where teachers joined by students and parents held a militant demonstration to demand free education for all and to denounce the *de facto* government's privatization agenda in education and the deplorable state of rural education in particular. Many expressed anger at the Ministry of Education's plans to continue delivering online classes only for some time, even though in rural areas families often lack access to the internet and the costly high tech devices required for their children to be able to participate in virtual classes, meaning they will simply be left behind. The response of the dictatorship was to fire teargas at the demonstrators.

Then on July 14, thousands of unionized workers and members of social movements marched together to denounce the corruption and anti-social wrecking of the coup government, the lack of medicines for the people and to demand there be no further postponement of the general election scheduled at that time for September 6.

Postponed Elections and Lawfare

A general election originally set to take place on May 3 was rescheduled for September 6 and has been postponed again to October 18, the result of a consensus reached by the country's political factions, according to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal. Hours before the latest postponement was announced, Evo Morales declared from Argentina where he has been living in exile that another delay would be against the interests of the people, prolonging ungovernability and the economic crisis wracking the country as the pandemic rages out of control. He said it would serve only to give more time for the coup forces to continue their persecution of social leaders and MAS candidates right at a time when the party's candidate for president, Luis Arce, leads the polls.

The delay will also give the coup government more time to coerce the Electoral Tribunal to go along with another of its key demands: that the legal status of MAS be removed, so its candidates are unable to run in the election -- a way to preempt a win by its presidential candidate, who is also falsely accused of violating the electoral law. In response, MAS-IPSP issued a communiqué on July 19 condemning "in the strongest possible terms the attempts of some politicians who want to achieve, through the banning of our political instrument, what they cannot achieve at the ballot box." It said that MAS had declared itself in a state of emergency in the face of this new attempt to ban the party and its candidates and would take legal action in its own defence. "Together with the Bolivian people, and with the truth up front, we will defend democracy, peace and social justice," the communiqué concluded.

It is to be expected that Áñez and her gang will continue scheming to avoid holding the election indefinitely and to bar MAS from running if and when it does take place in order to consolidate their coup. They are engaging in the same dirty legal manipulations, often referred to as lawfare, against MAS officials, members and supporters as have been used against former Presidents Lula da Silva in Brazil and Rafael Correa and others in Ecuador. All are subject to bogus criminal charges and vicious character assassination, with some already jailed with no evidence they have committed any crimes. Seven former government ministers and officials of MAS granted asylum months ago by Mexico have been forced to spend the last eight months inside the Mexican embassy in La Paz as virtual prisoners. They are threatened with arrest should they step outside -- a crude violation of diplomatic norms as well as international human rights conventions that require safe passage for asylees to leave the diplomatic mission of a country that has offered them asylum so they are able to travel to that country.

Future Prospects

All the evidence suggests that the U.S. imperialists are unwilling to accept Bolivians electing a president running on a program to reverse the anti-national, anti-social direction and state-organized racism they have so far managed to impose in Bolivia through fraud and force. If the

people's forces and their candidates once again win the election will they be able to take office and govern based on that program? Is the U.S. tiger likely to change its stripes? Or the racist and violent Bolivian oligarchy? Or the police and military commanded by unpatriotic elements groomed and bribed by U.S. imperialism to serve as an instrument of violent repression against any and all who resisted last year's coup?



La Paz, Bolivia, July 14, 2020.

Everything taking place in Bolivia today confirms that contempt for the rule of law, diplomatic norms and the rights of sovereign nations and peoples is the stock in trade of U.S. imperialism, its accomplices and appeasers. Beyond just pinning their hopes on winning a dubious election that may never be allowed to proceed, the Bolivian people are sure to draw on their experience and lessons learned to organize themselves to face whatever lies ahead in the fight for their democratic rights and to defend the gains they have made over the last 14 years. They have fighting traditions and a rich heritage of anti-colonial, anti-imperialist and revolutionary struggles going back centuries to inspire them as they work out how to organize themselves to fight for their freedom, independence and rights in today's conditions, keeping the initiative in their own hands. In this they deserve the full support of the Canadian and Quebec working class and people.



Workers of all industries and sectors continue protests against Áñez and to protect social rights created under Morales's government.



Indigenous women have been at the forefront of the fight to restore democracy in Bolivia.



Luis Arce, MAS presidential candidate in the upcoming election, and David Choquehuanca, running for the vice-presidency. They lead all surveys so far.

(With files from teleSUR, Nodal, Boya News. Photos TeleSUR, F. Morales, MAS-IPSP)



Important Anniversaries

"Moncada Taught Us to Turn Setbacks into Victories"

- Fidel Castro -

July 26: Celebrate Cuba's National Rebellion Day



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The following article was provided by Fidel Soldado de las Ideas Editorial Team, published by Cubadebate on July 20, 2020



Fidel Castro during the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Assault on the Moncada Barracks held in Santiago de Cuba, July 26, 2003.

In seven days, 67 years of the beginning of a struggle will be commemorated. "It was not the end, but the beginning," Fidel Castro once said.

July 26 is and will remain one of the most important pages in Cuban history. Under Fidel's leadership, the assault on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks removed the foundations of Batista's dictatorship.

That day, when everyone was ready, the Moncada Manifesto, written by the young poet Raúl Gómez García under the guidance of Fidel, was read out. Gómez García read his poem "We Are Already in Combat" and **Fidel directed this brief appeal to everyone:**

"Comrades: In a few hours you will be victorious or defeated, but regardless of the outcome -- listen well, comrades -- this movement will triumph. If we win tomorrow, what Martí aspired to will be fulfilled sooner. If the opposite happens, our action will nevertheless set an example for the Cuban people, to take up the banner and press on."

Victory would come a few years later with the Bearded Ones, when, led by Fidel, they descended victoriously from the Sierra Maestra on January 1, 1959.

***Cubadebate* and the website *Fidel Soldado de las Ideas* are proposing that you walk the path of this historical date today, through the speeches that the Commander in Chief gave on several occasions on July 26.**



Fidel Castro, Santiago de Cuba, July 26, 2003.

Just when the Revolution triumphed, Fidel expressed at a peasant gathering, on July 26, 1959:

"On seeing it today, on seeing how high we have raised our flag, I felt so happy that I saw at that moment all the sacrifices we have made, and all the sacrifices we will have to make in the future, rewarded."

A year later, remembering this same day, in the Mercedes foothills of the Sierra Maestra, he recalled:

"(...) July 26 and Sierra Maestra; they are two names that must weigh very deeply in the hearts of each of us."

"And so, that 26th of July was for us a moment that when a struggle seemed to end, when an effort to begin the battle for the liberation of our people seemed to end, **it was not the end, but the beginning.**"

"But it was not always like that, and by contrast, the memories of that first 26th came to our minds, that afternoon when everything was bitter and painful, when the pain of our comrades who had died and the pain of the defeat that forced the country to wait weighed on our spirits, its limits impossible to imagine at that moment.

"And **our people is one of those peoples that has never trembled in front of sacrifice**, one of those peoples that has never trembled at the price it was forced to pay for its dignity and its freedom; a people that has never trembled nor will it ever tremble before the price it has to pay for its happiness."



Fidel speaking to the people of Santiago, July 26, 1967.

On the 30th anniversary, in Santiago de Cuba, on July 26, 1983, the Commander said:

"One thing remains the same as on July 26, 1953: we have the same faith in the destiny of the country, the same confidence in the virtues of our people, the same certainty of victory, **the same capacity to dream of all that will be tomorrow's reality**, on top of the already realized dreams of yesterday."

On July 26, 1987 he would also speak about the new times, the revolution and the decision to rectify:

"To rectify meant on July 26, 1953, to fight to erase the old, to open a channel, to make a revolution, to create a new life; It means that today as well. **Rectify has a really broad meaning, and I am actually satisfied**, stimulated by what I see, the results that I see, even though we know that we are still far from all our possibilities, that there are many more possibilities ahead."



"We support Fidel!" Havana, July 26, 1959.

In more recent times, after several years of the revolution being in power, **in the central event for the 45th anniversary of the assault on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks**, carried out in Santiago de Cuba, in 1998, he acknowledged:

"We believe that we have fulfilled our duty, a whole generation, having fought without pause nor rest for 45 years since that July 26, 1953, standing firm in our trenches, in our principles, with the same ideas that inspired us that day."

On the significance of the date, in the celebration of its 49th anniversary, in 2002, in Ciego de Ávila, he recognized:

"(...) what are they this July 26th? An indestructible path that unites the thought, the heroism and the will to fight of the inextinguishable bastion, whose independence Martí wanted so as to prevent and that did prevent the powerful and expansionist neighbour to the north from expanding into the Antilles and falling with that added strength on our lands in America."



Fidel in Pinar del Río, July 26, 1976.

He recalled **on the 50th anniversary of the assaults the validity of revolutionary ideas** and their effect on the people:

"The Moncada Program was fulfilled and overfulfilled. For a long time now we have been pursuing much higher and more unimaginable dreams. Today, great battles are being fought on the field of ideas and we are facing problems associated with the world situation, perhaps the most critical that humanity has ever experienced."

"I wish to assure you of something similar to what I said before the spurious court that judged and condemned me for the struggle we began five decades ago today, but this time I will not be the one to say it; it is something affirmed and foreseen by a people that carried out a profound, transcendent and historic Revolution, and knew how to defend it: **Condemn me, it doesn't matter! The peoples will have the last word!**"



Speech in the Open Tribune in commemoration of the 47th anniversary of the assault on the Moncada Barracks on July 26, 1953, in the Provisional Square of the Revolution in Pinar del Río, August 5, 2000.



On the 11th anniversary of the assault on the Moncada and Carlos M. de Céspedes barracks held in the city of Santiago de Cuba where the people were responding to the anti-Cuba manoeuvres adopted the day before by the OAS.

(Cubadebate, July 20, 2020. Translated from original Spanish by TML. Photos: Estudios Revolución / Sitio Fidel Soldado de las Ideas, Lee Lockwood)

