

July 26, 2016

Affirming Independence and the Cause of Peace and Justice

History's Vindication: Commemorating Moncada in 2016

**- Isaac Saney, National Spokesperson,
Canadian Network On Cuba -**



Moncada Day 2015 celebrations in front of the Barracks in Santiago de Cuba.

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- **History's Vindication: Commemorating Moncada in 2016 - Isaac Saney, National Spokesperson, Canadian Network On Cuba**
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History's Vindication: Commemorating Moncada in 2016

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July 26, 2016 marks the 63rd anniversary of the act that is annually commemorated all over Cuba as the beginning of the movement and struggle that laid the foundation of the Cuban Revolution. On July 26, 1953, a group of courageous young men and women -- led by Cuba's former president, Fidel Castro -- attacked the Moncada Barracks in the city of Santiago de Cuba, and the Carlos Manuel de Cespedes Barracks in Bayamo, in an attempt to overthrow the U.S. supported puppet dictator Fulgencio Batista. As the island's second largest military garrison, the Moncada Barracks was critical to Batista's military control of southern Cuba. The goal was to seize the weapons and distribute them to the people and spark a national uprising that would not only overthrow the Batista dictatorship but also establish Cuba's independence and sovereignty.

The attacks were carried out by an organization that was created in 1952, under the leadership of Fidel Castro and Abel Santamaria, and comprised of young workers, students, artisans, peasants and landless farmers. It had around 1,500 members and affiliated itself with historic Cuban national liberation figures such as José Martí and Antonio Maceo. Around 120 youths were part of the attacks, approximately 70 of whom were killed, with many being tortured and executed after the attack. The survivors, including Fidel Castro,



were subsequently put on trial and given lengthy prison sentences. Most, including Fidel Castro, were released after an amnesty in May 1955. This amnesty was the result of the mass mobilization of Cubans in support of the imprisoned rebels. Under the leadership of Fidel Castro, the July 26 Movement galvanized Cubans, ultimately leading to the victory of the Cuban Revolution on January 1, 1959.

While the Moncada attack failed in fulfilling its immediate objective, it was central to the Cuban people's struggle for national affirmation and social emancipation. Cubans have always placed Moncada in a broad historical context, viewing it as a crucial link in the century-long striving of Cuba to free itself from Spanish colonial domination and U.S. tutelage, and then, establish authentic independence. At his trial Fidel Castro delivered a speech that eventually became the manifesto of the movement to overthrow the Batista tyranny. It was published as *La Historia Me Absolvera* (History Will Absolve Me) and laid out the national and social goals of the revolutionary movement that eventually triumphed on January 1, 1959. Today, the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Cespedes barracks, now a school and a museum, stand as concrete symbols of that successful struggle. History has given its judgment, vindicating the attack on the Moncada Barracks!



The Moncada Barracks shortly after the July 26, 1953 attack. The barracks have been converted into a school and Museum of the Revolution where the bullet holes shown here can be seen to this day.

Canadian commemorations of Moncada Day are a reflection of the ties that exist between Cuba and Canada. Canadians admire the courageous and rebellious spirit embodied in Moncada; a spirit that today is so powerfully manifested in Cuba's steadfastness against the efforts of the empire to destroy the island's independence. Canadians irrespective of their political or ideological positions, stand in favour of building relations with Cuba based on mutual respect and equality, relations which uphold Cuba's right to self-determination and sovereignty. Having traveled to Cuba in the hundreds of thousands and having witnessed Cuban reality for themselves, Canadians have come away with a profound respect and admiration for the Cuban people and their efforts to build and defend a society centered on independence, justice and human dignity.



Moncada martyrs

This year's commemorations are imbued with a particular poignancy; they occur as the world prepares to celebrate the 90th birthday of the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel

Castro. Fidel has epitomized the unbending commitment to Justice, Dignity and Independence that has characterized Cuba since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution on January 1, 1959. In 2016, this was profoundly demonstrated as the world witnessed the historic March 21-22 visit to Cuba by U.S. President Barack Obama; a visit born of the necessity for Washington to change its policy in the face of the resilience of the Cuban Revolution.

Since the Cuban people embarked on the road paved by Moncada, Cuba has refuted and continues to refute the colonialist mentality and practice of foisting on independent countries imperial arrangements and dictates that they resoundingly reject. The Cuban Revolution has refused to renounce its right to self-determination and its principles, principles forged in the crucible of Moncada.



Raúl, Fidel and the Cuban Army celebrate their victory over U.S.-backed reactionaries at Playa Giron in April 1961.

In the 63 years that have flashed by since Moncada, the Cuban people have shown what it is possible to achieve when one defends genuine independence and self-determination. The example of Cuba assumes even greater significance as the 21st century unfolds, fraught with grave dangers that threaten the well-being of the peoples of the world. In the midst of these profound challenges, Cuba refutes those who argue that relations among the world's nations and peoples are -- and can only be -- determined by self-interest, the pursuit of power and wealth. As Cuba continues on the path of social justice, human dignity and international solidarity, the Cuban Revolution continues to be an inspiration to humanity. Cuba demonstrates that it is possible to build relations based on genuine solidarity and social love; it is a living example of the alternatives that permit people to realize their deepest aspirations, and that another better world is possible.

***History Has Vindicated Moncada!
Long Live the Martyrs of Moncada!
Long Live the Cuban Revolution!***



Coming Events -- Celebrate Cuba's National Day of Rebellion!

Ottawa

Barbecue

Tuesday, July 26 -- 6:00 pm

166 Hopewell Ave.

RSVP to: (613) 698 - 5664

\$10 donation

Montreal

Thursday, July 28 -- 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Café l'Auditoire

5214 boulevard Saint-Laurent, Montréal (Québec)

Organized by: *Table de concertation de solidarité Québec-Cuba*
and *Radio Centre-Ville*. Call 514-721-4527 for information.

On July 26, 2016 the Cuban people celebrate the 63rd anniversary of the historic attack on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Barracks by the revolutionary youth. In appreciation of the Cuban revolution and all which it has contributed to humanity come and celebrate Moncada Day with us!

End the U.S. Blockade of Cuba Now!

Toronto

Saturday, July 30, 2016

7:00 pm -- 12:00 am

1604 Bloor Street West, Toronto

(1 block west of Dundas West subway station)

For more information: *CCFA Toronto*, Tel. 647-501-1219, www.ccfatoronto.ca

On July 26, 1953, 135 young revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro boldly assaulted the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba, the country's second-largest military fortress, while two smaller groups led by Abel Santamaría and Raúl Castro targeted important adjacent buildings. Though the Moncada Barracks did not fall, the revolutionary action was highly significant. It signalled the future battles that were to triumph in 1959 when the Cuban people celebrated the defeat of Fulgencio Batista's brutal dictatorship. As Fidel declared later, "Moncada taught us to turn setbacks into victories."

- **Message from the Cuban Consulate in Toronto**
- **Special Cuban video presentation for Fidel Castro's 90th birthday**
- **Free admission Music Door prize Refreshments Cash bar**

Organized by: Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto; Juan Gualberto Gómez Association of Cubans in Toronto, Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Network; Friends of Cuba against the US Blockade, Toronto Forum on Cuba