50th Anniversary of the Regina Conference

A Decisive Event in the Political Life of Canada

National Patriots' Day in Quebec
• Honour the Memory of Those Who Fought in the 1837-38 Rebellion to Vest Sovereign Decision-Making Power in the People
  • The Key Role Played by Patriot Women
  • Program of Activities on the Occasion of National Patriots' Day

Canadians Pay Utmost Attention to Developing Anti-Imperialist Solidarity
• The Hooliganism of the U.S. Imperialists Knows No Bounds
  - Nick Lin -
• Keep Canada-Cuba Relations on an Even Keel by Upholding International Rule of Law
  - Margaret Villamizar -
• Upholding Venezuela's Sovereignty and the International Rule of Law Is a Matter of Principle
• Windsor and District Labour Council Condemns Canada's Interference in Venezuela and Opposes Any U.S. Pressure to Disrupt Friendly Relations with Cuba
• Important Meeting in June to Discuss the Developments on the Korean Peninsula

71st Anniversary of Al Nakba
• Thousands of Palestinians Uphold Right of Return
• Conditions of the Palestinian People on the Eve of the 71st Commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba

- Dr. Ola Awad, President, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics -

Supplement
• 50th Anniversary of the Regina Conference

50th Anniversary of the Regina Conference

A Decisive Event in the Political Life of Canada

This year, in the month of May, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Regina Conference held in that city on May 7, 1969. The Regina Conference went down in history as an important preparatory step for the founding of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) whose 50th anniversary we will celebrate next year.

This month, we also celebrate the 51st anniversary of the reorganization of the Party's precursor organization, The Internationalists, as a Marxist-Leninist youth and student organization. The Internationalists, originally founded in Vancouver on March 13, 1963, was reorganized under the leadership of its founder Hardial Bains, in Montreal from May 7 to May 25, 1968. To celebrate that achievement, The Internationalists held the Regina Conference a year later and it became a development of historic import to the political life of Canada. This is because it marked a crucial step towards the creation of CPC(M-L) as the political party of the Canadian working class, a revolutionary party capable of and dedicated to providing the struggles of the working class and people with the consciousness and organization they require to win victory.

On this occasion the Central Committee of CPC(M-L) sends revolutionary greetings to all the activists who joined the work of The Internationalists in the 1960s and especially to those who...
were at the Regina Conference and participated in uniting all Marxist-Leninists from that period into one party, as well as all those who have joined this work since then. The Regina Conference defended the principle that the working class is one and it needs its own political party to elaborate its own independent aims and realize its own striving for empowerment as it constitutes the nation and vests sovereignty in the people.

On this occasion, the Central Committee of CPC(M-L) also sends militant revolutionary greetings to the U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization and its leadership. The participation of the U.S. Marxist-Leninists at the Regina Conference was one of its specific features which contributed to building the strong fraternal relations between the U.S. and Canadian Marxist-Leninists which have been indispensable to building the unity between the U.S. and Canadian working class and to settling scores with the U.S. imperialists and Canada's integration into the U.S. war machine. We treasure these relations established at that time, 50 years ago, and dedicate our work to strengthening them. On this occasion we salute the work of the U.S. working class and people to speak in their own name and bring an anti-war government into being. We pledge to contribute to this work to the best of our ability.

The Regina Conference led by The Internationalists had such an impact on the turn of events for the communist movement in this country that we are devoting the TML Weekly Supplement to a discussion on "The Work of The Internationalists and the Regina Conference" as well as reproducing the speech by Hardial Bains titled "The Origin of Consciousness and Social Change" delivered at the First Inter-Disciplinary Conference successfully held at the University of Windsor, February 9-11, 1996.

That conference stressed that the world is going through a defining moment in social development in which the main task and content centres around the need that has objectively arisen for new and modern arrangements in all fields of life. The nature and role of consciousness was given specific treatment, underscoring the need for a consciousness which emerges out of present real life, free of all preconceived notions and synonymous with social change. This discussion is crucial for those who are taking up for solution the problems which the communist and workers' movement is tackling today.

---

Supplement

50th Anniversary of the Regina Conference

---

National Patriots' Day in Quebec

Honour the Memory of Those Who Fought in the 1837-38 Rebellion to Vest Sovereign Decision-Making Power in the People

Victoria Day, which this year falls on Monday, May 20, is celebrated as National Patriots’ Day in Quebec, the day which pays tribute to the sacrifices and deeds of the patriots of Lower Canada in the rebellion against the British of 1837-38. Marches, historic exhibits, conferences and performances take place to mark the rebellion of 1837-1838 and to honour the memory of the Patriots who gave their lives or were forced into exile in the struggle to end British colonial rule.
by establishing a Republic of Quebec.

The project of the Patriots for the republic was brutally suppressed and, on the basis of that suppression, the British established what was called responsible government. They defined rights in Canada based on what were called two founding nations and established what are called the democratic institutions by preserving the role of the royal prerogative and privilege. This government vested sovereignty -- the decision-making power -- in the Queen of England, as the artificial person of state, which was supposed to be neutral and above the warring factions within the ruling class. It maintained strict dictatorship over the propertyless majority and government of accommodation so long as the colony's ruling classes served the interests of the British Empire. This division of the polity between those who rule in the name of an artificial person of state called the sovereign, and those who are ruled exists to this day. Today, governments are brought to power through an electoral system over which the people exercise no control. They are instruments of nation-wrecking, actively involved in U.S. imperialist wars of aggression and regime change to realize their striving for world domination. The project for which the Patriots fought lives on today in the nation-building project of the workers and people to solve the crisis of the democratic institutions in their favour, engage in modern nation-building to change the direction of the economy, humanize the social and natural environment and make Canada and Quebec a Zone for Peace.

The 1837-38 Patriots' Uprising is an important event in the history of Quebec and Canada. Its significance must be grasped to understand the present-day situation and not be misled by illusions that what are called the democratic institutions are immutable and that the people are destined to be deprived of decision-making power. On the contrary, the establishment of a modern Quebec state on its own basis remains necessary to settle the crisis of the democratic institutions in a manner that favours the people by ending the stranglehold of the institutions established out of the suppression of the nation-building project the Patriots put forward in 1837-1838. These so-called democratic institutions were based on the arrangements the British oligarchs found "reasonable" to strengthen British colonial rule after the English defeated the
French at the Plains of Abraham in 1759 and Quebec passed from being a French colony to a British colony. The British power divided the people on an ethnocultural basis and enshrined this division in the Act of Union of 1840. Ever since then, the line of divide and rule has served first the British and then the Anglo-Canadian state, today integrated into the U.S. war machine, to impose the dictate of the ruling elites on both the Quebec and the Canadian peoples as well as the First Nations. It is clear that after the rebellion of 1837-1838, all those patriots who refused to conciliate with these so-called reasonable accommodations were either hanged or exiled and with this infamy, the present democratic institutions of so-called responsible government came into being to keep the people out of the power-sharing arrangements.

Today, to realize the cause for which the Patriots fought in 1837-1838, the working class must constitute the nation and vest sovereignty in the people. The people must be empowered so that they become the decision-makers in all political, economic, social and cultural affairs that concern them and their nation. This need is all the more urgent as the governments of Quebec and Canada intensify the sell-out of the natural and human resources and establish new arrangements to facilitate the political, economic and military integration of Canada and Quebec into the U.S. imperialist war machine and restructure the state in the service of the narrow private interests of powerful oligopolies which operate on a global basis. To cover up the fact that they are in the service of these narrow private interests, they blame the people for being racist, anti-immigrant and narrow-minded. Their refusal to open society's path to progress is seen in increasing attempts to push the politics of division in the name of rights and scandal so that the people are reduced to a role of witnessing the daily spectacle of political factions challenging each other as to who will best represent the values they allege the people hold dear to get away with imposing different versions of their neo-liberal nation-wrecking agenda. All of it destroys the kind of arrangements the people require to flourish.

On this occasion, TML Weekly honours the Patriots from Upper and Lower Canada who fought and gave their lives for the cause of society's progress. Today's patriots honour their memory by advancing that cause within the present conditions. The struggle of the peoples of Quebec, the First Nations and Canada to vest sovereign decision-making power in themselves is more important than ever.

Reference

Principles Involved in the Exercise of Quebec Sovereignty -- Selected Texts - Parti marxiste-léniniste du Quebec.
In 1837-38, the role played by patriot women was second to none. They stood in the front ranks in the mobilization and organization of the people of Lower Canada to combat the British colonialists and affirm the Republic of Lower Canada. Their ingenuity and sacrifices for the success of the republican cause are legendary.

In 1837, within the framework of the effort to create an economy appropriate to the young republic and end its economic subjugation to Great Britain, women initiated a boycott of British goods and trade. They began to weave clothes from the country's own yarn and during the people's assemblies young women pledged to save their hearts for those who dared to clothe themselves in Canadian cloth. At mealtimes, they used maple syrup instead of sugar from the West Indies and served cider instead of wine. Historian Micheline Lachance informs that more than 250 women from the Parish of Saint-Antoine organized a sumptuous dinner where all imported products were formally banned.

On August 13, 1837, the Central and Permanent Committee of the Patriots received a petition from Marie-Louise Félix, wife of Patriot notary Jean-Joseph Girouard, requesting the creation of the Association of Patriotic Women of the County of Two Mountains. During the same period, at patriot assemblies the banner "Honour to Patriot Women" was raised.

Marie-Louise and her sister Marie-Victoire who was married to the patriot merchant Jean-Baptiste Dumouchel, settled in Saint-Benoît and records show that both were active in the Patriot cause, as were their three children: Vital-Léandre, Camille and Hercule. Besides having participated in the founding of the Association of Patriotic Women, Marie-Victoire was also known for having made the Patriot Flag of Two Mountains, representing a golden muskellunge enveloped in a pine branch with the letters C for Canada and J-Bte, for Jean-Baptiste, the symbol of the habitants of Lower Canada during that period. That same flag was raised during the Battle of Saint-Eustache.

To crush the rebels and the aspirations of the people of Lower Canada to rid themselves of the yoke of the British Empire, the British army responded with fire and sword. Records show that, at that time, women and families connected in any way to the Patriot movement were abandoned to raise their children and care for the elderly, and made to suffer the worst humiliations. But they courageously faced the violence of the British military. When their homes were pillaged or burned, the women had only themselves to rely on and the solidarity of their compatriots to survive. They were forced to take to the road with their families over long miles in search of shelter. Some, such as the sister of Doctor Chénier, crossed village after village to inquire about and give news of the patriots on the battlefield. Émilie Boileau, living in Chambly, organized Patriot assemblies from her home. She was armed at all times and Patriot Robert-Shore-Milnes
Bouchette wrote in his memoirs, "We had hardly entered the room when we saw people at the back of the room respectfully make room to allow a woman to pass, who came towards us in a calm and dignified manner. In her right hand she held a gun, its barrel resting on her left arm."[1] Others, such as the young Labrie and Berthelot women, melted lead to make bullets and made powder ammunition rounds. They were never far from the battlefield, ready to care for the wounded.

Women did not hesitate to offer refuge to patriots on the run, even at the risk of their own lives. In a letter dated March 9, 1838 intended for his wife, the Patriot notary Girouard related, "If you see Mrs. Mongrain, do not forget to express to her my deep gratitude for her concern when I was kept by the brave patriot women in the cellar of the de Payen house ... What a spectacle it was! It is always in my thoughts. If ever I return to St-Benoît, and have the means to do so, I will assemble all those generous women amongst us that promises, money, fear failed in having them betray any of their compatriots. I would like an opportunity to thank them, to express to them my recognition and admiration for their patriotism."[2]

The British power offered only prison, exile and death in response to the will of the people to establish a Republic of Lower Canada, but women did not submit to humiliation and fear and continued to defend the Patriot movement. They visited and provided care to prisoners, interceded with the authorities in defence of the just cause of their spouse, brother, son and demanded their release. Euphrosine Lamontagne-Perrault, who lost two sons in the Rebellion -- one killed, the other in exile -- exemplified the spirit of the women at the time: "if it was to do all over again and my children wanted to act as they had, I would not try to stop them as in no way were they driven by ambition, but by love of their country and hate against the injustices they were made to suffer."

Notes

1. Mémoires de Robert-S.-M. Bouchette (1804-1840), collected by his son Errol Bouchette, with notes by A.-D. Decelles.

2. Jean-Joseph Girouard (1795-1855), "Lettre addressée à son épouse Marie Louise Félix (1780-1846) from the Montreal prison March 9, 1838."

(Sources: La Canadienne pendant les troubles de 1837-1838, Marcelle Reeves-Morache, Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française; www.1837.qc.ca; www.unites.uqam.ca.)
Canadians Pay Utmost Attention to Developing Anti-Imperialist Solidarity

The Hooliganism of the U.S. Imperialists Knows No Bounds

- Nick Lin -

Working people across Canada continue to pay attention to the unfolding events internationally that require them to take a stand to uphold the international rule of law and organize actions in solidarity with the peoples of the world who have courageously set independent paths for themselves, for which they are increasingly being targeted by U.S. imperialism. Canadians must not accept U.S. dictate in world affairs which seeks to overturn the principles and norms of international relations. These have been expressly codified so as to maintain peaceful relations between countries and to find diplomatic means to settle disputes between countries.

The U.S. is blatantly violating with impunity the UN Charter, as well as fundamental norms of international relations established by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and other treaties and agreements. It is even violating the Charter of its instrument the Organization of American States, because it has been unable to impose its narrow aims on the member states that
make up that body. It launches wars of aggression, and uses and threatens the use of force. It imposes economic sanctions and blockades, considered acts of war, including through carrying out acts of piracy on the high seas, as well as seizing assets of other countries in financial institutions. This U.S. exceptionalism is wreaking havoc on the international rule of law.

Working people in Canada recognize that they have a particular duty in this situation, given that the government of Canada is fully embroiled in many of these activities, as one of those countries appeasing U.S. imperialism and exceptionalism in the name of upholding a rules-based order. They are taking public stands to reject the unacceptable activities of the Canadian government and opposing the disinformation about high ideals to turn truth on its head.

The situation requires that Canadians step up their activities to develop their anti-imperialist solidarity with the peoples of the world and to make Canada a Zone for Peace. The hooliganism of the U.S. imperialists clearly knows no bounds and is creating the conditions for a new world war. This must not pass.

Below are some of the latest developments that require the attention of peace- and justice-loving people in Canada.

**Stepped up Blockade Against Cuba**

The U.S. activated Title III of the *Helms-Burton Act* against Cuba, on May 2, to permit U.S. citizens and companies to sue the Cuban government as well as businesses and other entities from third countries making use of properties nationalized after the Cuban Revolution, rather than receiving compensation offered by the Cuban government under provisions in international law.[1] At the time the U.S. refused to take compensation offered by Cuba for such properties.

Under these circumstances, Canadians must see to it that the government of Canada does not submit to interference in its affairs and its relations with Cuba, through the extraterritorial application of U.S. laws against Canadian companies doing business in Cuba, or permit the undermining of Canada's longstanding friendly diplomatic relations with Cuba. The recent indefinite closure of the Canadian Embassy's visa office in Havana is already having an impact on travel and exchanges between Cubans and Canadians.

**Ongoing Attempt at Regime Change in Venezuela**

The U.S. announced on April 5 that it will block Venezuelan shipments of oil to Cuba and has since begun doing so. The U.S. suspended all commercial passenger and cargo flights between the United States and Venezuela on May 15. U.S. Homeland Security claims that "conditions in Venezuela threaten the safety and security of passengers, aircraft, and crew traveling to or from that country."

U.S. police invaded the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, DC on May 16, to remove U.S. activists present with the permission of the Venezuelan government. Those activists were there to protect the embassy from takeover by illegitimate representatives of the U.S.-backed opposition
forces as part of the attempt at regime change in Venezuela. Under the Vienna Convention on Diplomacy, the sovereignty of embassies must be upheld and they must be protected by the host country even in times of war and when relations are severed.[2]

When it comes to Venezuela, the Canadian government is fully embroiled in the U.S. attempt at regime change. For example, Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland is very much the handmaiden for the U.S. imperialist aims in Venezuela, spearheading the Lima Group and advising the self-proclaimed president Juan Guaidó.

**Naval Blockade of Democratic Republic of Korea**

The U.S. seized the M/V Wise Honest earlier in May in what news agencies refer to as "civil forfeiture action," an attempt to provide a legal veneer to what is effectively an act of piracy. It has a load of coal bound for the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK). The U.S. Justice Department accused the Korea Songi Shipping Company of paying U.S. dollars through "unwitting U.S. financial institutions" for improvements, equipment purchases and service expenditures for the Wise Honest, activities it claims are in violation of U.S. laws. The ship was initially detained in April 2018 by Indonesia and has now been towed to port in American Samoa. This "civil forfeiture action" is a totally illegitimate extrajudicial application of U.S. domestic civil procedure, that has no standing in international law.

It was on January 12, 2018 that 17 countries, including Canada and the United States, signed a statement indicating that they are "postured" to enforce UN Security Council Resolutions 2375 and 2397 against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). These enforcement measures include interdicting and inspecting ships suspected to be trading with the DPRK in materials prohibited under UN Security Council sanctions, based on "information that provides reasonable grounds." This is effectively a naval blockade, an act of war.[3]

**Attempts to Isolate Iran**

Last year, the U.S. withdrew from the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) that it and other countries signed with Iran, under which Iran agreed to curb its uranium enrichment capacity in return for sanctions relief. Now the U.S. has announced new rounds of renewed sanctions in March and May, including a blockade against Iranian oil exports. Its aim is to coerce other countries to abide by its unilateral sanctions and pressure them not to fulfill their responsibility under the JCPOA to contribute to the development of Iran's economy through trade. The U.S. has also imposed sanctions on Iran's steel, iron, aluminum and copper industries. The U.S. recently deployed an aircraft carrier battle group, B-52 bombers, and Patriot missiles to the area, claiming Iran represents a threat to its troops and interests in the region.

**Economic War with Syria**

With the government of Syria having prevailed over terrorists and foreign intervention, the U.S. is ramping up its economic war against the Syrian people with sanctions to isolate the government of Bashar El Assad to continue its attempts at regime change.

Canadians must oppose any involvement of Canada in these sanctions or future military actions, which have caused the Syrian people so much harm.

**Huawei and U.S. Trade War with China**

The U.S. is using "national security" concerns to apply tariffs against other countries' products, as in the case of Chinese telecommunications company Huawei. The U.S. Commerce Department said on May 15 that it was adding Huawei and 70 affiliates to its so-called Entity List which would
ban it from acquiring components and technology from U.S. firms without prior U.S. government approval. The same day President Donald Trump signed an executive order barring U.S. firms from using telecom equipment made by companies deemed to pose a national security risk.

Canada is already doing the bidding of the U.S. vis-à-vis Huawei, in the name of high ideals. As previously pointed out in *TML Weekly*, claims by the Canadian government that it is upholding the rule of law ring absolutely hollow.[4]

**Notes**


2. The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 is an official United Nations treaty, ratified by the United States in 1972. Article 22 of the convention states:

   i) The premises of the mission shall be inviolable. The agents of the receiving State may not enter them, except with the consent of the head of the mission.

   ii) The receiving State is under a special duty to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of the mission against any intrusion or damage and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity.

   iii) The premises of the mission, their furnishings and other property thereon and the means of transport of the mission shall be immune from search, requisition, attachment or execution.

   Similarly, Article 45 states:

   If diplomatic relations are broken off between two States, or if a mission is permanently or temporarily recalled:

   a) The receiving State must, even in the case of armed conflict, respect and protect the premises of the mission, together with its property and archives;

   b) The sending State may entrust the custody of the premises of the mission, together with its property and archives, to a third State acceptable to the receiving State;

   c) The sending State may entrust the protection of its interests and those of its nationals to a third State acceptable to the receiving State.


Canadians are increasingly concerned about the disruption of Canada-Cuba relations, especially when the Trudeau government so closely takes its orders from the U.S. which is stepping up its interference in the internal affairs of other countries. They want Canada-Cuba relations to be kept on an even keel by upholding the international rule of law, and will not accept that the Canadian government should be acting to serve U.S. aggressive aims in Cuba.

It is in this light that many people paid close attention on Thursday, May 16, when Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland conducted a working visit to Havana where she met with her counterpart, Cuba's Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla. In advance of the
meeting, Freeland said she intended to discuss "the deteriorating situation in Venezuela" as well as how Canada and Cuba could "work together to defend Canadians conducting legitimate trade and investment in Cuba in light of the United States ending the suspension of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act." Freeland is not just anyone when it comes to Venezuela. She has been spearheading the Lima Group whose sole purpose is to impose U.S.-led regime change against the democratically elected government of Nicolás Maduro, a government supported by the majority of the world's countries.

At the conclusion of her visit she said in a tweet that "Canada, together with its partners in the Lima Group, hopes to find ways to work with Cuba to address the worsening political, economic and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela," saying that she had a "frank discussion" about that with Rodríguez Parrilla. Regarding the Helms-Burton Act she simply repeated what she said in a statement a month ago when the U.S. announced its decision -- that Canada would defend its businesses conducting legitimate trade and investment in Cuba.

Freeland is the first high-ranking member of the Canadian government to visit Cuba since Prime Minister Trudeau's official visit in November 2016. To all appearances the main purpose of her visit was to follow up on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's May 3 phone call to President Miguel Diaz-Canel on behalf of the so-called Lima Group of countries to seek the Cuban government's cooperation in foisting regime change on Venezuela "peacefully" by forcing the holding of new presidential elections. At the time Freeland put it more bluntly, stating imperiously that "Cuba needs to not be part of the problem in Venezuela, but become part of the solution."

The Cuban President's response to Canada's overture on behalf of the U.S.-led regime change forces was to reiterate Cuba's principled stand in support of dialogue with President Nicolás Maduro based on respect for Venezuela's sovereignty and international law, without threats or foreign intervention. The same position was conveyed to Minister Freeland by Minister Rodríguez at their meeting in Havana. A statement issued on May 16 by Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Minrex) indicated that "Minister Rodríguez ratified Cuba's willingness to contribute initiatives aimed at promoting a respectful dialogue with the government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela based on the sovereign equality of states, the principles of international law and provisions of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, in particular the rejection of the use or threat of force and the application of unilateral coercive economic measures that cause humanitarian harm."

![Monthly picket in Vancouver demands end to the U.S. blockade of Cuba, March 17, 2019.](image)
Regarding other matters discussed, the statement said Rodríguez thanked Canada for the support it has traditionally given to the resolution against the U.S. blockade of Cuba at the United Nations General Assembly and the Canadian government's stand in opposition to the recent application by the current U.S. administration of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act.

It also indicated that Rodriguez expressed Cuba's concern over Canada's decision to suspend visa services to Cuban citizens from its Consular Office in Havana, saying this would negatively affect Cubans' family and personal ties as well as the development of cultural, educational, academic and scientific exchanges between Cubans and Canadians. He further told Freeland that Canada's decision to withdraw part of its diplomatic and consular staff from Havana was unfounded, given the absence of evidence of a risk to their safety. Cuban and international experts have to date failed to establish any basis for the alleged "sonic attacks" that the U.S. and Canada have said affected their diplomatic personnel in Havana.

Workers taking part in the recent Canadian Union of Postal Workers 2019 Convention in Toronto from May 13-17 reported with dismay that for the first time, their counterparts from the Federation of Cuban Workers (CTC) were not able to attend because they could not get their visas on time.

Early in the morning on the same day Freeland travelled to Havana, U.S. police broke into Venezuela's embassy in Washington, DC. in flagrant violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, arresting U.S. activists who had been living and working inside the building for the last 37 days with the permission of the Venezuelan government, to protect it from just such an illegal action. Notably, despite the end of official diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Venezuela on January 23, Venezuela continues to do its duty to protect the site of the U.S. Embassy in Caracas.

Freeland, in Washington herself on May 16, to meet with trade officials of the Trump administration in an attempt to get U.S. tariffs removed from Canadian steel and aluminum (which in fact took place the next day), has said nothing about this precedent-setting violation of
the rules of diplomacy that flies in the face of the rules-based international order that she claims to champion.

The visit to Havana also took place as talks were being held in Oslo, Norway under the auspices of the Norwegian government -- and with the participation of representatives of the Venezuelan government and opposition -- to explore the possibility of a mediated dialogue being initiated. The same day, a delegation of the EU-dominated International Contact Group (ICG) was received in Caracas by President Nicolás Maduro. Like the Lima Group, the ICG calls for a "peaceful transition" through the holding of a new presidential election in Venezuela, with most of its members recognizing Juan Guaidó as the country's "interim president" in the meantime. Clearly, given Cuba's prestige and the years it spent working with Norway as well as Venezuela to facilitate Colombian peace negotiations, it makes sense for Cuba to play a role in facilitating dialogue and a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Venezuela today -- as long as the starting point is, as Cuba maintains, upholding international law and the rights of the Venezuelan people, not the violation of both, couched in terms that make it seem otherwise.

Of note in that regard, two days before Freeland met with her counterparts in Cuba, her department issued a statement to say that Prime Minister Trudeau had spoken with the self-proclaimed "president" of the illegal parallel government of Venezuela that Canada helped the U.S. set up, commending him for the latest round of the failed coup attempt against the government of Nicolás Maduro. Trudeau represented that attempt to incite a civil war between Venezuelans as an example of "the courage and persistent efforts to return democracy to Venezuela" of Jean Guaidó, the National Assembly and "the people of Venezuela." The statement said the Prime Minister and the "Interim President" reaffirmed "the need for the international community to align itself in order to bring a peaceful transition to Venezuela" and that Trudeau had updated Guaidó on the Lima Group's alleged efforts to this end, mentioning his own discussions with other international partners. Guaidó is said to have thanked Trudeau for Canada's role in helping lead the international response to the crisis in Venezuela.

In spite of whatever illusions the regime change forces Canada is part of may have, or machinations they invent to try and coerce the Cubans to abandon their principled positions in support of Venezuela's sovereignty and right to self-determination, their efforts will not succeed -- not with Cuba and not with the Venezuelan people who have a long tradition of fighting for their freedom and independence.

In this regard, Canadians need to be vigilant and act against any attempts by this or any future government of Canada to appease the U.S. in its criminal aims against Cuba and Venezuela. Likewise they should make their voices heard to make sure that nothing or nobody is allowed to disrupt the longstanding friendly relations between Canada and Cuba, so that diplomatic relations continue based on respect for the international rule of law and equality.

(With files from Cubadebate, CTV, CBC. Photos: TML, Ottawa-Cuba Connections, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, Minrex.)

Upholding Venezuela's Sovereignty and the International Rule of Law Is a Matter of Principle

On the morning of May 16, U.S. Secret Service and Department of State special security agents broke down a door to gain entry to the Venezuelan embassy in Washington, DC. They arrested the four members of a group of activists calling themselves the Embassy Protection Collective who had remained inside the building after electricity and water were cut off and the delivery of food and medicine was blocked as U.S. authorities imposed a siege against them. The last diplomatic
staff vacated the building on April 24 as a result of Venezuela and the U.S. breaking off diplomatic relations. In an attempt to protect the embassy from being taken over illegally by coup forces, the activists had been living and working in the building since April 10 with the express permission and as guests of its rightful owner, the government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. In spite of this they were removed by force and charged with trespassing, and the embassy has now been handed over to a representative of the imposter Juan Guaidó who has illegitimately proclaimed himself the "interim president" of Venezuela and leader of a phantom parallel government which the U.S. says it recognizes.

In anticipation of the course of action the U.S. government eventually pursued, the activists issued a statement on May 13 explaining the dangerous precedent it would set and how they intended to respond to it.

Urgent Message to U.S. State Department
Embassy Protection Collective, May 13, 2019

This is the 34th day of our living in the Venezuelan embassy in Washington, DC. We are prepared to stay another 34 days, or however long is needed to resolve the embassy dispute in a peaceful way consistent with international law.
This memo is being sent to the U.S. and Venezuela as well as members of our Collective and allies. We are encouraging people to publish this memo as a transparent process is needed to prevent the U.S. from making a unilateral decision that could impact the security of embassies around the world and lead to military conflict.

There are two ways to resolve the issues around the Venezuelan embassy in DC, which we will explain.

Before doing so, we reiterate that our collective is one of independent people and organizations not affiliated with any government. While we are all U.S. citizens, we are not agents of the United States. While we are here with permission of the Venezuelan government, we are not their agents or representatives.

We are here in the embassy lawfully. We are breaking no laws. We did not unlawfully enter and we are not trespassing.

1. Exiting with a Protecting Power Agreement

The exit from the embassy that best resolves issues to the benefit of the United States and Venezuela is a mutual Protecting Power Agreement. The United States wants a Protecting Power for its embassy in Caracas. Venezuela wants a Protecting Power for its embassy in DC. Such agreements are not uncommon when diplomatic relations are severed.

A Protecting Power Agreement would avoid a military conflict that could lead to war. A war in Venezuela would be catastrophic for Venezuela, the United States, and for the region. It would lead to lives lost and mass migration from the chaos and conflict of war. It would cost the United States trillions of dollars and become a quagmire involving allied countries around the world.

We are serving as interim protectors in the hope that the two nations can negotiate this resolution. If this occurs we will take the banners off the building, pack our materials, and leave voluntarily. The electricity could be turned on and we will drive out.

We suggest a video walk-through with embassy officials to show that the Embassy Protection Collective did not damage the building. The only damage to the building has been inflicted by coup supporters in the course of their unprosecuted break-ins.

2. The United States violates the Vienna Convention, makes an illegal eviction and unlawful arrests

This approach will violate international law and is fraught with risks. The United States would have to cut the chains in the front door put up by embassy staff and violate the embassy. We have put up barriers there and at other entrances to protect us from constant break-ins and threats from the trespassers whom the police are permitting outside the embassy. The police's failure to protect the embassy and the U.S. citizens inside has forced us to take these actions.

The Embassy Protectors will not barricade ourselves, or hide in the embassy in the event of an unlawful entry by police. We will gather together and peacefully assert our rights to remain in the building and uphold international law.

Any order to vacate based on a request by coup conspirators that lack governing authority will not
be a lawful order. The coup has failed multiple times in Venezuela. The elected government is recognized by the Venezuelan courts under Venezuelan law and by the United Nations under international law. An order by the U.S.-appointed coup plotters would not be legal.

Such an entry would put embassies around the world and in the United States at risk. We are concerned about U.S. embassies and personnel around the world if the Vienna Convention is violated at this embassy. It would set a dangerous precedent that would likely be used against U.S. embassies.

If an illegal eviction and unlawful arrests are made, we will hold all decision-makers in the chain of command and all officers who enforce unlawful orders accountable.

If there is a notice that we are trespassing and need to vacate the premises, please provide it to our attorney Mara Ver Hayden-Hilliard, copied on this memo.

We have taken care of this embassy and request a video tour of the building before any arrests.

We hope a wise and calm solution to this issue can be achieved so escalation of this conflict can [be] avoided.

There is no need for the United States and Venezuela to be enemies. Resolving this embassy dispute diplomatically should lead to negotiations over other issues between the nations.

Demonstration in Washington, DC on May 18, 2019.

(Photos: A. Duarte, AVN)

Windsor and District Labour Council Condemns Canada's Interference in Venezuela and Opposes Any U.S. Pressure to Disrupt Friendly Relations with Cuba

The following resolution was passed by the Windsor and District Labour Council at its May 14 General Membership Meeting:

The Windsor and District Labour Council condemns the Canadian government's continued
interference in the affairs of the Venezuelan people by its participation in the illegal U.S.-led attempt to overthrow their constitutionally elected president, Nicolás Maduro, and replace him with an unelected opposition figure, who at the instigation of the U.S., Canada and a number of other foreign governments, has illegitimately proclaimed himself the country's "interim president."

Under no circumstances must Canada participate in or support a foreign military intervention in Venezuela or permit the friendly relations between Canada and Cuba to be disrupted by pressure from the U.S.

Canada must immediately stop the use of and support for economic sanctions as a tool for regime change and instead start respecting the sovereignty and right to self-determination of the Venezuelan people.

The Labour Council furthermore calls on Canada to make an active contribution to a peaceful and democratic solution by supporting the initiative of Mexico, members of the Caribbean Community and others who have put forward proposals and offered their assistance to facilitate dialogue and negotiations between the contending parties in Venezuela in order to reduce tensions and prevent violence, guided by the principle of non-intervention that is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

---

**Important Meeting in June to Discuss the Developments on the Korean Peninsula**

**Toronto**

**Saturday June 15, 2019 — 2:00-6:00 pm**

TNG Community Centre, 349 Ontario Street

**Keynote Speaker:** Professor Kiyul Chung, 21st Century Institute Washington D.C.
Associate Professor, Kim Il Sung University, Pyongyang, DPRK

Everyone is warmly invited to a public forum on the struggle for peace, security and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the historic June 2000 North-South Joint Declaration signed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK).

This forum is taking place in the context of recent developments including the Panmunjom Declaration between the DPRK and ROK in April 2018, and the subsequent DPRK-U.S. Summits in Singapore in June 2018 and in Hanoi in February 2019. These developments have created the potential for a new era of peace on the Korean Peninsula and normalization of relations between the DPRK and the U.S. by establishing a process of reciprocal steps to end the past history of hostility and confrontation. However, progress toward a solution based on mutual interest has been blocked by the insistence of the U.S. side on unilateral demands for the dismantling of the legitimate defence capacity of the DPRK.
71st Anniversary of Al Nakba

Thousands of Palestinians Uphold Right of Return

All over Palestine and in cities all over the world, Palestinians and supporters marked the 71st anniversary of Al Nakba, also known as the "catastrophe" when, in 1948, 750,000 Palestinians were displaced during and after the establishment of the state of Israel. To this day more than five million Palestinians still live as refugees as they wait to return to their lands in Israel.

The main West Bank rally was held on May 15 in Ramallah City, in the central occupied West Bank, during which Palestinians gathered at the grave of the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, from where thousands marched towards the city centre, holding high placards, Palestinian flags, and black flags as a symbol of mourning on Al Nakba. At 12:00 pm, Palestinians stood in silence as sirens sounded for 71 seconds symbolizing the 71 years of the Palestinian catastrophe.

Palestinians carried keys signifying their determination to return to their original homes, now in present-day Israel, which they were forced from in 1948. Palestinian Prime Minister Muhammad Ishtayeh, as well as members of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Fatah Central Committee, political factions, and civic leaders, participated in the mass march, Ma'an News Agency reports.

In Gaza, Palestinians continued their protests at the fence Israel built to isolate Gaza from the
other occupied territories in an attempt to smash the people's resistance movement. News agencies report that more than 60 Palestinians were injured in the Gaza Strip as Israeli forces attacked protesters marking the anniversary. Ashraf al-Qedra, the spokesman for the Gazan Health Ministry, said that 65 Palestinians, including 22 children and five women, were injured during the protests and that most of those injured were hit by live bullets, reports indicate. Qedra further said that the Israeli forces also targeted the medical personnel, hitting three paramedics with rubber bullets.

More than 300 Palestinians have been killed since March 30, 2018 when the series of protests called "The Great March of Return" began and over 17,300 have been injured. Gaza has been under specific Israeli siege since June 2007 and the Zionists have launched three major wars against the occupied territory, killing thousands of Gazans each time and shattering the territory's infrastructure time and time again. On the occasion of Al Nakba, Hamas said in a statement that "attempts to divide the Palestinians and tarnish the image of the unified Palestinian people by judaizing Jerusalem and recognizing it as the capital of the Israeli occupation, tearing the West Bank apart through settlement expansion and annexation, strangling Gaza, and passing the 'Jewish Nation State' law in the occupied territories, as well as trying to liquidate the Palestinian refugee issue by cutting all aid to [the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees], in a bid to end the UN body and abolish the right of return, are doomed to failure." It rejected all plans aimed at liquidating the Palestinian cause or abolishing the Palestinian rights, above all the "Deal of the Century" and emphasized the Palestinian people's right to resist the occupation with all means possible, including armed resistance, saying the weapons of the resistance were a red line.

Rallies commemorating the 71st anniversary of the Nakba were also held in other West Bank cities and towns.

Ramallah, Palestine
Al Nakba general strike in Gaza
Dr. Ola Awad, President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, through historical and current data, reviewed the geographic, demographic and economic situation of the Palestinian people on the eve of the 71st anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba on May 15. Information based on that data follows.
The Nakba: Ethnic Cleansing, Displacement of Palestinians and Settler Colonization

*Nakba* in Palestine describes a process of ethnic cleansing in which an unarmed nation was destroyed and its population displaced systematically by gangs and individuals from all over the world. The *Nakba* resulted in the displacement of 800,000 of the 1.4 million Palestinians who lived in 1,300 villages and towns in historical Palestine in 1948. The majority of the displaced Palestinians ended up in neighbouring Arab countries and in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and other countries around the world. Further, thousands of Palestinians -- who stayed in the area controlled by the Israeli occupation in 1948 -- were driven out of their homes and lands, which were seized by the Israeli occupation.

According to documentary evidence, the Israelis controlled 774 towns and villages and destroyed 531 Palestinian towns and villages during the *Nakba*. The atrocities of Zionist forces also included more than 70 massacres in which more than 15,000 Palestinians were martyred.

**Demographic Reality: The Palestinian Population Has Doubled Nine Times Since the 1948 *Nakba***

The population of Palestine in 1914 was around 690,000, of whom only 8 per cent were Jewish. In 1948, the number of Palestinians in Palestine exceeded 2 million, 31.5 per cent of them were Jews, their numbers doubling more than six times during this period. Between 1932 and 1939, the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine reached 225,000 and between 1940 and 1947, more than 93,000 migrated to Palestine. Palestine received around 318,000 Jews between 1932 and 1947, and 540,000 from 1948 to 1975.

Despite the displacement of more than 800,000 Palestinians in 1948, and the displacement of more than 200,000 Palestinians (the majority of them to Jordan) after the 1967 War, by the end of 2018 the Palestinian world population totalled 13.1 million, which means that the number of Palestinians in the world has doubled more than nine times since the events of the *Nakba* in 1948. More than half of them live in historical Palestine, where at the end of 2018 their numbers reached 6.48 million (compared to 1.57 million in the occupied territories in 1948). Estimates indicate that the population in the West Bank at the end of 2018, including Jerusalem, was 2.95 million, with around 1.96 million in Gaza Strip. The population of Jerusalem Governorate, was about 447,000, of which approximately 65 per cent (about 281,000) live in those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by Israeli occupation in 1967, an area referred to as J1. The data show that Palestinians represent 49 per cent of the population living in historical Palestine, while Jews constitute 51 per cent at the end of 2018. The Israeli occupation continues to control over 85 per cent of the area of historical Palestine, which amounts to 27,000 square kilometres, while the remaining areas continue to endure further attempts at usurpation and control. It should be noted that under the British Mandate only 1,682 square kilometres of historical land of Palestine was used by Jews, which represents 6.2 per cent.

**Palestinian Refugees Status**

Records of the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) reported on January 1, 2018 that the total number of Palestinian refugees was 6.02 million, 28.4 per cent of whom live in 58 camps (10 in Jordan, nine in Syria, 12 in Lebanon, 19 in the West Bank and eight in Gaza Strip). Estimates, however, indicate that this is a minimum number of refugees as many are not registered. This number does not include the Palestinians displaced in the period from 1949 till the Six-Day War in June 1967. The UNRWA definition of refugees does not cover the Palestinians who migrated or who were displaced after 1967 because of the war and who were not registered refugees. On the other hand, the Population, Housing and Establishments Census 2017 showed
that refugees represented 43 per cent of the population of the State of Palestine.

Population Density: Gaza Strip Has One of the Highest Population Densities in the World

The population density in the State of Palestine at the end of 2018 was 816 individuals per square kilometre: 522 individuals per square kilometre in the West Bank and 5,375 individuals per square kilometre in Gaza Strip, noting that 66 per cent of the total population of Gaza Strip are refugees. The flux of refugees has turned Gaza Strip into one of the most densely populated areas in the world. Despite the small area of Gaza Strip, the Israeli occupation set up a buffer zone more than 1,500 metres long along the Eastern border. Consequently, the Israeli occupation controls about 24 per cent of the total area of Gaza Strip (365 square kilometres).

Continuous Siege of Gaza Strip

The continuous Siege of the Gaza Strip, one of the most densely populated areas in the world, has led to a sharp rise in unemployment. The unemployment rate has reached 52 per cent, around 72 per cent of youth aged 15-24 years are unemployed. The siege also shakes the economy of Gaza Strip and has made over half of its population poor (53 per cent), and 11 per cent of households use an improved drinking water source in Gaza Strip due to the deterioration in the quality of water extracted from the coastal basin.

More than 100,000 Martyrs Since the Nakba 1948

The number of Palestinian and Arab martyrs from the Nakba in 1948 up to the present day (inside and outside Palestine) has reached about 100,000. The number of martyrs killed between September 29, 2000 and May 7, 2019 was 10,853. The bloodiest year was 2014 with 2,240 Palestinian martyrs, of whom 2,181 were from Gaza Strip. The number of Palestinian martyrs reached 312 persons during 2018, among them 57 children and three women. The Israeli occupation also detained the bodies of 15 martyrs.
Funeral, March 31, 2019 for Tamir Abu Al-Khair, one of 4 youth killed in land day protests in Gaza.

About 17,000 Wounded Since the Start of the Marches of Return

The number of wounded Palestinians reached about 29,600 persons in 2018, while data from the Ministry of Health indicates that the number of wounded in Gaza Strip has reached 16,800 since the Marches of Return began on the occasion of Land Day, March 30, 2018. It is noteworthy that 136 citizens have had amputations as a result of the Israeli occupation forces' aggression against the Palestinians in the March of Return and breaking the siege east of Gaza Strip. The number of martyrs was 272 citizens, among them 54 children and six women and elderly, along with four paramedics and three journalists.

Youth injured on Land Day, March 30, 2018 as the Great Return March begins.

About 1 Million Detentions Since 1967

The Israeli occupation has detained about 1 million Palestinians since 1967. This year, the Israeli occupation had arrested about 5,700 Palestinians, as of the end of March, of whom 250 were children and 47 were women. Since the beginning of 2018, the Israeli occupation has arrested 6,500 Palestinians, including 1,063 children and 140 women. In addition, the Israeli occupation
has imposed house arrest on 300 children in Jerusalem since October 2015. Around 36 children are still under house arrest.

Continuous Confiscation of Land

The Israeli occupation uses land classification according to the Oslo Agreement (A, B, C) to tighten control over Palestinian land, especially in areas classified as (C) -- an area of 3,375,000 dunums. About 2,642,000 dunums -- constituting 76 per cent of the total area classified (C) -- is exploited by the Israeli occupation directly. The area classified (A) is about one million dunums, the area classified (B) is 1,035,000 dunums, and the area classified "Others" is 250,000 dunums and includes Natural Reserves, J1 in East Jerusalem and H2 in Hebron, along with unclassified areas. In 2018, the Israeli occupation confiscated 508 dunums of Palestinian land, in addition to confiscating hundreds of dunums of the Palestinians through the expansion of Israeli checkpoints and the establishment of military checkpoints to protect the settlers.

Israeli Occupation: Continuous Expansion of Settlements

There were 435 Israeli occupation settlements and military bases in the West Bank (including 150 settlements and 116 outposts) by the end of 2017. Data indicate that the total number of settlers in the West Bank was 653,621 by the end of 2017; 306,529 (47 per cent) lived in Jerusalem Governorate, including 225,335 of them in Jerusalem J1. In demographic terms, the proportion of settlers to the Palestinian population in the West Bank is around 23 settlers per 100 Palestinians compared with 70 settlers per 100 Palestinians in Jerusalem Governorate.

The expansion and annexation wall isolates more than 12 per cent of the West Bank area. This has imposed restrictions on 1.9 million people living in areas close to the wall and/or settlements. Around 400,000 people live in Area "C." The expansion and annexation wall that surrounds the city of Jerusalem is about 93 kilometres long and isolates about 84 square kilometres of the area of Jerusalem Governorate; while the incomplete part of the wall, about 46 kilometres long, will isolate about 68 square kilometres.
The Jurisdiction Area of the Israeli occupation settlements in the West Bank reached 541.5 square kilometres at the end 2018, representing about 10 per cent of the West Bank, while the confiscated areas for the purposes of military bases and military training are about 18 per cent of the West Bank, which deprives the Palestinian farmers and herders of access to their farms and pastures. The Israeli occupation places obstacles to tighten the siege and restrict the Palestinians' urban expansion, especially in Jerusalem and Area (C), in the West Bank, which are still under full Israeli occupation control.

**Theft of Agricultural Land**

The total area of land classified as being of high or medium agricultural value in the West Bank is 2,072,000 dunums, constituting about 37 per cent of the West Bank. The Palestinians use only 931,500 dunums which constitutes about 17 per cent of the West Bank area.

The reason for the non-exploitation of agricultural land in the West Bank is that Area (C), which constitutes about 60 per cent of the area of the West Bank, is still under full Israeli occupation control. The Israeli occupation prevents many farmers from accessing their land and cultivating or caring for cultivated areas, which has led to the destruction of most of the crops in those areas. Israeli occupation forces have also bulldozed and uprooted 7,122 trees in 2018, bringing the number of trees uprooted to more than one million from 2000 to the end of 2018. Thousands of dunums have been confiscated by settlers to be cultivated. The area planted in the Israeli settlements in 2018 reached about 110,000 dunums, the majority irrigated agriculture.

**Jerusalem: Intensive and Systematic Displacement of Palestinians**

Protest against July 2018 Israeli destruction of Bedouin village of Khan al-Amar near East Jerusalem, to extend an illegal settlement.

The Israeli occupation forces have issued deportation orders for 12 Bedouin communities in East Jerusalem, comprising about 1,400 people.

In 2018, the Israeli occupation issued orders to demolish 546 buildings in the West Bank and Jerusalem, at a time when the need for new housing units for Palestinians increases. According to figures and the data of the Housing Conditions Survey 2015, about 61 per cent of households in Palestine will need new housing units over the next decade. The Israeli occupation demolished 471 buildings in 2018 (houses and establishments), of which about 46 per cent were in the city of
Jerusalem with 215 demolitions, leading to the forced displacement of 217 people, including 110 children. Of the demolished buildings, 157 were residential buildings and 314 establishments. During 2018, the Israeli occupation approved building permits for 5,820 settlement units.

A Bitter Reality: 22 per cent of Available Water in Palestine Purchased from Israeli Water Company "Mekorot"

Israeli occupation measures contribute to limiting the ability of the Palestinians to exploit their natural resources, especially water. Palestinians are forced to compensate for the water shortage with purchases from the Israeli water company "Mekorot." In 2017, the quantity of water purchased for domestic use reached 83 million cubic metres (MCM)(22 per cent of the total 375 MCM of water used), in addition to 23.5 MCM flowing from Palestinian springs, 264.5 MCM from underground wells, and 4.0 MCM of desalinated drinking water.

77 per cent of Available Water from Surface and Ground Water

Data show that the percentage of surface and ground water exploited from available water in the year 2017 was high, with an average of 77 per cent. It should be noted that the Palestinians have been denied access to extract from the Jordan River since 1967, which was estimated at about 250 MCM. On the other hand, the quantity of water pumped from Palestinian wells in the West Bank in 2017 was 86 MCM from the Eastern, Western and North-Eastern aquifers.

The amount of water extracted from the coastal aquifer for domestic use was 178.7 MCM in Gaza Strip in 2017, an amount which jeopardizes its sustainability, as it is known that the yield should not exceed 50-60 MCM per year. More than 97 per cent of the water pumped from the coastal aquifer in Gaza Strip does not meet the World Health Organization's water quality standards. It also leads to the depletion of groundwater reserves, which in the coastal aquifer have reached 19 metres below sea level.

Sources


(Edited for style and grammar by TML. Photos: Times of Gaza, Great Return March, Palestine Info Centre, Active Stills.)