



\*\*\*\*\*  
**Australia-Cuba Friendship Society**  
**Melbourne NEWSLETTER**  
**June 2018**  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Next Meeting**  
**Monday**  
**4<sup>th</sup> June**  
**7.30pm**  
**Unitarian Church**  
**110 Grey St,**  
**East Melbourne**

Melbourne	Sydney	Perth	Brisbane	Canberra	Hobart	Adelaide	Central Coast	NSW/Vic Sthn Border	New Zealand
PO Box 1051 Collingwood Vic. 3066	PO Box k364 Haymarket NSW 1240	PO Box 1455 South Perth WA 6951	PO Box 5683 West End Qld 4101	PO Box 6139 Kingston ACT 2604	GPO Box 323 Hobart Tas. 7001	Box 381 N. Adelaide SA 5006	PO Box 1082 Gosford NSW 2250	PO Box 854 Albury NSW 2640	220a Adelaide Rd Newtown Wellington New Zealand

May 28, 2018

**Sorry all, there is no editorial this month due to Joan being overseas and strict time constraints.**

## **May Day actions show global class struggle**

Posted in [Immigrants & Refugees](#), [Labor solidarity](#), [Spotlight](#), [World](#)

**By Kathy Durkin - May 18, 2018**

Proudly, the workers of the world marched on May Day. Millions walked out of the factories, fields and offices to stand with their class sisters and brothers. As members of the global multinational, multi-gendered, multigenerational working class, they showed their strength and solidarity.

As capitalists the world over impose austerity programs, with layoffs, speedups and salary cuts — and try to weaken the power of organized labor — workers are standing up. Where imperialist companies super-exploit workers to maximize profits, paying semi-starvation wages, many are defying the bosses, demanding unions, livable salaries, permanent jobs and basic rights. Migrant workers, many of them women, confronted by racism and abuse, are making their voices heard.

May Day began during the period of labor militancy in the 1880s in Europe and the U.S., when workers demanded the 8-hour day. Unions organized a general strike; hundreds of thousands of workers joined U.S. rallies on May 1, 1886. Some 30,000-40,000 workers left their job sites in Chicago alone.

At Chicago's Haymarket Square, police killed workers demonstrating for the 8-hour day. After the massacre, the movement picked up steam, as the call for the 8-hour day resonated at home and abroad. The First International Socialist Congress in 1889 recognized International Workers' Day to commemorate the Haymarket massacre.

For many in the global workforce, the fight for the 8-hour day continues. On this May Day, labor unions, social justice groups, socialists, communists and other progressive forces organized and joined demonstrations. Some red flags, posters of Che Guevara and portraits of Karl Marx were visible. Notably, defiant workers rallied, despite police attacks. Here are highlights of global May Day actions.

### **'No to austerity!'**

Hundreds of thousands marched across **France** to protest pro-corporate Macron government austerity measures, attacks on public sector unions and transit privatization plans. Workers also marched across **Germany** to defend their rights against globalized capitalism's rav-



*Barcelona, Spain*

ages, protesting service cutbacks and demanding secure jobs and decent working conditions. The German Trade Union Federation said 340,000 joined 500 events.

Organized by major labor unions CCOO and UGT, tens of thousands opposed austerity in 70 cities across **Spain**. In Madrid, workers waved red union flags, demanding higher pay, secure jobs and pensions. Chants of "general strike!" resounded. Women held purple flags representing their struggles for gender pay equity and an end to misogynist violence.

Thousands of workers marched through Athens, **Greece**, in three separate marches, one organized by the Communist-affiliated PAME labor union, and in Thessaloniki. Work stoppages shut down museums and transportation systems. Protesters denounced European Union banker-imposed austerity policies and criticized the SYRIZA government.

Elsewhere in Europe, workers marched in **Italy** and **Austria**, carried red flags in **Denmark**, and rallied in former socialist countries, including **Poland** and **Russia**.

### **Enemy: 'monopoly capital'**

More than 7,000 members of the General Union of Tunisian Workers celebrated in **Tunis**. They hailed their union's commitment to

fighting for their right to secure jobs and benefits and its opposition to privatization, abuse and oppression. The union has 750,000 members from many industries and public sectors, and is organizing agricultural workers, mainly women.

The Congress of **South African** Trade Unions organized 14 marches, with a major rally in Nelson Mandela Bay. Speakers included COSATU President S'dumo Dlamini, SA Communist Party leader Blade Nzimandi and African National Congress President Cyril Ramaphosa. Dlamini asserted the workers' enemy was "monopoly capital." COSATU called for an alternative development strategy to tackle poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The South African Federation of Trade Unions held several marches and rallies. SAFTU's statement deplored the country's crises of unemployment and economic inequality.

#### **'Long Live May 1!'**

Thousands of workers and activists rallied across **Turkey**, including in Ankara and Istanbul, for higher pay and improved working conditions — and denounced the Erdoğan regime's repression. Left-wing unions protested privatization and other anti-labor policies. Sixty people were arrested as they chanted, "Long live May 1!" and attempted to defy a government ban by marching to Taksim Square, site of a 1977 police massacre of 40 demonstrators.

In Damascus, **Syria**, the General Federation of Trade Unions celebrated May Day, honoring workers, including martyrs of today's civil war. Also honored were Syrian army victories in this war.

In **Gaza**, hundreds of Palestinians called for an end to the horrific U.S.-backed Israeli siege and the resulting "humanitarian disaster" — deteriorating economic conditions of their people.

**Iraqi** Communist Party members marched with red flags and hammers in Baghdad.

Communist parties organized workers' meetings, marches and rallies throughout **India**. The All-India Central Council of Trade Unions mobilized, too. Banner slogans called for an 8-hour workday, jobs, higher wages and social justice.

Dhaka, **Bangladesh**, was the site of many demonstrations. Thousands of workers, backed by 14 organizations, demanded a monthly minimum wage of 18,000 TK (\$213), unionization, an 8-hour day and workplace safety. The Communist Party of Bangladesh waved red flags. The government denies garment workers' calls for higher wages in order to benefit profit-seeking global brands.

More than 10,000 Korean Confederation of Trade Unions members assembled in Seoul, **South Korea**, demanding a higher minimum wage and change of "non-regular employees" to "regular employee" status, with equal pay and treatment. A slogan was: "Rewrite the constitution based on labor rights!" The KCTU-Migrant Trade Union held a separate rally on April 26 for migrant workers.

In **Hong Kong**, 5,000 workers pressured employers to stop using their pension funds, set regular hours and provide paid maternity leave at a march organized by the Federation of Trade Unions; 200 subsidiary unions participated. Also addressed were migrant and disabled workers' rights.

Thousands of chanting labor unionists and other workers, dressed in red and waving red flags, marched in Manila, **Philippines**, to decry

President Rodrigo Duterte's economic policies. They denounced short-term employment contracts, which deny workers decent pay and job security, as well as low wages, unemployment and repression of labor unions.

Elsewhere in Asia, workers rallied for their rights throughout **Pakistan**; garment and shoe factory workers marched in Yangon, **Myanmar**; thousands of union members were out in Taipei, Taiwan, while 10,000 unionists demonstrated in Jakarta, Indonesia, for better wages and working conditions, permanent jobs and free health care.

#### **Haiti: 'Holiday of Agriculture and Work'**

Workers marched on May 1 through Port-au-Prince, **Haiti**, to demand a three-fold increase in the daily minimum wage from 350 gourdes (\$5.38) to 1,000 gourdes (\$15.36). The Confederation of Haitian Workers, the National Central of Haitian Workers and other unions led the demonstration. (Haiti Liberté, May 2) The Trump administration has intensified racism against Haitians in the U.S.

In San Juan, **Puerto Rico**, tens of thousands marched in the Golden Mile financial hub against drastic U.S.-imposed austerity measures and posthurricane neglect and abuse. Coordinated marches took place throughout the island. Police tear gassed and attacked young protesters. But the people vow to keep fighting local and U.S. attacks on their living conditions. (See WW, May 10; [tinyurl.com/yal6tw6r](https://tinyurl.com/yal6tw6r))

In socialist **Cuba**, 1 million people honored workers, former Presidents Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro and their new leader, Miguel Díaz-Canel. (See article, page 9)

In **Guatemala** City and **Mexico** City, thousands demanded jobs and improved pay and working conditions. At the same time, the bigoted, anti-immigrant Trump administration stopped a caravan of Central Americans, mostly women, LGBTQ individuals and children, at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Police used tear gas and water cannons against demonstrators in Tegucigalpa, **Honduras**. In that city and two others in the country, workers protested the fraudulent Nov. 26 election of pro-U.S. President Juan Orlando Hernández.

#### **Stop U.S. attacks on Venezuela!**

Thousands of workers from throughout **Venezuela** gathered in Caracas for a massive march and rally supporting President Nicolás Maduro's reelection and the Bolivarian Revolution. They said "No" to imperialist sanctions and interference.

Maduro hailed workers' gains, particularly those outlined in the Organic Law of Work and Workers, and announced a 95 percent minimum wage increase. He vowed, "We are going to contain [imperialism's] brutal economic war and we will move forward." (TeleSUR, May 1)

Demonstrators in Curitiba, **Brazil**, yelled "Free Lula!" while demanding the release from prison of former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, jailed there on false corruption charges.

Union and social movement activists protested slashes in government services and energy subsidies (prices have soared 1,000 percent in two years!) in Buenos Aires, **Argentina**, under the Macri administration's austerity policies. Similar forces marched peacefully through Santiago, **Chile**, opposing President Sebastián Piñera's reactionary program. Riot police attacked them.

## **High quality must be an essential premise of Cuban education**

President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez insists during national meeting of sports school authorities to prepare for the 2018-2019 academic year

- [Another survivor of the Havana plane crash passes away](#)
- [Díaz-Canel undertakes intense work agenda in the capital](#)
- [Investigation of aviation accident continues](#)



## **55 YEARS OF CUBAN MEDICAL COLLABORATION**

### **Healing beyond borders (+Photos)**

The love, ethics and humanist values shared by Cuba for over half a century of medical cooperation, were commemorated May 23 on the 55th anniversary of the launch of its international humanitarian missions, with over 400,000 health professionals serving in 164 nations worldwide



### **Singular sites in Havana**

Cuba's cities harbor so much history that travelers want to visit them all. Havana is one of the most popular, chosen a Wonder City of the modern world by thousands of people participating in the third contest organized by the Swiss foundation New7Wonders



### **Díaz-Canel undertakes intense work agenda in the capital**

The Cuban President participated in the inaugural session of the International Justice and Law Meeting; visited the Cuba 2.0 International Food Fair at the Pabexpo fairgrounds, and met with Cuban artists who participated in the Peoples' Summit, in Peru, and the Artes de Cuba Festival, at Washington's Kennedy Center

### **In times of tragedy, the Cuban people are never alone**



Today, as the entire country mourns the tragic air disaster, its leaders are on the front line, just as they have always been for the last 59 years

### **Messages of solidarity with Cuba continue to arrive**

Messages of solidarity continue to arrive to Cuba from all corners of the world, after the fatal plane crash on Friday, May 18, in which more than a hundred people lost their lives





## Salvador Valdés Mesa: “You are not alone, the Party and government are with you

Cuba's First Vice President spoke with families of the victims of the aviation accident and was updated on work underway to determine what caused the disaster



## Questions and answers on aviation accident (+ Photos)



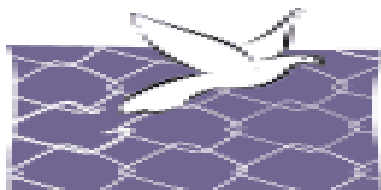
A summary of information available reported on the airplane accident which took place May 18, near Havana's José Martí International Airport

- [One of three survivors of Havana air disaster passes away](#)
- [Minute to Minute: Cuban President at site of accident](#)
- [Aviation accident in Havana](#)

## **Anything from the list below you can bring to the ACFS monthly meeting is greatly appreciated.**

### **Food and Household Items**

- healthy breakfast cereals
- dried fruit, nuts & seeds
- flatbread
- long life (UHT) milk
- healthy snack foods
- tomato paste
- tinned sardines and salmon
- tinned tomato, corn and peas
- tinned beans and lentils (without sauce)
- green tea, black tea & instant coffee
- spices
- honey (in small jars)
- dishwashing detergent
- shaving items
- sanitary pads
- shampoo
- soap
- toothbrushes
- washing powder



**asrc** Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

### **People Feeding People**

These are some practical ways you can help support families seeking asylum, who are living below the poverty line.

1. Become a [food sponsor](#)
2. Order a Foodbank 'home delivery' through [Coles Online](#)
3. Donate toilet paper online via [Who Gives a Crap](#).

The centre in Footscray is extremely grateful for items already donated by ACFS.

# Ballet Revolucion - DIRECT FROM CUBA

ALL-NEW PRODUCTION RETURNS TO AUSTRALIA IN 2018



Direct from Cuba, **Ballet Revolución** – the show that has taken Europe by storm – returns to Australia for a national tour in April and May with a brand new production. **Ballet Revolución** is recharged, rebooted and ready for its Australian fans once again.

Audiences all over the world simply cannot get enough of the Cuban dancers' exuberant energy and contagious joy of life with which they turn any idea into an explosive and intense performance. With breathtaking twists, daring jumps and sensual moves from ballet to street dance, **Ballet Revolución** has already thrilled audiences in sold-out shows from Singapore to Berlin, Vienna and London.

Leading Australian choreographer Aaron Cash, along with Cuban choreographer Roclan Gonzalez Chavez, blend breathtaking contemporary moves with salsa and Cuban dance to produce a unique fusion, resulting in an explosion of unbridled passion and raw energy, with a distinctly Cuban flavour.

Boundless passion, attractive sensuality, stunning athleticism and exuberant joy of life, **Ballet Revolución** combines it all in a fireball of emotions that no one can escape.

**Ballet Revolucion, played in the State Theatre, Melbourne, May 17-20.**

## Cuba takes gold in Pan American cycling championship

*Led by Arlenis Sierra, Cuba gave a perfect performance on the last day of the Pan American Road Cycling Championships in San Juan, Argentina*

Author: [Redacción Digital](#) | [internet@granma.cu](mailto:internet@granma.cu) - may 7, 2018 10:05:53



Arlenis Sierra won gold in the 2018 Pan American Road Cycling Championships. **Photo:** jit digital

Led by Arlenis Sierra, Cuba gave a perfect performance on the last day of the Pan American Road Cycling Championships in San Juan, Argentina.

Finishing the 80 kilometer race in a time of 1:58:30, the 25 year old athlete took first place on the podium, joined by teammates Iraidia García and Marlies Mejías, who occupied second and third, respectively.

Meanwhile Claudia Baró and Yudelmis Domínguez, one of the Cuban team's most experienced members, came in fourth and fifth in that order, with the former winning gold in the under 23 category, reports José Luis Basulto.

Although Cuba has won the road cycling competition in the past, with Sierra, world track cycling champion and Marlies Mejías both taking the top spot, this was the first time the team has

achieved such a feat in a continental competition, which also saw Mailín Sánchez finish eighth.

This year's result represents good prospects for the Cuban squad as it looks toward the upcoming Central American and Caribbean Games, Barranquilla 2018, where the cycling competitions (road and track) will take place in the city of Cali. (**Jit**)

# Mexico investigating company which owned plane involved in May 18 accident

*Mexico's Secretariat of Communications and Transport (SCT) launched an "extraordinary review" of Damojh Arilines, also known as Global Air, and suspended its activities while investigations continue in Havana*

Author: [Prensa Latina](#) | [internet@granma.cu](mailto:internet@granma.cu)

may 23, 2018 12:05:06

Mexico.— Mexico's Secretariat of Communications and Transport (SCT) launched an "extraordinary review" of Damojh Arilines, also known as Global Air, and suspended its activities while investigations continue of the plane crash which occurred on May 18 in Havana. According to a statement by the SCT cited by **Prensa Latina**: "Due to the unfortunate accident that occurred on May 18, the company Damojh Airlines was notified of the start of an extraordinary review, which aims to verify that its current operating conditions comply with regulations."

The federal body stated that the aim of the review is to gather information to help with ongoing investigations into the tragic accident.

"Likewise, the company is being notified of the temporary suspension of its activities while the review is carried out," noted the document.

The decision was taken in light of the recent plane crash in Cuba and despite the fact that the company has undergone yearly verification process, the last in November 2017; and obtained its mandatory airworthiness certificate awarded every two years, most recently in August and October 2017.

The Boeing 737-200 aircraft that crashed in Cuba underwent its most recent maintenance review November 21-24, 2017.

According to a statement by the Mexican government, the review found that the company carried out "maintenance services in accordance with the maintenance program of the manufacturer and the maintenance program approved by the General Directorate of Civil Aviation."

Meanwhile, Cuban Minister of Transport Adel Yzquierdo, speaking to the press on May 20, stated that "We have all the documentation that shows that the crew was certified and competent."



Photo: Facebook

## Stop the war threats against Korea!

Posted in [Asia](#), [Korea](#) - May 18, 2018

May 17 — The International Action Center condemns the threatening moves made by the Trump administration and the Pentagon that have deliberately undercut the momentum and planning for a June 12 summit meeting between the U.S. and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is the U.S. government's actions and statements that have called into question the planned discussions to improve relations between the two nuclear powers.

At this very moment, the U.S. and South Korea are conducting joint military exercises simulating an invasion of the DPRK. Called operation Max Thunder, these exercises involve some 100 warplanes, including nuclear-capable B-52 bombers and F-22 Raptor stealth fighter jets.

Last month, similarly threatening U.S.-S.K. military operations — Foal Eagle and Key Resolve — took place despite efforts by the DPRK to decrease tensions by meeting with South Korean officials and inviting President Donald Trump to a summit with Kim Jong Un.

The U.S. calls its military provocations "defensive." There is nothing defensive about them. They are taking place thousands of miles away from the U.S., on the very border of the DPRK, a country the U.S. ravaged from 1950 to 1953. While the Pentagon killed millions of Korean people in that war, it could not defeat the revolutionary government that had liberated the north from Japanese colonial rule at the end of World War II. But Washington has never agreed to end the formal state of war that continues to exist now, 65 years later.

Trump's appointment of John Bolton to national security adviser in late March was a sign that the White House was moving toward greater confrontation with the DPRK. Bolton is an unapologetic war hawk who has gone on record advocating a pre-emptive strike against the DPRK. Bolton has threatened the Koreans with the fate of Libya if it does not immediately denuclearize, and Trump has repeated his words. Libya gave up trying to acquire nuclear weapons on the promise of peace, but instead was invaded and dismembered.

But the DPRK is not Libya. It is a nuclear power and can retaliate if attacked.

On May 16, Kim Kye Gwan, first vice minister of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK, released a statement saying: "If the Trump administration takes an approach to the DPRK-U.S. summit with sincerity for improved DPRK-U.S. relations, it will receive a deserved response from us. However, if the U.S. is trying to drive us into a corner to force our unilateral nuclear abandonment, we will no longer be interested in such dialogue and cannot but reconsider our proceeding to the DPRK-U.S. summit."

In the interests of the people of the U.S. and Korea, we call on anti-war forces in the U.S. to urgently denounce this dangerous maneuvering by the reactionary Trump administration.

We must demand that the U.S. cease its hostile war "games," sign a peace treaty with the DPRK, end its military occupation of South Korea and bring the troops home!



# U.S. puts stamp of approval on Israeli murder of Gazans

Posted in [North Africa & West Asia](#), [Palestine](#) - By Chris Fry - May 23, 2018

Two side-by-side photos from May 14 were splashed across the front pages of newspapers around the globe and all forms of social media.

One showed Ivanka Trump, daughter of the U.S. president, unveiling a plaque at the newly opened U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. Present were a champagne-glass-clinking gaggle of right-wing Israeli politicians, U.S. officials and fanatical Christian evangelicals. The last group explained the move to Jerusalem as the glorious prelude to the “second coming,” when all non-Christians — Jews included — will be annihilated and then consigned to eternal damnation.

The medieval Inquisition had nothing on these guys.

The other photo showed heroic medical workers rescuing injured, unarmed Palestinian protesters from murderous Israeli sniper fire and massive gas clouds along the illegal fence that the Zionist state has erected to imprison nearly 2 million people in Gaza.

At least 62 Gazans were killed on May 14 — one day before the anniversary of the Nakba, or the Catastrophe, when Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homes by Zionist forces in 1948. The dead this time included six children and an eight-month-old baby named Layla Ghaben. More than 2,700 Palestinians have been wounded, half from sniper fire, since the protests began in Gaza on March 30, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

In moving the embassy to Jerusalem, the strategists for U.S. imperialism are far more interested in profits than they are in theology. They are somewhat leery of openly endorsing Israeli atrocities, which have sparked objections among some organs of the corporate media. A May 14 editorial in the New York Times opined: “Mr. Trump’s announcement that he was recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, and moving the embassy from Tel Aviv, swept aside 70 years of American neutrality.” It added that Israeli officials “are unconvincing when they argue that only live ammunition — rather than tear gas, water cannons and other nonlethal measures — can protect Israel from being overrun.”

## Myth of U.S. ‘neutrality’

Of course, Washington has never been “neutral” toward Israel. As of five years ago, it gave the settler state more than \$234 billion in aid, mostly military aid to purchase U.S. weapons, thus arming Israel to the teeth while at the same time filling the coffers of the U.S. war machine. (Haaretz, March 20, 2013) Democratic and Republican politicians are unified behind their support of Israel. Nearly all repeat the Zionist argument that the brutal killing of unarmed protesters in Gaza is necessary so that the racist settler state “can protect its borders.”

Black Agenda Report points out: “No fewer than 24 states have enacted bipartisan legislation to publicly identify and blacklist individuals or corporations that do business with individuals and entities publicly identified as BDS-friendly [the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement]. Similar legislation has been introduced in a dozen more states and in the U.S. Senate. Israel trains thousands of U.S. police each year for hundreds of local departments — from big cities, universities and state cop shops to small towns and rural counties. It’s no wonder that U.S. corporate news media portrayed the latest Israeli massacre as a bizarre act of self-defense at Israel’s borders, as though the gun line around the world’s largest concentration camp, population 2 million, were an international frontier.” (May 17)

But now, the Trump regime has dropped any pretense of total support for Israeli atrocities by moving its embassy to Jerusalem and canceling the Iran treaty. It is hoping that brute force will break any resistance to U.S. imperialism’s exploitation of the vast wealth in the region.

The Netanyahu government had chimed in its support for the Pentagon on April 30 by launching a massive missile attack against Syria. The Assad government’s “crime”? Enlisting Iranian support against U.S.-backed rebels trying to carry out regime change in Syria.

## World condemnation of Gaza murders

Around the world, voices loud and clear supported the Palestinian people. From New York to Cape Town; from Albany, N.Y., to Detroit; from Brussels to Halifax, thousands marched in protest of the Israeli atrocities and Trump’s complicit support.

Young Jews from the group IfNotNow blocked traffic in front of the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C., for two hours on May 14 as they erected an “Embassy of Freedom” to protest the embassy move. Rebecca Hornstein, a rabbinical school student from Philadelphia, said, “Moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem puts the U.S. stamp of approval on the ongoing evictions and dispossession of Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the ongoing violence directed at Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank — all of which are counter to Jewish values.” (mondoweiss.net, May 14)

In Israel itself, more than 600 protesters blocked the roads in the center of Tel Aviv for more than two hours. “Artwork created by some students at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem was banned from being displayed at an international science conference by an Israeli minister after the students showed support for Palestinian protesters killed on the Gaza border.” (Newsweek, May 17)

Other governments denounced both the embassy move and the Gaza atrocities. South Africa, with the infamous apartheid regime’s 1960 Sharpeville Massacre burned into its memory, removed its ambassador to Israel. The autocratic Erdogan government in Turkey, which Trump has showered with praise, withdrew its ambassadors from both Israel and the U.S. Even the brutal Saudi Arabian monarchy, immersed in a devastating Pentagon-supported war against the people of Yemen, denounced Trump’s embassy move and Israeli attacks.

Trump and Netanyahu are counting on the storm of worldwide protest dying down in short order so they will be able to carry out their lethal program of conquest and oppression. We must not let that happen.



# Ten Marxist ideas that define the 21st century

No matter how hard the propaganda machine has tried to refute Marx's analysis, his ideas have stood the test of time

Author: [Sergio Alejandro Gómez](mailto:internet@granma.cu) | [internet@granma.cu](mailto:internet@granma.cu) - may 16, 2018 10:05:33

Every time the alarms sound announcing another economic crisis, sales of Karl Marx's books skyrocket. Few understood how capitalism works and its consequences for humanity like this 19th-century German thinker.

No matter how hard the hegemonic propaganda machine has tried to refute his analysis and decree the death of the ideas to which he dedicated his life, Marxism resists the test of time and its validity - not only as a method to understand the world, - but as a tool to transform it, is proven.

Two centuries after his birth, **Granma International** shares ten of Marx's predictions that set the pace of the 21st century.

## **1. THE CONCENTRATION AND CENTRALIZATION OF CAPITAL**

In his masterpiece *Capital*, Marx defined economic reproduction in capitalism and predicted the tendency to concentrate and centralize capital.

While the first aspect refers to the accumulation of surplus value - the value created over and above the labor power of workers (surplus labor), appropriated by the capitalist as profit - the second term consists of the increase in capital as a result of the combination of several individual capitals, almost always as a result of bankruptcies or economic crises.

The implications of this analysis are devastating for the defenders of the ability of the "blind hand of the market" to distribute wealth.

As Marx predicted, one of the characteristics of capitalism in the 21st century is the growing gap between rich and poor. According to Oxfam's latest report, 82% of the wealth generated worldwide in 2017 went into the pockets of the richest 1% of the global population, while 3.7 billion people, the poorest half of the world, saw no increase in their wealth.

## **2. THE INSTABILITY OF CAPITALISM AND CYCLICAL CRISES**

The German philosopher was one of the first to understand that economic crises were not an error of the capitalist system, but one of its intrinsic characteristics.

Even today attempts are made to peddle a different idea.

However, from the Stock Market Crash of 1929, to the crisis of 2007- 2008, there is a clear course that follows the patterns as outlined by Marx. Hence, even Wall Street magnates end up turning to the pages of *Capital* to find some answers.

## **3. CLASS STRUGGLE**

Perhaps one of the most revolutionary Marxist ideas was the understanding that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," as we read in the *Communist Manifesto* written by Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848.

That thesis threw liberal thought into crisis. For Marx, the capitalist state is one more tool of the hegemonic class to dominate the rest, while reproducing its values and its own class.

A century and a half later, social struggles are fought between the 1% that dominates and the other 99%.

## **4. THE INDUSTRIAL RESERVE ARMY**

The capitalist, according to Marx, needs to keep wages low in order to maximize profitability. This can be achieved as long as there is another worker waiting to take the place of one who refuses to accept the conditions. That's who he called the "reserve industrial army."

Although the social and trade union struggles from the 19th century to the present day have changed elements of this situation, especially in developed nations, the quest for low wages continues to be a constant in the business sector.

During the twentieth century, large manufacturing companies in Europe and the United States relocated to Asia in search of a skilled workforce they could pay less.

Although recent governments point to a loss of jobs through this process, as the Donald Trump administration in the United States has, the fact is that these companies managed to maintain their high growth rates thanks to the exploitation of cheap labor. Regarding wages, current studies show that workers' purchasing power, in terms of what can be bought and not their nominal value, has been decreasing in western countries for nearly 30 years.

And the gap is even greater between executives and low-level employees.



Photo: Granma



According to an article in **The Economist**, while in the last two decades workers' pay in countries like the United States has stagnated, the salary of top executives has increased significantly: they have gone from earning 40 times the average pay to pocketing 110 times more. (<https://www.economist.com/node/8554819>)

## **5. THE NEGATIVE ROLE OF FINANCIAL CAPITAL**

While Marx details the mechanisms of exploitation inherent in the process of capital accumulation, he is especially critical of financial capital, which does not have a direct material role in the economy, but is created in a "fictitious" way, such as a promissory note or a bond.

In his day, one couldn't imagine the modern development of this sector of the economy, thanks to the use of computers to carry out financial transactions at the speed of light.

Speculation and the elaboration of complex financial mechanisms – such as the so-called "subprime," which triggered the crisis of 2007-2008 – are currently solid confirmation of Marx's concerns.

## **6. THE CREATION OF FALSE NEEDS**

The 19th century had not yet seen the boom of commercial advertising on radio and television, much less modern mechanisms to personalize advertising messages on the Internet, but Marx already warned of the ability of the capitalist system to generate alienation and false needs among people.

"The extension of products and needs becomes a contriving and ever-calculating subservience to inhuman, sophisticated, unnatural, and imaginary appetites," he predicted over 150 years ago.

In today's world, cell phones become outdated in just a few months, and advertising is responsible for convincing users to buy the latest model. Meanwhile, household appliances are built with planned obsolescence to ensure they stop working after a few years, and thus create the need to replace them.

## **7. GLOBALIZATION**

"The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere," Marx and Engels wrote in the Communist Manifesto. Their portrait of the globalization of markets, accompanied by the imposition of a culture determined by consumption, could not be more accurate.

## **8. THE PROMINENCE OF MONOPOLIES**

At the same time, this trend is accompanied by the creation of transnational monopolies. While classical liberal economic theory assumed that competition would maintain multiplicity of ownership, Marx went a step further and identified the market's tendency to amalgamate based on the law of the strongest.

Large media, telephone, and oil conglomerates are some of the current examples of the process described by Marx.

## **9. THE SUICIDAL TENDENCY OF CAPITALISM**

"All that is solid melts into air," is one of the most enlightened reflections on capitalism in the Communist Manifesto.

Marx and Engels understood the creative and at the same time self-destructive nature of capitalism, in which the pursuit of productivity at any price imposes an inhuman rhythm of production and unsustainable consumption.

It is precisely this trend that currently has our planet on the edge of collapse.

The impact of human beings on the rise in global temperature is scientifically proven, although certain presidents, such as that of the United States, continue to deny it.

## **10. THE REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL OF THE WORKING CLASS**

Marx's greatest impact on history was not his profound analysis of the contradictions of capitalism, but his call to build a new kind of society: based on communism.

His message that the proletariat has the potential to free itself from oppression and inequality forever changed the twentieth century and inspired revolutions in Russia, China, Vietnam, and Cuba, among other countries. His call to working class unity remains fully valid in the 21st century.

<http://en.granma.cu/cultura/2018-05-16/ten-marxist-ideas-that-define-the-21st-century>

# CUBA NEEDS YOU!

## Join the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society

The Australia-Cuba Friendship Society aims to promote and encourage friendship, understanding, cultural, trade and other exchanges between the peoples of Australia and Cuba.

☐ I wish to join the ACFS. Enclosed is a cheque/money order for \$30 (full membership) \$15 (concession)

☐ I am interested in the annual work/study trip to Cuba. Please send me information.

☐ I wish to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ towards the material aid campaign for Cuba.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

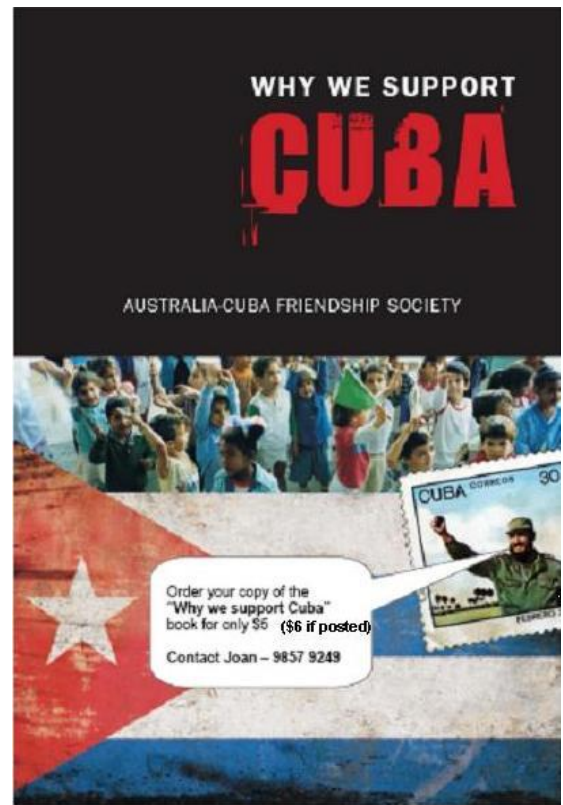
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

P/C \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter preference (please tick one) Email ☐ Mail ☐

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: ACFS PO Box 1051, Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia



*Don't forget to check out the latest on the Melbourne ACFS Website*

[www.melbourneacfs.org](http://www.melbourneacfs.org)

Or contact us directly at [melbacfs@yahoo.com.au](mailto:melbacfs@yahoo.com.au)

## Do you want your ACFS newsletter online?

Now available to all members with a computer and email account.

Please email [Melbourne ACFS](mailto:Melbourne ACFS) with your preference and help assist us save money on postage.

*Added bonus of electronic newsletters – direct hyperlink access to articles from around the world*

## Old CUBA World Heritage

By Joan Coxsedg

*“A personal story about Cuba during my three visits to the tiny island nation with drawings, text and a potted history”*

*“In presenting this fine collection of pen and pastel drawings, I am certain that Australians who view it will be inspired to learn more about Cuba...”*, Eusebio Leal,

*Chief Historian of the City of Havana*

## Only \$20

*Plus postage (\$2:10 -1copy, \$3:50 for 2)*

Please make cheques payable to:

Joan Coxsedg  
8 Leicester Street, North Balwyn, 3104

