



Australia-Cuba Friendship Society
Melbourne NEWSLETTER
May 2019

Next Meeting
Monday 6th
May
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

Dear Comrades

Only a few weeks to go before we cast our votes for bad or much worse, and I'll let you nut that one out for yourselves. Either way, the rorts and inequalities will continue with the rich getting richer and the rest of us getting slugged for the basics like gas, electricity, transport and water that were once in public hands. We don't nurture our land, but allow the road lobby to do what it likes, cutting a swathe through precious Aboriginal sites and ancient trees and places of natural beauty. Climate change? Not interested. Homeless people? Ditto. Money talks and big money talks even louder. The world as a whole isn't looking too flash. Fresh catastrophes just keep coming, some 'natural' and some not, mostly committed by screwed-up young men. Headlined for a day, before another nightmare comes along to take its place. The only thing that's made me laugh out loud recently was the Ukrainian election which was won by a comedian, a fair dinkum comedian. Why not? When you cast your eyes around the world's leaders, they certainly qualify as clowns, not funny ones though, just cynical caricatures who dish out crap and like to act tough. To impress the lying war-hungry clown who inhabits the White House? Even when Trump goes, he will be replaced with another war-hungry clown because they're the ones who get the big gigs. Like corporate toady Joe Biden, who's put his hand up to 'rescue the Democrats from Bernie Sanders'.

You're probably sick of hearing about Julian Assange, but you shouldn't be, because that's what the powers-that-be want, so a few more facts about his incarceration in Britain's maximum security Belmarsh Prison - its 'Guantanamo Bay' - wouldn't hurt. And the knowledge that the slimy English magistrate who put him there is the same one who stopped a private prosecution of Tony Blair for war crimes. Assange is not allowed any visitors, including from his doctors and lawyers, despite needing urgent medical care. He's being held in appalling conditions for exposing US war crimes. For being a journalist. A few weeks ago, the American Civil Liberties Union noted that **'criminally prosecuting a publisher for the publication of truthful information would be a first in American history and unconstitutional...and would open the door to criminal investigations of other news organisations'**. The manufactured FBI indictment contains no evidence, no documents and no genuine testimony but was concocted by the Pentagon's shadowy Cyber Counter-Intelligence Assessments Branch. On 2 May Julian Assange will appear in custody at Westminster Magistrates' Court for a preliminary extradition hearing and the US must request his extradition from the UK by 12 June. But he could be in UK gaols for years if the extradition is contested in court. **While the Ecuadoran, British and US governments are flagrantly violating its own laws in persecuting Julian, individuals and civil society organisations are mobilising to defend him.** The Australian Government? Labor Opposition? Not a peep.

Trump and his cabal despise civil rights and are doing everything possible to wind back former treaties and alliances enshrining progressive international law. A free press? You're kidding. The aim of these thugs in suits is

28 April, 2019

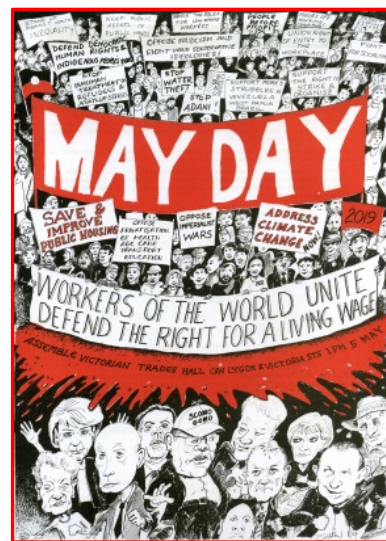
to dissuade investigative journalists from 'investigating'. Beat them up and lock them up as an example to others who might still want to write the truth about American barbarism. And journalists and governments are watching and taking note. The Deep State has gone ballistic, especially after WikiLeaks published the Vault 7 files, detailing the CIA's gigantic hacking/cyber espionage repertoire, including the activities of the ultra-secret Centre for Cyber Intelligence, its NSA counterpart. There is every reason to believe that Assange will be hit with far more serious charges once he lands on US soil. They're not going to all this bother to put him away for five years, but are clearly intent on setting a legal precedent to enable a US government to imprison any journalist who steps out of line.

Never before in my long life have I seen such a belligerent United States. Jimmy Carter agrees. **'The most warlike nation in the history of the world'**, he said. Vice-President Mike Pence told the UN Security Council that the White House intends removing Venezuelan President Maduro from power with 'all options on the table', adding that: **'Russia and other friends of Maduro need to leave now or face the consequences'**. The crisis in Venezuela could become global as Russia gears up for war. Like Iran, after Washington declared that part of the Iranian military was a 'foreign terrorist organisation' and therefore subject to attack.

As an antidote, I came across an article by George Burchett, son of the famous Wilfred, who recently attended the 70th anniversary of the founding of Ho Chi Minh's School of Writing and Journalism, some 80 kms north of Hanoi. In 1949, resistance against the French colonialists, backed by US Imperialists, was almost impossible. In that year, 49 young students were trained as lecturers, including the famous General Giap, in revolutionary journalism so they could contribute to their country's struggle for independence and liberty. Uncle Ho's principles? **Know why you write and who you write for. Be succinct. Get your facts straight. Don't use complicated language. Believe in what you write.** Revolutionary journalism is only possible when truth is on your side. Then the pen is indeed mightier than the sword. **When words serve a just cause, no army can defeat them. Viva!**

Joan Coxsedg

Commentator-in-Chief, Melbourne ACFS (03) 9857 9249



Subtle Reminder – Subs are due...please help keep the flags flying

May this Congress discussion lead to greater production and better services

Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba; Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President of the Councils of State and of Ministers, and Party Second Secretary José Ramón Machado Ventura, presided during the closing session of the Federation of Cuban Workers 21st Congress

Raúl and Díaz-Canel attend inauguration of Amistad Cuba-Vietnam School for children with physical-motor disabilities in Santiago

Speaking on behalf of parents, Aylin Torres stated that if anyone has the idea of taking away the beautiful building, in an attempt to apply Chapter III of the Helms-Burton Act, they will be obliged to face the students themselves, parents, teachers, and other workers who will defend it unconditionally



History teaches us that when there is unity of objectives, and a sense of the nationhood, all obstacles can be overcome

Speech by Miguel M. Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President of the Councils of State and of Ministers, closing the Third Extraordinary Session of the National Assembly of People's Power Ninth Legislature, at Havana's Convention Center, April 13, 2019, Year 61 of the Revolution

The Cuban Revolution reiterates its resolute determination to confront the aggressive U.S. escalation, and prevail

Today, April 17, is the anniversary of the United State's 1961 military invasion at Playa Girón. The Cuban people's resolute response in defence of the Revolution and socialism, within only 72 hours, produced the first military defeat of imperialism in America

Courage and loyalty in the face of lies and aggression

This April 16, Cubans return to raise our rifles into the air, with the same fortitude and willingness to fight as in 1961, as the Bay of Pigs invasion began and Fidel handed weapons to the people to defend the sovereignty and dignity we had won, and as Díaz-Canel said, faced with the same lies and aggression of imperialism, our response will be "the same courage and loyalty"

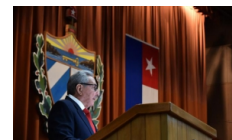


Efficiency: a challenge for the pharmaceutical industry

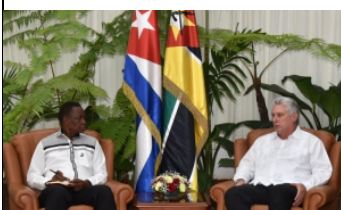
President Díaz-Canel participates in 2018 annual review of Cuba's pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry

Raúl: The Constitution we proclaim today guarantees the continuity of the Revolution and the irrevocability of our socialism

Speech delivered by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee, during the Second Extraordinary Session of the National Assembly of the People's Power Ninth Legislature, on the occasion of the proclamation of the Constitution of the Republic, in the Convention Center, April 10, 2019, Year 61 of the Revolution



- [National Assembly proclaims new Constitution](#)
- [LIVE: Second Extraordinary Session of the Ninth Legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power](#)



Díaz-Canel receives Secretary General of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique

During the cordial meeting, the positive progress of bilateral relations and perspectives for their strengthening was discussed. Díaz-Canel conveyed his best wishes to the government and people of Mozambique, immersed in recovery from damage caused by Hurricane Idai

Díaz-Canel holds meeting with United Nations General Assembly President

The President of Cuba's Councils of State and Ministers, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, received on April 5 the President of the United Nations 73rd General Assembly, Her Excellency María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, on an official visit to our country.



The socialist state enterprise is the key link in Cuba's economic model

Deficiencies persist in central enterprise management, noted Marino Murillo Jorge, head of the Policy Implementation and Development Commission, during a recent meeting with Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez and government leaders

The honor of helping Mozambique

A medical brigade from the Henry Reeve Contingent, specialized in disaster situations and serious epidemics, is saving lives in this sister African country

The heroism of Cuban workers

Cuban trade unions began the month of April with the convocation of May Day marches and the recognition of workers at the Comprehensive Automotive Services Enterprise (EISA) for their contribution to the recovery in Havana following the January 27 tornado

May Day: another resounding demonstration of our unity

Federation of Cuban Workers and national trade unions convoke May Day march

The art of restoring classrooms

A total of 78 educational institutions were damaged during the January 27 tornado, but their repair began immediately, and substantial resources have been allocated to ensure that they are in better constructive conditions than before the severe weather

Cuba vs. illicit drugs

Confiscated in 2018 were 2,438 kilograms of illegal drugs, the majority marijuana from drops by international traffickers which went astray, not intended for Cuba

Díaz-Canel receives His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales (+Photos)

During the cordial meeting, they discussed the positive state of bilateral relations, based on cooperation and mutual respect

Ten images of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall upon their arrival in Havana

After arriving at Havana's José Martí International Airport, the distinguished visitors placed floral wreaths at the base of the José Martí monument in the Plaza de la Revolución

History preserved in our national symbols

The proposed National Symbols Bill would establish more flexible use of these items with a view toward promoting their greater presence in society, within a legally defined, respectful framework

Truth or a visa: The New York Times spreads lies about Cuba and Venezuela

The **Times** is not above participating in the fake news campaign being waged against the Bolivarian Revolution by the United States

Díaz-Canel receives former President of Argentina

Prior to this meeting, Yesterday March 18, the distinguished guest was received by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Community Party of Cuba Central Committee



Cuban tourism grows despite U.S. obstacles



Cuba's hotel infrastructure continues to grow, already offering more than 69,500 rooms. **Photo:** Archive

The diversification of tourism offers and the progressive growth of investment are supporting the sustained development of a secure destination

Author: [Vivian Bustamante Molina](#) | internet@granma.cu - march 21, 2019 11:03:23

Almost 40 hotels, providing 18,000 new rooms to be inaugurated in the medium term, are currently under construction in Cuba, where authorities remain committed to the sustained growth of the tourism industry, as the driving force of the economy.

Forecasts for the present year were based on sector potential, and include the expected arrival of 5,100,000 international visitors, representing a 7.4% increase in comparison to 2018, as reiterated by Tourism Minister, Manuel Marrero.

There are already early signs that this figure will be reached, as Cuba welcomed one million international visitors five days before it did so in 2018, while January closed with an increase of 9% as compared to the same

month of the previous year.

It is worth noting that the anticipated growth of this sector is not based solely on new investments, but also on plans for modernization and updating of the country's existing hotel infrastructure. Meanwhile, diversification goes hand in hand with the development of event and incentive tourism, and the promotion of high-standard facilities in Havana.

The upcoming annual International Tourism Fair, FitCuba, to be held in Havana in May, will offer an opportunity to corroborate results in this regard, including the announced opening of a dozen new accommodations and the reincorporation of 1,121 refurbished rooms that were out of service. Currently in different phases of construction are the Havana hotels: Prado y Malecón, Corona, Metropolitano, Gran Hotel, and those located on Malecón and D Street, 3rd and 70th Streets, and 25th and K Streets; while undergoing refurbishment are the hotels: Habana Riviera, Habana Libre, Deauville, Lincoln, Sevilla, Cohiba, Colina, Vedado, St. Johns, Neptuno Tritón and Copacabana. Reconstruction works are planned on another five, among them, the emblematic New York hotel.

Such a broad investment program includes extra-hotel services such as the Tarará and Hemingway marinas, and the Capdevila golf course; in addition to recreation and gastronomic centers, including the La Ferminia restaurant, and the Complejo 1830.

SAFE, QUALITY TOURISM

Sector authorities estimate that, for the first time, revenues in the current year will surpass 3 billion dollars, representing growth of 17%.

Greater service quality and diversity constitutes the cornerstone of efforts, supported by the intangible value provided by the security of the country, which leads to increased tourist arrivals, as visitors recognize and appreciate the safe conditions to undertake activities.

A series of international awards vouch for such conditions: Varadero features second place in the TripAdvisor 2019 Travelers' Choice Awards for the world's best beaches, after having placed third in 2018; while the hotels Paradisus Princesa del Mar, located at the same beach destination, and Havana's Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski and Hotel Nacional, were all recognized in different categories of the 2018 World Travel Awards, which identify excellence in all activities linked to the global travel and tourism industry.

Such honors, together with last year's record number of international visitors, only serve to refute the U.S. State Department's Cuba Travel Advisory, warning its citizens to reconsider travel to the island.

The advisory, in effect since November 2017, represents yet another orchestrated lie aimed at sabotaging Cuba's economic and social development. Just like the ever-present blockade, it has had a negative impact, demonstrated by the 40% drop in U.S. visitors to the island following the issue of the warning, having seen previous growth of 175%.

However, people from other latitudes continue to come to Cuba, attracted by its climate, environment, culture, and safety. Meanwhile, several sectors in the U.S. itself have expressed their opposition to moves by the Donald Trump administration, including for example the U.S. Tour Operators Association (USTOA), which has insisted that Cuba is a "safe" destination.

Likewise, Cuba Educational Travel, a U.S. organization, reported that in an anonymous survey of citizens of that nation, 99.13% felt "safe" or "very safe" during their stay in the Caribbean country. The same opinion is shared by U.S. Senators who have traveled to the island, and refute the story of sonic attacks on diplomatic staff at their embassy in Havana, instead advocating the restoration of all operations of that mission.

Further arguments to support Cuba as a tourist destination include the Excelencias Award for Safest Travel Destination, received by Minister Manuel Marrero during the 38th International Tourism Trade Fair, FITUR 2018, held in Madrid; or the high level events and visits of dignitaries and personalities from around the world, who travel to Cuba to strengthen ties of friendship and collaboration.

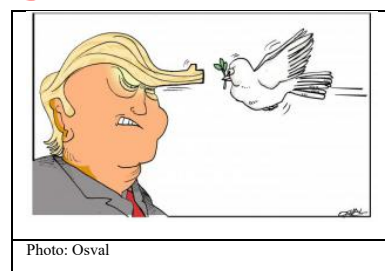
In addition, the country's potential is demonstrated by growing foreign investment in the sector. Two examples are the Meliá company, which continues to consolidate its presence in Cuba, operating 34 hotels with 14,661 rooms; while the prestigious Asian chain MGM Muthu Hotels will open its fourth hotel in Cuba during the first half of this year. All this begs the question as to who loses out more from the U.S. obstacles to Cuban tourism.

<http://en.granma.cu/tourism/2019-03-21/cuban-tourism-grows-despite-us-obstacles>

Trump breaks Cuba-U.S. baseball agreement

The agreement applauded by players and fans around the world was cancelled to further the Trump administration's increasingly confrontational policy toward Cuba

Author: [Oscar Sánchez Serra](mailto:Oscar_Sanchez_Serra@informacion@granma.cu) | informacion@granma.cu - april 9, 2019 16:04:48



It is not news that the Trump administration has cancelled the agreement signed by the MLB and the Cuban Baseball Federation, on December 19, after three years of hard work by both parties. And it is not because the agreement sought to end the human suffering of Cuban athletes. In January of this year, the MLB, not Cuba, sent a letter to the United States government, detailing their plans and intentions with this new deal, stating that it was mainly directed toward avoiding the trafficking in persons that Cubans usually face when leaving the country and the harsh conditions they face in order to be contracted by a Major League team, citing the examples of Yasiel Puig, Yoan Moncada, José Abreu, and Yoenis Céspedes, among others. These "harsh conditions" include the very high risk of losing one's life to sports merchants conspiring with unscrupulous individuals engaged in illegal trafficking of persons, as happened to Puig, who was taken out of Cuba by traffickers linked to a Mexican drug cartel, according to court testimony. These same players, born and raised in Cuba, who today fill stadiums for the so-called "show," as U.S. baseball calls itself, celebrated the agreement, precisely so that their fellow citizens would not face what they had experienced. When the agreement was signed, José Daniel Abreu, "Pito," as fans in Cuba know him, told ESPN: "Words cannot fully express my sincere joy and enthusiasm to hear that Commissioner Rob Manfred and Tony Clark have reached an agreement with the Cuban Baseball Federation. Knowing that the next generation of Cuban baseball players will not face the unimaginable fate experienced by the Cuban players who went before them, is the realization of an impossible dream for all of us. Dealing with the exploitation of smugglers and unscrupulous agencies will finally come to an end for Cuban ball players. Even now, I am still harassed. The next generation of Cuban baseball players will be able to sign a Major League contract, while in Cuba they will be able to keep their earnings like any other player in the world, they will be able to return to Cuba, they will be able to share with their families, and they will be able to practice the sport they love against the best players in the world, without fear or trepidation." These are the sentiments that U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton opposes. Just before The Washington Post communicated the April 5 decision, he stated that if Cuban baseball players want to play in the Major Leagues, they could escape from Cuba. He and Senator Marco Rubio have torpedoed an agreement that baseball lovers around the world applauded, the same two who have fabricated Juan Guaidó in Venezuela, and attacked the Sandinista Revolution in the halls of the White House, under the sickly batting of Donald Trump, based on their version of the Monroe Doctrine for Latin America. Trump's decision puts Cuban baseball in the same position it was in February of 2015, when the Treasury Department and the MLB created the residence outside of Cuba certificate regulation, which obliged any Cuban baseball player seeking to play in the U.S. Major Leagues to sign a statement under oath, assuring that they are not members of the Cuban government, or of the Communist Party, and that they will not return to their country. Trump's argument is that the December agreement violates blockade laws, because the Cuban Baseball Federation (FCB) is a government entity. He is lying, as he has done in his long career of fake news. The FCB is recognized as a national federation by all international sports organizations, not as a representative of the Cuban government. Imperialism attacks baseball to attack the Revolution, knowing that the right to sports is one of its great conquests, which will not be stopped.

<http://en.granma.cu/deportes/2019-04-09/trump-breaks-cuba-us-baseball-agreement>

Terrorism at U.S.-Mexico border

Posted in [Immigrants & Refugees](#), [Latin America & The Caribbean](#)

By Gloria Rubac - April 23, 2019



Tent camp of Honduran migrants in Tijuana, Mexico

The U.S. border with Mexico has become a site of domestic terrorism — inflicted by acts of the president of the United States, the Department of Justice, Customs and Border Patrol, Homeland Security and racist anti-immigrant vigilante groups.

The terrorism is tormenting people desperately trying to escape violence, death, rape, joblessness and poverty in Central America.

This terrorism is legal. And it is terrifying, traumatic and life altering for its victims: poor people with no alternative except to seek asylum in the U.S.

Since the beginning of Donald Trump's presidential campaign, racist and anti-immigrant rants have been broadcast on every big-business news outlet and in print media. Trump has emboldened anti-immigrant racists to take action. He has set policies that result in government agencies ripping children from their parents' arms. He has imprisoned migrants in brutal detention centers where private prisons make a fortune, while the people locked up are victimized over and over.

Racist vigilantes emboldened

Though private militia organizations have been patrolling the border for many years, they had not yet detained migrants on the U.S. side of the Rio Grande. Now, in New Mexico, the armed group, United Constitutional Patriots, is impersonating the Border Patrol and has held at gunpoint hundreds of migrants who have crossed over.

The American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico responded to this armed militia by sending a letter to the U.S. government asking it to intervene: "We cannot allow racist and armed vigilantes to kidnap and detain people seeking asylum. We urge you to immediately investigate this atrocious and unlawful conduct."

The letter continues: "The Trump administration's vile racism has emboldened white nationalists and fascists to flagrantly violate the law. This has no place in our state." ([aclu-nm.org](#))

Peter Simonson, executive director of the New Mexico ACLU, told CNN that while militia groups have patrolled near the border before, they are now being given permission by the White House. (April 19)

The New York Times quoted Jim Benvie, who posts online for these racist vigilantes, as saying that he issues "a verbal citizen's arrest. If these people follow our verbal commands, we hold them until Border Patrol comes. Border Patrol has never asked us to stand down." (April 4)

Concentration camps for profit

The Corpus Christi Caller Times reported on April 19 that the federal government has awarded a \$39 million contract to Deployed Resources LLC in Rome, N.Y., to build "shelter" for those seeking asylum.

According to Border Patrol figures, more than 361,000 migrants were apprehended at the southern border during a six-month period ending March 31. Of that total, nearly 36,000 were unaccompanied children.

The number of migrants landing in federal detention has been relentlessly increasing since the advent of "zero tolerance" in April 2018, as families continue to flee gang violence and political repression, in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala in particular.

There are around 50,000 people in detention centers on a daily basis. Numerous accounts speak of filthy conditions, inedible food, temperatures that are either extremely cold or unbearably hot, illnesses that have proven fatal in nine cases this year, and sexual assaults.

Recent photos from El Paso, Texas, have shown detained migrants, including families with young children, sleeping on rocky gravel under a border bridge in the cold with only foil blankets and two baloney sandwiches a day.

"[Immigration and Customs Enforcement] takes people from [U.S.] homes and communities in early morning raids, from courtrooms and workplaces, and from the border where they arrive seeking safety and protection, and jails them thousands of miles from their lawyers and their loved ones. Inside, they suffer solitary confinement, unsafe conditions, and severe isolation," said Heidi Altman, the National Immigration Justice Center's policy director.

Detention Watch Network notes that an "astonishing number of people ... separated from their families and communities ... [are being] held within a system that Department of Homeland Security's own Inspector General has criticized for abusive conditions."

Human rights and civil rights flouted

U.S. Attorney General William Barr announced on April 17 that the Department of Justice would deny bond and indefinitely jail any detained asylum seekers who enter the U.S. outside official ports of entry. Barr's "Matter of M-S-, Respondent" [decision](#) will result in the unlawful prolonged incarceration of asylum seekers and strip immigration judges of authority to consider individuals for release on a case-by-case basis.

Many asylum seekers are unable to reach one of the official ports of entry to present their

claims for asylum. In fact, the

Trump administration has been turning people away from ports of entry. As they wait in difficult conditions in Mexico for weeks or months, many are forced to find other routes to safety in the U.S.

When an asylum seeker is detained by the Department of Homeland Security, a bond hearing often is their only opportunity to have a judge from outside DHS review their case and determine whether they should be allowed to pursue asylum protection from outside a jail cell.

"By eliminating the right to a bond hearing, the attorney general has made DHS the judge, jury, and jailer for those who come to our border seeking safety and freedom," said National Immigrant Justice Center Executive Director Mary Meg McCarthy. ([immigrantjustice.org](#), April 17)

McCarthy emphasized: "The decision also is the latest attack on the judicial branch by an administration that has repeatedly attempted to weaken the authority of immigration judges. As this administration continues to consolidate the power of an anti-immigrant president, this unilateral ruling should alarm all Americans."

Solidarity with detainees

While there are numerous protests at immigrant detention centers around this country and protests of deaths in detention, an unusual action was led in late March by Japanese survivors of federal detention during World War II. They were held, beginning December 1943 and officially ending February 1948, in a camp in Crystal City, Texas, located in the Rio Grande Valley.

These survivors and their descendants made a pilgrimage to the site of the Family Internment Camp where about 4,000 people of Japanese ancestry were held for indefinite detention during WW II.

Then they traveled to the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley where mothers and children are currently being incarcerated while seeking asylum in the United States.

There, survivors of racist federal detention and their descendants protested the present-day repetition of unlawful mass incarceration. Among their demands were humane treatment for the imprisoned and compassion for immigrants and refugees.

This was historic solidarity.

<https://iacenter.org/2019/04/24/terrorism-at-us-mexico-border/>

Raúl: The Constitution we proclaim today guarantees the continuity of the Revolution and the irrevocability of our socialism

Speech delivered by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee, during the Second Extraordinary Session of the National Assembly of the People's Power Ninth Legislature, on the occasion of the proclamation of the Constitution of the Republic, in the Convention Center, April 10, 2019, Year 61 of the Revolution

Author: [Raul Castro Ruz](#) | internet@granma.cu - april 11, 2019 16:04:21

(Council of State transcript / GI translation)

Compañero Esteban Lazo, President of the National Assembly;

Compañero Miguel Díaz-Canel, President of the Republic of Cuba; now President of the Councils of State and Ministers;

Compañeras and compañeros:

It is an exceptional privilege for me to deliver the central remarks in this session to proclaim the Constitution of the Republic. This is the second occasion on which I am fulfilling such a great responsibility.

Just over 43 years ago, the Comandante en Jefe of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, before departing abroad to complete an obligatory international commitment, asked me to take his place in the solemn ceremony, held on February 24, 1976, to proclaim the Constitution which today ends its validity.

The date chosen is not accidental, 150 years ago, on April 10, 1869, the Mambises gathered in a Constituent Assembly, in Guáimaro, and agreed to our first Constitution, the product of the unity and institutionality required by the nascent Republic in Arms.

Freedom and independence from Spanish colonialism were among its essential objectives, along with the recognition of equality among all Cubans, without exceptions or privileges.

The Constitution we proclaim today represents the continuity of this first one, as it preserves the unity of all Cubans and the independence and sovereignty of the homeland, as fundamental pillars of the nation.

The constitutions of Baraguá, Jimaguayú, and La Yaya, later proclaimed at different moments during the insurrectionary conflict, were a continuing expression of the revolutionary constitutional tradition in our history. It is worth recalling that, despite the victorious Mambi struggle against Spanish colonialism, true national independence was not achieved, nor was the installation of the democratic, progressive republic to which Cuban patriots aspired. The victory was cut short by the intervention of U.S. imperialism, the danger of which our forefathers, José Martí first of all, had warned.

Under the U.S. military occupation, the 1901 Constitution of the Republic was approved, which included the imposed Platt Amendment that subordinated our sovereignty to U.S. interests.

As Fidel said in his Central Report to the First Party Congress in December of 1975, after the Cuban War of Independence, (I quote) "Formal independence was conceded May 20, of 1902, with U.S. Navy bases and the constitutional amendment imposed, which, among other things, gave the United States the right to intervene in Cuba. This way, Yankee neocolonialism was installed in our homeland." (End of quote)

Let us not forget that this constitution entered into effect on orders from the U.S. Military Governor.

Later, the 1940 Constitution, which was the product of a complex historical process following the defeat of the Machado dictatorship, was able to reflect some of our people's aspirations at that time.

The international conjuncture during which the Constituent Assembly for that Magna Carta took place, within the framework of the world struggle against fascism and the active participation of assembly members with progressive ideas, in particular Communists, made possible the approval of an advanced constitutional text, for its time, establishing new social and economic rights. It included precepts such as the rejection of all forms of discrimination based on race, skin color, or sex; the eight hour work day; and prohibitions on large landholdings.



Photo: Estudio Revolución



Photo: Estudios Revolución

As is known, many of these postulates were left as dead letter, in some cases, because there was no subsequent legislative development, and in other cases, because their implementation was not feasible within the framework of that bourgeois society.

The validity of the 1940 Constitution was interrupted by the coup orchestrated by Batista in 1952, and the establishment of some spurious constitutional statutes. This event became the catalyst for the revolutionary movement of the Centenary Generation, whose political program was synthesized in Fidel's self-defense statement during his trial for the assaults on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Garrisons, known as "History will absolve me."

The triumph of the Revolution, January 1, 1959, rescued the 1940 constitutional postulates, that were adjusted to the circumstances of a true revolutionary process. One of the first measures adopted on the legal order, was the promulgation of the Fundamental Law on February 7, 1959, the constitutional base for the new challenges.

It could not have been done any other way: we would either be obliged to stop the revolutionary process to dedicate ourselves to producing a new Constitution, or do what was actually decided.

In terms of the institutional configuration, the most important change was the definition of the Council of Ministers as the highest legislative and executive body, with constituent authority. This was an imperative necessity, to be able to adopt future measures as quickly as this historical moment required.

Under this authority, rights recognized in the 1940 text were concretized, and at the same time, new rights emerged that reached the poorest.

In the first case, this meant enforcing what was established, and later, complementary laws abolishing large landholdings. Years went by and no one had taken charge of enforcing these complementary laws, until the Revolution, and Fidel, and just a few months after the victory, May 17, 1959, the Cuban Revolution's Agrarian Reform was enacted in the heart of the Sierra Maestra.

The Revolution was the foundation of the law that gave land to campesinos; that guaranteed free and universal access to education; that put public health at the service of citizens; that guaranteed the equality of all Cubans; that nationalized - with popular support - the huge properties held by foreign companies that exploited our compatriots.

In his Central Report to the First Party Congress, compañero Fidel said (I quote): "We need a socialist constitution now, given the characteristics of our new society, the social consciousness, the ideological convictions, and the aspirations of our people. A constitution that reflects the general laws of the society we are constructing, the profound economic, social, and political transformations launched by the Revolution, and the historic accomplishments achieved by our people. A constitution, that is, which consolidates what we are today and helps accomplish what we want to be tomorrow." (End of quote)

The provisional period lasted until the proclamation of the Constitution of the Republic of 1976, the result of a broad popular consultation and referendum.

The Constitution of 1976 reaffirmed the socialist nature of the Revolution proclaimed by Fidel on April 16, 1961, established the rights won by the people through the revolutionary process, and created a system of government based on the authority of People's Power bodies.

Agreements reached at the Fourth Party Congress, in 1991, along with the experience of the rectification of errors and negative tendencies process, the collapse of the socialist camp, and the need to perfect our situation given the circumstances reigning in our society, and new ones developing with the arrival of the Special Period, led to a partial reform of the Constitution in 1992.

Fundamentally, modifications were introduced in the economic system and the organization and functioning of People's Power bodies. The direct election of deputies to the National Assembly and delegates to Provincial Assemblies of People's Power by the people was established, and religious freedom was expanded.

Also transcendental was the Constitutional Reform of 2002, when the United States was increasing its threats against the Revolution. At the insistence of mass organizations, and with the people's majority support, the irrevocable nature of our socialism, and our revolutionary political and social system, were established in the Constitution. Added along with this was the statement that economic, diplomatic, or political relations with any other state were never to be negotiated under aggression, threat, or coercion, on the part of a foreign power.



Photo: Estudio Revolución

The Economic and Social Policy Guidelines of the Party and the Revolution, approved during the Sixth Party Congress, in April of 2011, and the agreements that emerged from the First Party Conference, in January of 2012, made clear the need to introduce changes on the constitutional order.

Consequently, in 2013, the Political Bureau approved the creation of a working group for this purpose.

The Seventh Congress, in April of 2016, reaffirmed the Sixth Congress agreements and advanced in the elaboration of programmatic documents on the Cuban Social and Economic Development Model, the implementation of which would, likewise, have constitutional implications.

During the studies we conducted, we came to the conclusion that more than a reform, a new constitution was required, one that would not be limited to updating the economic and social order, but would deepen the principles of our state structure, the extension of citizen rights and guarantees, and other relevant issues; thinking not only of the present, but, above all, the future of the nation.

On June 2, 2018, this Parliament approved the initiation of the Constitutional Reform process and, toward this end, created a Commission of 33 deputies to prepare the draft of the new Magna Carta. I consider it appropriate, in this solemn session, to note the meritorious work done by members of this commission and its four advisors, not only in the preparation of the initial text, but throughout the entire process.

The first version of the draft of the new Constitution was submitted to this Assembly for analysis, July 21-22, 2018, and after a broad debate, a new text was approved and it was decided to submit this document to a popular referendum.

As has been reported, some nine million people participated in more than 133,000 meetings. We can affirm that this was not mere assistance, but that consciously, responsibly, and with absolute freedom, everyone was able to express their opinions, which also contributed to raising citizens' legal culture. There were more than 1,700,000 remarks made, from which some 783,000 proposals emerged.

With their participation, the people became a true constituency. It is enough to reiterate here that, as a result of the popular contribution, almost 60% of the draft's articles were modified.

The work carried out by those in charge of collecting and processing the population's opinions was commendable. Completed in record time, their contribution was decisive to the successes of this profoundly democratic process.

This past December, the National Assembly approved the new Constitution of the Republic, and in accordance with the established reform mechanism, agreed to submit it to a referendum, which was held on February 24, when our people provided more evidence of their commitment and support to the Revolution and socialism.

It is significant that the majority of Cubans who exercised the vote were members of generations born after the triumph of the Revolution, reflecting the strength and continuity of our principles.

The results of the referendum are unequivocal proof of this assertion. As has been reported, 90% of citizens with the right to vote went to the polls,

and of these, 86.85% voted in favor, a figure that represents 78.3% of all compatriots with the right to vote, with which the new Constitution of the Republic was approved.

It is also relevant that 95.85% of ballots were valid and only 9% voted No. With regard to this last fact, we consider that this vote did not, in all cases, mean rejection of the general content of the new Constitution, but rather reflected opposition to specific topics.

Cuba demonstrated, once again, that via democratic mechanisms and exercising the right to self-determination, it is possible to strengthen our socialist system as a viable alternative, at a time when imperialist aggression is increasing, as it attempts to discredit progressive alternatives for social development.

The Constitution we proclaim today guarantees the continuity of the Revolution and the irrevocability of our socialism. It synthesizes the aspirations of all those who for more than 150 years have fought for a free, independent, sovereign Cuba, with social justice.

This law of laws is a product of its time. It reflects the historical circumstances of the construction of our society and legally establishes the changes that are taking place with a vision toward the future, with the supreme purpose of achieving an increasingly prosperous, sustainable, inclusive, and participatory socialism.

With this new text, the revolutionary state is institutionalized and strengthened, prepared to conduct its work, as required, transparently and in accordance with the law. If something in particular distinguishes the document, it is respect for the full dignity of women and men, and the equality of Cubans, without discrimination, and these are precisely the pillars on which this society is based.

The constitutional text is the product of the joint effort of those who had the privilege of accompanying Fidel in the revolutionary struggle and the "new pines," who are gradually assuming responsibility for the nation.

This Constitution is a legacy for new generations of Cubans.

It is not enough to proclaim it, it is necessary to put its precepts into practice. In this endeavor, it is the Assembly's responsibility to undertake an intensive legislative effort to comply with the norms established in the Transitory Provisions of the Constitution, a task already entrusted to several working groups.

Today, once this proclamation ceremony is concluded, the full text of the Constitution will be published in the Official Gazette of the Republic, and as of that time enters into effect.

Among the immediate tasks that we must undertake, by constitutional mandate, is the approval of a new Electoral Law, the draft of which is being developed, with the purpose of presenting it to this Assembly for approval, during its next ordinary session.

Once the Electoral Law is in effect, the National Electoral Council must be elected by this Assembly and, in accordance with the Second Transitory Provision of the Constitution, within the next three months, the Assembly itself will elect its President, Vice President, and Secretary, other members of the Council of State, and the President and Vice President of the Republic.

Likewise, once the President of the Republic is elected, within three months, the new government will be submitted to the National Assembly, for approval, that is, this Parliament will designate the Prime Minister, First Deputy Prime Ministers, Secretary and other members of the Council of Ministers.

We will work to ensure that all these steps are taken before the end of the year.

Likewise, mandated at the beginning of 2020, are the election of provincial governors and vice-governors, and the designation of superintendents by municipal assemblies.

As expected, the historical enemies of the Revolution have attempted to cast doubt on the legitimacy of this broad constitutional exercise. But all the slanders evaporate in the face of the irrefutable, massive support of our noble people.

We have been warning of the aggressive actions unleashed by the U.S. government against the Latin American and Caribbean region. It does so in the name of the Monroe Doctrine, with an arrogant McCarthyist contempt for socialism, for the self-determination of peoples, and the sovereign rights of countries in the region.

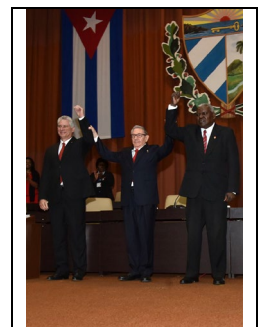


Photo: Estudio Revolución

On July 26, 2018, during the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of Moncada, and January 1, this year, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution, I warned of the adverse panorama that was developing and the resurgence of our enemies' enthusiasm and rush to destroy the example of Cuba. On both occasions I reiterated the conviction that the empire's siege was tightening around Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba. The facts have confirmed that assessment.

The region that Martí called Our America has, in recent times, been able to strengthen regional independence, in a climate of peace, cooperation, and harmony among its member states.

With the precept of achieving unity within diversity, sustained progress was made towards integration, complementarity, and the agreement among all to solve the economic and social problems of our peoples. Latin America and the Caribbean were declared a Zone of Peace and progress was also made in the goal of reaching a more respectful relationship with northern neighbors.

The scenario today is different. The current government of the United States, with its hegemonic ambitions for the region, poses the most urgent threat of the last five decades to the peace, security, and well-being of Latin America and the Caribbean.

In pursuit of establishing its domination, several coups were orchestrated over a number of years, in one case, a military one, and others of a parliamentary nature, to remove progressive Presidents from office, while the participation of leftist leaders in elections was prevented via media campaigns and malicious legal charges. Precisely, last Sunday, marked the end of the first year of compañero Inácio Lula da Silva's unjust incarceration, whose freedom we demand.

Unfortunately, there are governments and political forces that irresponsibly join imperialism in this warlike escalation.

The relentless siege of the sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, using methods of unconventional warfare and economic strangulation, is the main target of aggression, but, the threat concerns us all.

The Venezuelan government and the Chavista people are writing admirable chapters of resistance. On Bolivarian soil, being defined today is whether Latin American and Caribbean nations have the right to self-determination, if sovereign power rests with the people or with a foreign government, if it is acceptable for a powerful country to determine the rulers of an independent state, if the rules and principles governing the United Nations have real value or are dead letter, if the peoples of the region will remain passive before the imposition of a sovereign power in a sister nation or respond to repudiate the crime.

We reaffirm, from this Parliament, our firm solidarity and support to the Bolivarian Chavista Revolution, President Nicolás Maduro Moros, and his people's civic-military union.

To the more than 20,000 Cuban collaborators, 61% of them women, who are fulfilling missions in Venezuela, I convey our deep appreciation for their commitment and consecration to the noble, deeply humanitarian task they perform in the service of families in this sister nation. (Applause)

The tone being used by the United States government against Cuba is increasingly threatening, while steps are being taken to impair bilateral relations.

Cuba is blamed for all evils, using lies in the worst style of Hitler's propaganda. We will never abandon the duty to act in solidarity with Venezuela. We will not renounce any of our principles and will strongly reject any form of coercion.

The stepping up of the economic war, the strengthening of the blockade, and continued application of the Helms-Burton Law, pursue the old ambition to overthrow the Cuban Revolution through economic strangulation

<http://en.granma.cu/cuba/2019-04-11-raul-the-constitution-we-proclaim-today-guarantees-the-continuity-of-the-revolution-and-the-irrevocability-of-our-socialism>

and hardship. This aspiration has already failed in the past and will fail again (Applause).

We have let the U.S. administration know, with the greatest clarity, firmness and serenity, through direct diplomatic channels and in a public manner, that Cuba is not afraid of threats and that our vocation for peace and understanding is accompanied by the unshakeable determination to defend the sovereign right of Cubans to decide the future of our nation, without foreign interference.

We defend socialism, a system reviled by the United States government, because we believe in social justice, in balanced, sustainable development, with a just distribution of wealth and guarantees of quality services for the entire population; we practice solidarity and reject selfishness, sharing not what we have left over, but even what we ourselves lack; we repudiate all forms of social discrimination and fight organized crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, trafficking in persons, and all forms of slavery; we defend the human rights of all citizens, not of exclusive, privileged segments; we believe in the people's democracy and not in the political and undemocratic power of capital; we seek to promote the prosperity of the homeland, in harmony with nature and caring for the resources on which life on the planet depends; and because we are convinced that a better world is possible.

We hope that the international community responds to this dangerous situation with consciousness and a sense of duty, and that we are not lamenting the outcome when it is too late.

Faced with the turbulent scenario that has taken shape, we have defined as imperative priorities preparing the country for defense, and the national economy's development, both of equal importance.

As our population has noted, a series of measures have been underway for months in order to reinforce the combat capacity and readiness of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the country's entire defense system, under the strategic conception of the war of all the people, as established in the Constitution of the Republic we have just proclaimed.

At the same time, a group of decisions has been adopted to guide the performance of our economy, to resist and overcome new obstacles imposed by the tightening of the economic and financial blockade, without renouncing development programs that are underway.

Thus, we must remain alert and aware that we could face additional difficulties and that the situation could worsen in coming months. It is not a question of returning to the most difficult times of the Special Period in the 1990s. The current panorama is different, with the diversification of the economy, but we must always prepare for the worst variant.

It is imperative that efforts be redoubled to increase national production, especially food; review all expenses to avoid those that are not absolutely necessary; ensure more efficient use of energy resources, especially gasoline, which includes ending existing theft and assuming conservation as a firm guideline for leaders, from the national level to the local, and among compatriots in general.

Over 60 years, facing aggression and threats, Cubans have shown the iron will to resist and overcome the most difficult circumstances. Despite its immense power, imperialism does not possess the capacity to break the dignity of a united people, proud of its history and of the freedom conquered with so much sacrifice. Cuba has already shown that, yes, we could, yes, we can, and will always be able to resist, fight, and emerge victorious. (Applause). There is no other alternative.

That's all for now.

Thank you very much.

(Ovation).



Celebrating MayDay

HANDS OFF VENEZUELA

Benefit for Venezuela and Latin America

MUA-46 Ireland St. West Melbourne

International guest: Rebel Diaz, a radical latino hiphoppers from El Bronx-New York, presenting one song and open discussion on solidarity between peoples

MAY 1st, door opens 4pm, \$20

Join us to celebrate international al workers day and raise some funds. With local musos, short films of recent March 2019 Venezuela delegation.

Venezuela Solidarity Campaign (VSC) - Latin American Solidarity Network (LASNET)

Fact finding mission has returned from Venezuela

A solidarity delegation has recently returned from Venezuela. They had gone there to investigate the truth, and take the message that there are Australians, who are against foreign intervention.

We were able to talk to a wide range of people, not just officials, but ordinary people.

This is what most of them told us and what we saw.

- *There is no food shortage, but there is a financial crisis.
- *Support to Maduro's government is widespread.
- * Venezuela is not suffering from a brutal dictatorship but is a society where people power is rising through local self-management and cooperative organisation, which is gradually taking over the running of affairs and transforming the way the nation is governed.
- * Venezuelans are organising to overcome the sanctions and preparing to respond to a possible foreign invasion. The army is on their side and exists a two million strong civilian militia.
- * Communities have asked us to help with the opening of an agricultural college and agro-ecological farm, and to send requested goods.

Find out more by coming to the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign (Melbourne) event advertised on the other side. Contacts Joe Montero 0448 482892 or Lucho Riquelme 0425539149.

See us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Venezuela.Solidarity.Campaign/>

Venezuela confronts fabricated chaos

Against all imperialist logic, the Venezuelan people refuse to be subjugated

Author: [Raúl Antonio Capote](#) | informacion@granmai.cu - april 9, 2019 12:04:05



The Venezuelan people have resisted U.S. governments attempts destabilize the country. Photo: AP

Venezuela is being subjected to intense chaos therapy, a systematic media campaign, permanent pressure, obliged to use force to control sectors of the middle class, all part of a well-crafted plan. The economic war causes scarcity; consumption habits rooted in bourgeois culture are affected; constant attacks generate feelings of insecurity, fear, and anxiety, keeping persons focused on hatred, leading them to the limits of endurance; they are lied to and mobilized; skillfully pulling the strings of hatred, the population becomes a time bomb, ready to explode at any moment.

The ground is prepared with the aim of provoking mental confusion, before an avalanche of events, messages, fake news, shortages, the lack of water, blackouts, attacks, etc. "Citizens fall into such a state of regression that they cannot think rationally or protect their interests," read CIA manuals. In such a state many people are easily manipulated and, according to the intelligence agency, can renounce their beliefs.

This is how the strategy works. A terrorist attack, a market collapse, war, a hurricane, power outages, etc. drag the country's population into a state of collective chaos, to break the will of a society, undermine its capacity for mobilization and response.

During the 1973 coup in Chile, as the armed forces deployed a contingent to attack and savagely bomb the Moneda Presidential Palace, repression against the population began. Intent upon causing terror, paralysis, factories and neighborhoods were attacked, hundreds of persons were arrested and assassinated in the first hours.

Tanks, planes, artillery and hundreds of soldiers were mobilized against a handful of the faithful alongside their President.

The country had been living with constant tension for months, and rumors of a coup were rampant. The military unleashed vicious repression against the Popular Unity party, arresting thousands and leaving hundreds dead.

The plan was crafted well in advance. The names of people and places were identified to determine the exact way any resistance would be neutralized. Witnesses have testified that torture was directed more at breaking individuals than obtaining information. Widespread power outages occurred in Chile, as well, prior to the coup, with the goal of creating confusion, fear, and anxiety in the population.

In Argentina, the coup environment was prepared in advance as well, in detail. The armed forces knew exactly where to find trade union leaders, the groups of workers resisting the neoliberal plans of the military and its bosses.

The machinery of terror sought to eliminate an entire generation physically and psychologically. The experience of the CIA in torture, the experiments used to dehumanize prisoners, deprive them of their identity, erase their memory, served as the model for this kind of shock therapy.

Electric shock, submersion, sleep deprivation, prolonged soil ingestion, sensory isolation - practices that are used today on prisoners in the illegal prison in Guantánamo - were used.

In all South American countries, transnational corporations not only offered their facilities to create torture centers, as was the case with Ford, but collaborated actively with the military, handed over union leaders, "annoying" workers and participated in the plan to construct a neoliberal state.

The kidnapping of prisoners' children born in captivity, placing them with new families of the right (military, civil servants, politicians) was part of the project meant to destroy a generation.

The Southern Cone became the land of chaos, to achieve the economic dominance of big capital; after the coups came unemployment, low wages, control of the surviving unions, austerity policies...

The clearest example of this phenomenon was September 11, 2001. For millions of people, the world that was familiar to them exploded into a thousand pieces and gave way to a period of profound disorientation and regression that the Bush administration knew how to exploit with skill. Suddenly, we found ourselves living in a kind of Year Zero, in which everything we knew could be disparagingly dismissed with the label of "before 9-11." (1).

The shock doctrine establishes this process step by step, in its attempt to achieve on a massive scale, what individual torture accomplishes in the interrogation room: destroy the ability of a society to respond, end all feelings of solidarity and collective support, to transform the individual into a fearful, egotistical being, whose only object is to survive.

An army of specialists quickly materialized to write new, suggestive words about our posttraumatic consciousness: "clash of civilizations," "axis of evil," "Islamic fascism," "national security."

With the world preoccupied with deadly new cultural wars, the Bush administration was able to achieve what it had scarcely dreamed of before September 11, waging private wars abroad and building a corporate security apparatus within U.S. territory.

Against all imperialist logic, Venezuela resists. Washington has encountered an obstacle that cannot be overcome with supercomputers, superagents, or chaos professionals: the people's refusal to be subjugated, the determination to resist.

Millions of men and women mobilizing solidarity to resist the masters of terror, chaos, and ungovernability.

After the sabotage against the Guri hydroelectric system, the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, urged the academic community to resume school activities, which had been suspended in the wake of attacks on the national electrical grid.

Schools opened on April 3, "Amidst the battle, it is best to resume classes. Let's make an effort, because we will emerge victorious," Maduro said, leading the response to this war planned and carried out by the United States, to make life in the country unbearable. The national government instructed the Ministry of the Popular Power for Education to reschedule the school year and recuperate the days lost.

At the same time, a 30-day plan to implement a load administration regimen, with the goal of gradually restoring the national electrical grid to serve the Venezuelan people, was launched Sunday, March 31st.

The Venezuelan people have responded to every attack, every attempt at destabilization, a response that never ceases to amaze the world, and should serve as a warning to the masters of chaos. The values that the Chavista revolution has nurtured over the years are an antidote to shock therapy.

[1] Klein, Naomi. The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism. <http://en.granma.cu/mundo/2019-04-09/venezuela-confronts-fabricated-chaos>

THE ASSANGE ARREST IS A WARNING FROM HISTORY

13 April 2019

That this outrage happened in the heart of London, in the land of Magna Carta, ought to shame and anger all who fear for "democratic" societies. Assange is a political refugee protected by international law, the recipient of asylum under a strict covenant to which Britain is a signatory. The United Nations made this clear in the legal ruling of its Working Party on Arbitrary Detention.

But to hell with that. Let the thugs go in. Directed by the quasi fascists in Trump's Washington, in league with Ecuador's Lenin Moreno, a Latin American Judas and liar seeking to disguise his rancid regime, the British elite abandoned its last imperial myth: that of fairness and justice.

Imagine Tony Blair dragged from his multi-million pound Georgian home in Connaught Square, London, in handcuffs, for onward dispatch to the dock in The Hague. By the standard of Nuremberg, Blair's "paramount crime" is the deaths of a million Iraqis. Assange's crime is journalism: holding the rapacious to account, exposing their lies and empowering people all over the world with truth.

The shocking arrest of Assange carries a warning for all who, as Oscar Wilde wrote, "sow the seeds of discontent [without which] there would be no advance towards civilisation". The warning is explicit towards journalists. What happened to the founder and editor of WikiLeaks can happen to you on a newspaper, you in a TV studio, you on radio, you running a podcast. Assange's principal media tormentor, the Guardian, a collaborator with the secret state, displayed its nervousness this week with an editorial that scaled new weasel heights. The Guardian has exploited the work of Assange and WikiLeaks in what its previous editor called "the greatest scoop of the last 30 years". The paper creamed off WikiLeaks' revelations and claimed the accolades and riches that came with them.

With not a penny going to Julian Assange or to WikiLeaks, a hyped Guardian book led to a lucrative Hollywood movie. The book's authors, Luke Harding and David Leigh, turned on their source, abused him and disclosed the secret password Assange had given the paper in confidence, which was designed to protect a digital file containing leaked US embassy cables.

With Assange now trapped in the Ecuadorian embassy, Harding joined the police outside and gloated on his blog that "Scotland Yard may get the last laugh". The Guardian has since published a series of falsehoods about Assange, not least a discredited claim that a group of Russians and Trump's man, Paul Manafort, had visited Assange in the

embassy. The meetings never happened; it was fake.

But the tone has now changed. "The Assange case is a morally tangled web," the paper opined. "He (Assange) believes in publishing things that should not be published.... But he has always shone a light on things that should never have been hidden." These "things" are the truth about the homicidal way America conducts its colonial wars, the lies of the British Foreign Office in its denial of rights to vulnerable people, such as the Chagos Islanders, the expose of Hillary Clinton as a backer and beneficiary of jihadism in the Middle East, the detailed description of American ambassadors of how the governments in Syria and Venezuela might be overthrown, and much more. It all available on the WikiLeaks site. The Guardian is understandably nervous. Secret policemen have already visited the newspaper and demanded and got the ritual destruction of a hard drive. On this, the paper has form. In 1983, a Foreign Office clerk, Sarah Tisdall, leaked British Government documents showing when American cruise nuclear weapons would arrive in Europe. The Guardian was showered with praise.

When a court order demanded to know the source, instead of the editor going to prison on a fundamental principle of protecting a source, Tisdall was betrayed, prosecuted and served six months.

If Assange is extradited to America for publishing what the Guardian calls truthful "things", what is to stop the current editor, Katherine Viner, following him, or the previous editor, Alan Rusbridger, or the prolific propagandist Luke Harding?

What is to stop the editors of the New York Times and the Washington Post, who also published morsels of the truth that originated with WikiLeaks, and the editor of El Pais in Spain, and Der Spiegel in Germany and the Sydney Morning Herald in Australia. The list is long.

David McCraw, lead lawyer of the New York Times, wrote: "I think the prosecution [of Assange] would be a very, very bad precedent for publishers... from everything I know, he's sort of in a classic publisher's position and the law would have a very hard time distinguishing between the New York Times and WikiLeaks."

Even if journalists who published WikiLeaks' leaks are not summoned by an American grand jury, the intimidation of Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning will be enough. Real journalism is being criminalised by thugs in plain sight. Dissent has become an indulgence.

In Australia, the current America-besotted government is prosecuting two whistleblowers who revealed that Canberra's spooks bugged the cabinet meetings of the new government of East Timor for the express purpose of cheating the tiny, impoverished nation out of its proper share of the oil and gas resources in the Timor Sea. Their trial will be held in secret. The Australian prime minister, Scott Morrison, is infamous for his part in setting up concentration camps for refugees on the Pacific islands of Nauru and Manus, where children self harm and suicide. In 2014, Morrison proposed mass detention camps for 30,000 people.

Real journalism is the enemy of these disgraces. A decade ago, the Ministry of Defence in London produced a secret document which described the "principal threats" to public order as threefold: terrorists, Russian spies and investigative journalists. The latter was designated the major threat.

The document was duly leaked to WikiLeaks, which published it. "We had no choice," Assange told me. "It's very simple. People have a right to know and a right to question and challenge power. That's true democracy."

What if Assange and Manning and others in their wake - if there are others - are silenced and "the right to know and question and challenge" is taken away?

In the 1970s, I met Leni Reifenstahl, close friend of Adolf Hitler, whose films helped cast the Nazi spell over Germany.

She told me that the message in her films, the propaganda, was dependent not on "orders from above" but on what she called the "submissive void" of the public.

"Did this submissive void include the liberal, educated bourgeoisie?" I asked her.

"Of course," she said, "especially the intelligentsia.... When people no longer ask serious questions, they are submissive and malleable. Anything can happen."

And did.

The rest, she might have added, is history.

<http://johnpilger.com/articles/the-assange-arrest-is-a-warning-from-history>



The glimpse of Julian Assange being dragged from the Ecuadorian embassy in London is an emblem of the times. Might against right. Muscle against the law. Indecency against courage. Six policemen manhandled a sick journalist, his eyes wincing against his first natural light in almost seven years.

MAY DAY 2019

**WORKERS OF THE
WORLD UNITE!**

MAY DAY 2019: 125th MAY DAY IN MELBOURNE

May Day is worker's day. It is Workers' day in Australia and throughout the world. This has been so internationally since 1890.

Many other events are celebrated each year in Australia: royal birthdays, cup day, military exploits, religious beliefs, etc, but May Day is one of the few days in the calendar where workers struggles are celebrated and workers' demands are publicised.

In recent times, the Melbourne May Day has organised for the focus to be on workers' rights – the right to strike, to picket, to assemble, to take solidarity action. Rights which are largely denied, to workers in Australia. We must continue to build a movement to win those rights.

As well as these fundamental rights we are focusing on other issues impacting on the working class in Australia, which obviously includes precarious work (Sham contracting, casualisation, etc), unequal pay for women, the off-shoring of jobs to low wage, super-exploited labour in other countries, poor occupational health and safety standards, poor workers compensation laws and systems and so on.

Part of the work of the May Day movement in Victoria and Australia now, is to help defeat the anti-worker programme of the Federal Liberal/National Party Government.

In addition workers at May Day will be demanding an independent foreign policy, proper civilised, humane and welcoming treatment of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and support for Aboriginal peoples struggles for sovereignty, land rights, jobs and dignified community conditions.



**Come and join the singing
May Day March and Rally
12pm Sunday May 5th**

Rehearsal times:

Sunday 28 April at 2pm

Tuesday 30th April at 7pm.

**Meeting Room 1, Trades Hall, Cnr Victoria &
Lygon Streets, Carlton**

Inviting all those who enjoy singing and are interested in being part of the community vocal group at the May Day March on May 5th, 2019.

We will be leading the community in singing songs of protest and resistance – both old and new.

There are three different rehearsal times for those interested in learning the songs and joining us on the day. Hopefully everyone interested can make one or ideally both of these rehearsals

For more information contact Sonja: 9309 6296 comaction@iprimus.com.au

COME AND SUPPORT MAY DAY EVENTS AND THE MAY DAY MARCH ON THE 5TH OF MAY.

Fight for the removal of the Federal Government and its anti-worker programme.

Demand a workers' programme from Labor.

Let us make May Day 2019 another major demonstration against the Morrison anti-worker programme.

- ★ If you are a unionist make the May Day events a major demonstration against the attacks on workers' rights, pay and conditions.

If you are a struggling community organisation make the May Day events a major demonstration against the attacks on social conditions, democratic rights and living conditions.

- ★ If you are a migrant and asylum seeker-based organisation or an otherwise ethnic based organisation, make the May Day events a major demonstration against the inhumane and anti-people policies of the Australia Government and other governments around the globe

MAY DAY EVENTS 2019:

WREATH LAYING AT THE 8HR MONUMENT:
on **Thursday 2 May at 5pm.** Corner Victoria and Russell Streets, opposite Trades Hall.

MAY DAY INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY EVENT: **Thursday 2 May at 6pm.** Meeting Room 1, Trades Hall. Multicultural food and entertainment.

MAY DAY RALLY AND MARCH: **Sunday 5 May, assembling at 1pm.** Corner Victoria & Russell Streets, opposite Trades Hall.

Come and Hear International Guest Rebel Diaz, radical Latino hoppers from El Bronx-New York from the May Day bandstand at 12 Noon.

CUBA NEEDS YOU!

Join the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society

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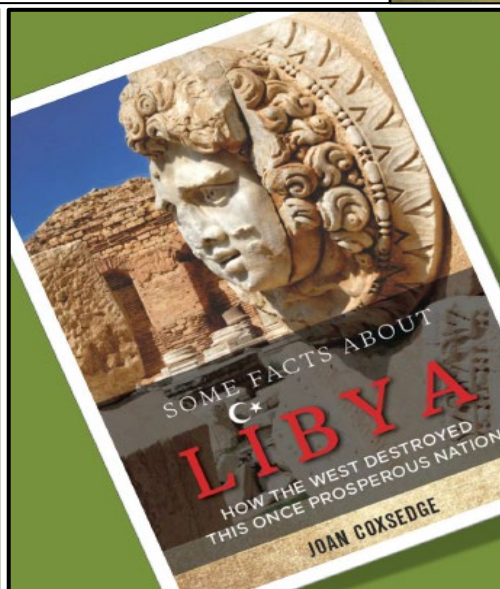
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