



From Plymouth to Bolivia Indigenous people resist

By Greg Butterfield
Plymouth, Mass.

Nov. 28 — On the fourth Thursday of November, for the 50th year on the U.S. “Thanksgiving” holiday, Indigenous people and their supporters gathered on Cole’s Hill to remember the brutal reality behind white nationalist mythology — and the heroic history of Native resistance.

In lashing wind and cold rain, an estimated 1,500 people gathered at the call of the United American Indians of New England (UAINE). They came from not only from Baltimore, Boston, Maine and New York, but from as far away

as Louisiana, Manitoba, Mexico and Mauna Kea in Hawai’i. This reporter traveled on a bus organized by the Haitian community from Brooklyn, N.Y., for the 12th consecutive year.

Together, Indigenous and Black, Latinx and Asian, Arab and white, they respectfully observed the opening ceremony, listened to speakers representing many Native Nations and then marched in solidarity through the streets of Plymouth.

Moonanum James of the Aquinahn Wampanoag tribe, co-leader of UAINE, recounted how his father, Wamsutta Frank James, was invited to speak at an event celebrating the 350th anniversary of the Pilgrims’ arrival in 1970. When the elder James refused to censor the truth about the invasion and its genocidal consequences for Native peoples, he was banned from speaking. This led to the first National Day of Mourning.

“Those who started National Day of Mourning could not have envisioned that generations would still be here, year after year, carrying on this tradition,” said Moonanum James. “Many of the elders who stood on this hill and organized the first Day of Mourning are no longer with us, but we feel their spirits guiding us today.”

James explained that the Pilgrims’ arrival in 1620 was a capitalist venture, not a bid for religious freedom, as typically depicted. “It is also important to remember that the first official Thanksgiving did not take

place in 1621, when the Pilgrims had a harvest-time meal provided largely by the Wampanoag,” he said. “Instead it was officially proclaimed by Gov. Winthrop of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 to celebrate the massacre of over 700 Pequot men, women and children on the banks of the Mystic River in Connecticut.

“So why does any of this matter?” he asked. “It’s simple: When people perpetuate the myth of Thanksgiving, they are not only erasing our genocide, but also celebrating it.

“In 1970, very few people would have given any thought to the fact that the Indigenous people of this hemisphere do not look upon the arrival of the European invaders as a reason to give thanks. Today,” James concluded, “many thousands stand with us in spirit as we commemorate the 50th National Day of Mourning.”

Elevating MMIWG2S

Banners on the speakers’ platform and scattered throughout the crowd reflected a plethora of people’s struggles embraced by UAINE and Indigenous communities: “Homophobia is not Native to these shores,” “Defend Mother Earth” and “Free Leonard Peltier.” Wampanoag elder Bert Water read a message from political prisoner Leonard Peltier, imprisoned on frame-up charges for over 40 years. Sign language interpretation was provided for all the presentations.

Displayed prominently near the

stage, a banner proclaimed: “Contra el golpe, en solidaridad con Bolivia. #ElMundoEsConEvo.” Many speakers condemned the U.S.-backed coup against Bolivian President Evo Morales and the subsequent massacres of Indigenous protesters.

Another common theme was expressed in the banner that read: “No borders in the Indigenous struggle.” From the platform to the crowd, people shared their outrage at the U.S. government’s detention and deportation of migrants, many of them of Indigenous backgrounds, and the separation of families, which echoed the horrific experience of many Native children forcibly sent to boarding schools that sought to strip them of their identities.

A striking red banner proclaimed “No more stolen sisters,” addressing the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people (MMIWG2S) in the U.S. and Canada.

“Trump announced on Monday that the federal government is creating a task force on missing and murdered Indigenous women,” said UAINE co-leader Mahtowin Munro. “Having extensively followed the many pitfalls of Canada’s MMIW task force, I do not believe that this task force will enact real change. This task force will be grossly underfunded. The families and tribes of the missing and murdered may not be sufficiently involved and centered in the process so that they can

get answers about what happened to their loved ones.”

As Munro spoke, an empty red dress whipped in the harsh winds nearby, offering a poignant symbol. “Unfortunately, the many underlying reasons for why MMIWG2S is a crisis will not be addressed.

“Attacking the Earth and attacking Indigenous women are intertwined,” she said. “The man camps and the resulting impact on Indigenous women is one of the many reasons why Indigenous people are fighting pipelines and mines and fracking.”

Fighting mega-dams

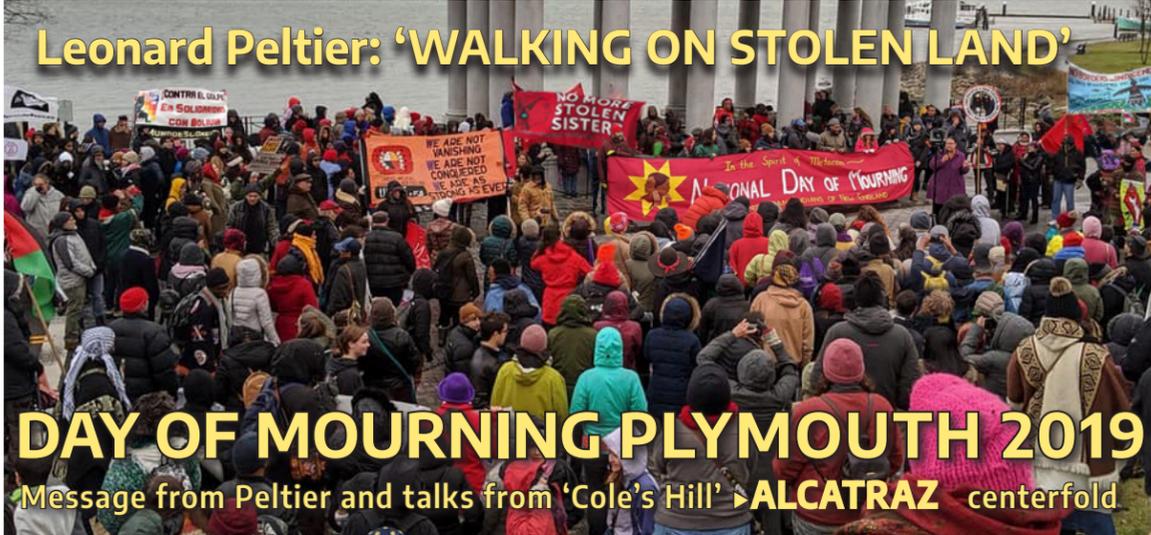
The theme of pervasive capitalist attacks on the planet, Indigenous sovereignty and people’s lives was echoed by many speakers.

Several Indigenous activists attended from the North American Megadam Resistance Alliance in Canada. They are touring the northeast U.S. to build support against electricity-generating “mega-dam” projects that are destroying Native lands and livelihoods.

“I have witnessed islands disappear, lands disappear. I have witnessed our lands get really, really dirty,” said Carlton Richards of the Pimicikamak Cree Nation in Manitoba, Canada. “Our children cannot swim in our waters. We cannot drink from our waters.”

Ayeta Aronson, a member of the

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Leonard Peltier: ‘WALKING ON STOLEN LAND’

DAY OF MOURNING PLYMOUTH 2019

Message from Peltier and talks from ‘Cole’s Hill’ ▶ALCATRAZ centerfold

- ▶ ‘Attacks on Earth & Indigenous women are intertwined’ ▶ ‘Thanksgiving myth celebrates genocide’
- ▶ Indigenous leader says: ‘Capitalism is not going to save us’

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Lo que Fidel significa hoy para mí

What Fidel means to me

Homeless in Los Angeles

CHICAGO National Alliance Against Racist And Political Repression

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FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL & THE MOVE 9

HEAR Pam Africa International
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Janine Africa & Janet Africa

MOVE 9 members released from prison after 40 years



San Diego Sat • DEC 14 • 2:30 pm / Los Angeles Sun • DEC 15 • 2 pm
Malcolm X Library 5148 Market St., SD Harriet Tubman Center 5278 W Pico Blvd, LA

Homeless in Los Angeles tops 59,000

By Scott Scheffer

The population of homeless people in Los Angeles County has exploded to 59,000 in recent years. A report by California Healthline and Kaiser Health News in April 2019 revealed that more than 3,600 homeless people have died on the streets of Los Angeles in four years; 4 out of 5 were men, but with the number of women who have died doubling in that time.

Over the holiday, local television news has been full of stories about charitable organizations serving hot meals. The staff of service organizations with limited budgets hustled on their outreach to try to get people off the streets and into shelters when lower temperatures, wind and rain hit. They may have made a small dent in the problem, but those extra efforts are not everyday occurrences and now, as in many areas of the U.S., three-quarters of the county's homeless will resume "sleeping rough" — on sidewalks or in tents.

Until recent years, Los Angeles' homeless population has been concentrated in the famed 50-block Skid Row neighborhood and in South L.A. Due to spiking rent costs and consistently low wages, the rapid swelling of homelessness has generated tent cities in many neighborhoods, town and city alike — far from shelters and other services.

California has the largest homeless population in the U.S., particularly Southern California. An April 2019 Point-In-Time count for San Diego County showed 8,000 homeless, with more than 5,000 living on the streets. San Diego has the highest rate of formerly homeless people ending up homeless again. The same survey showed a 40 percent increase in the homeless population in Orange County, the densely populated

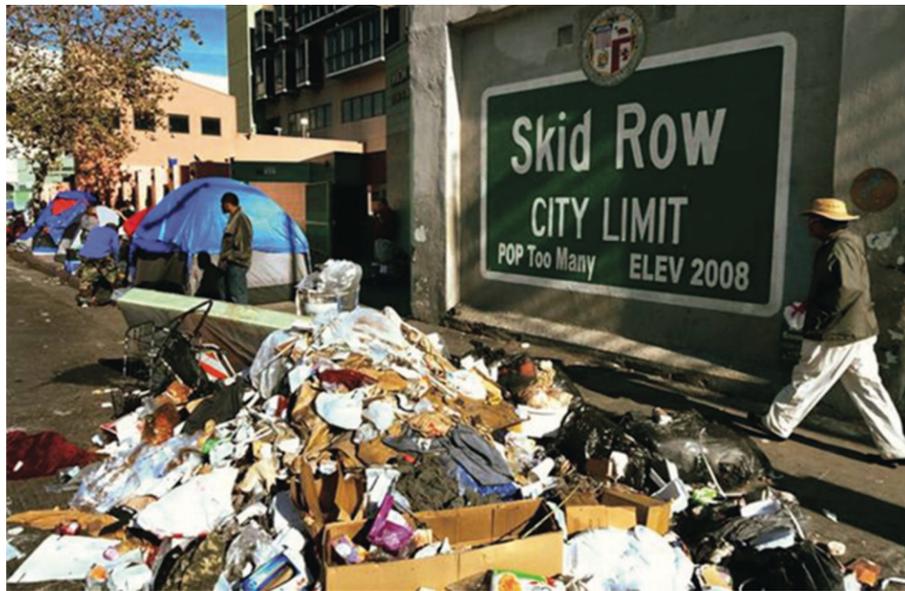
area between the cities of Los Angeles and San Diego.

Of the homeless population in L.A. County, 19 percent are disabled. Nearly 18,000 are students in Los Angeles public schools. About 15 percent are women with children. African American homelessness, already disproportionately high, increased by 22 percent over the last two years. According to L.A. County, 35 percent of the homeless population are Latinx, but they caution that as immigrant bashing and deportations have ratcheted up, the pervasive fear of going near any government office likely means that that number is a significant undercount. Both of these high percentages are associated with early release from California's racist prison system due to overcrowding. Of the 160,000 people in prison in this state, two-thirds are African American and Latinx. To a terrible extent, release from prison ends up being a pipeline to homelessness.

A September 2018 NPR report said that in Los Angeles, 8 percent of homeless people surveyed are working, and among adults with children, 27 percent have jobs. Nearly 5,000 in San Diego reported having jobs. Most have been evicted because they just can't afford the rent.

In 2016, Los Angeles voted for and passed a bond measure to target homelessness and raised \$1.2 billion for the construction of housing to attack homelessness. That's the largest amount of money to target homelessness in the country so far, yet the plan is a massive failure.

Bonds are rarely paid off by cities. Because of the interest, they enrich the bankers and other investors and are a drain on a city budget that usually lasts for many decades past the use of the funds. An article on laist.com explains some of the failures



of Prop HHH, as the measure was named.

The initial goal was to build 10,000 units of supportive housing — meaning reserved strictly for homeless people. Of the 10,000, so far two units are expected to be finished by the end of 2019. Initial estimates put the cost at up to \$414,000 per unit to build. Now the median cost is \$531,000, and one large building that's been contracted will cost \$700,000 per unit.

In the meantime, Los Angeles has paid \$5.2 million in interest. Interest, consulting fees and permitting, projected over the life of the plan, will use 35 percent to 40 percent of this staggering amount of money. Because the costs are so high, the goal of 10,000 units has been revised downward to 7,640, and instead of 100 percent of the units being supportive housing — there will only be 5,873 units of supportive housing. In a bow to L.A.'s real estate developers, the rest will be so-called affordable housing and manager units.

Karl Marx explained that the "reserve army of labor" is permanent in

a capitalist economy. It maintains a level of vulnerability of the working class. The higher the number of unemployed, homeless or imprisoned, the lower are wages and the higher are capitalist profits.

Along with the massive warehousing of people of color in prisons, the lack of action to tackle the homeless crisis is driven by an irresistible trend of the capitalist economy. Democratic Mayor Eric Garcetti's administration felt the pressure of the crisis, but Los Angeles' powerful landlords, big banks and other capitalists wield the real power.

What appears to be bureaucratic speed bumps is likely fueled by their desire to continue making a fortune. Even when reforms like Prop HHH are successful, they are just barely enough to earn class peace. Homeless people are isolated. But every reform is worth fighting for. A united, determined and militant struggle against homelessness, racism and poverty can end the billionaires' stranglehold on society once and for all. 📌

Struggle-La Lucha marks one year anniversary

SLL PHOTO

Dear reader,

We are proud to announce that December 9, 2019, marks the one year anniversary of our publication **Struggle for Socialism★La Lucha por el Socialismo!**

Please keep our voice strong with your donation
<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/donate/>

This has been an incredibly important year for exposing the imperialist lie machine on almost every front, from Venezuela — where U.S. imperialism demonized President Nicolás Maduro to justify an unsuccessful coup attempt — to the continuing Hong Kong demonstrations — where empire has obscured the real issues under the false cry of "democracy" — or the continuing U.S. blockade of Cuba.

Our publication immediately condemned the coup in Bolivia and issued a statement in defense of the rightful president, Evo Morales. We did more than just write about Bolivia. Our writers helped to organize protests overnight from New York City to Los Angeles to Baltimore and Washington, and in other cities.

In addition to our continuous coverage of anti-imperialist struggles from Syria to Zimbabwe, from the Philippines to Ukraine and Palestine, **Struggle★La Lucha** held several national webinars, including "Sanctions are War" and "The Puerto Rican Liberation Movement."



We took to the streets during the global climate strike, distributing our publication with front page coverage of the Amazon fires and carrying a huge banner that read, "The Pentagon, world's biggest polluter — Shut it down!"

We have covered the attacks on immigrants and the movement to defend them; we have analyzed the rising racist, rightwing violence and its connection to capitalism in the United States, discussed the capitalist economic crisis and covered the workers' fightback. This included publishing a series of articles from an Amazon worker.

The fight for all political prisoners, from Mumia Abu-Jamal to Leonard Peltier, has received continuous coverage in both our printed editions and on the web. We have published a series of articles entitled

"Black August — 1969 to 2019" by writers Gloria Verdieu and M. Matsemela Ali Odom, soon to be published as a book.

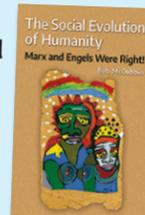
Our writers attended and covered the "National Day of Mourning" in Plymouth, Mass., in depth.



Struggle for Socialism ★

La Lucha por el Socialismo representatives attended and reported back from the anti-imperialist conference in Havana, Cuba, and from the Women's Conference in Namibia called by the Women's International Democratic Federation/Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres.

In just one year, we are proud to announce not only our participation at the major marches commemorating the Stonewall Rebellion for LGBTQ2S pride but also the publishing of a new book by Bob McCubbin, 'The Social Evolution of Humanity; Marx and Engels Were Right.'



These are some (not all) of our accomplishments in just one year!

We believe that there is a tremendous need for our publication **Struggle★La Lucha!** It is crucial that we not only survive but expand. This means being able to come out with a printed version more frequently; the ability to have a greater internet presence and to be able to send our activist writers into the field to give first hand reports.

We can only do this with your help.

Please consider donating to help us grow:

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Attacks on the Earth and Indigenous women are intertwined'

By Mahtowin Munro

Before we start, let's take a moment to think about those who are no longer with us: Shirley Mills and many others. Our ancestors are beside us, holding us up today.

My name is Mahtowin Munro and I am the co-leader of United American Indians of New England. Greetings to all of you who have traveled to the 50th National Day of Mourning! Some of you had to get up in the middle of the night to travel here. Take a look around at this amazing crowd!

We acknowledge the many struggles that you have carried with you today, from the many efforts to stop pipelines and protect the water to the ongoing work to free Puerto Rico from U.S. colonialism, to the attempted desecration of Mauna Kea by scientists who lack respect for Indigenous sacred places, to occupied Palestine. Our speakers today will reflect some, but certainly not all, of the struggles that Indigenous peoples are leading and involved in.

Defending tribal sovereignty is certainly as much an issue today as it was at the original National Day of Mourning in 1970. Native nations continue to have their sovereignty and land rights denied and infringed upon, regardless of whether the tribal nations have treaties or not, and regardless of whether they have federal recognition or not.

Both of the federally recognized tribes in this state, the Mashpee and Aquinnah Wampanoag, have had their tribal sovereignty restricted and have been denied the use of their own lands by settler governments. The U.S. government also continues to deny federal recognition to other tribes in the region, such as the Massachusetts and Nipmuc, among others. Nevertheless, Indigenous tribes in this area continue to strengthen cultures and political sovereignty with or without federal recognition.

While writing this speech, I could not help reflecting on all of the terrible things happening to Indigenous peoples in the world today. In Bolivia, the Indigenous President Evo Morales was forced to leave the country as a result of a U.S.-backed coup. As a result, Indigenous people there are dying at the hands of a fascist, CIA-installed government. Meanwhile, Indigenous people in Brazil have been under nonstop attack for defending the Amazon rainforest from destructive industries such as mining and logging. Some have been shot by the police, while others have been gunned down by hired assassins or private security forces.

Whether it's Australia or Honduras, Chile or Nova Scotia, Indigenous people continue to defend and protect their lands. It's really important for those of us who live here in the U.S. to show our solidarity with others in struggle and to bring public awareness to all Indigenous struggles and all acts of violence against Indigenous peoples, not just the ones occurring in North America. We are all united in our fight against settler-colonialism, and we must remember that what happens to one of us happens to all of us.

Children, families under attack

You know, as a mom, I always pay the most attention to the status of Indigenous children. Despite immense family and tribal efforts to improve educational outcomes and nurture our children, our children and youth are endangered in many ways. The residential school days may be over, but the Indian Child Welfare Act, which prevents our children from being stolen by non-Native people, is under attack and may end up going to the Supreme Court.

If the Indian Child Welfare Act is repealed, we could return to the grim time when Native children by the thousands were taken from their homes to be adopted by white families. Already, thousands of our kids are being put into foster care. This is one reason why we say the genocide of Indigenous peoples is ongoing, not something that happened in the past.

And at the U.S.-Mexico border, things have grown even worse this past year. More than 70,000 children were detained and caged by the U.S. government this year alone. The U.S. leads the world in child prisoners.

Many of us who are Native to this country have been outraged by the treatment of our relatives from Mexico, Central America and South America. It is devastating to see their families torn apart just as our families have been splintered as a result of cruel government policies. Everyone must remember that no one is illegal on stolen land, and we join migrant communities in saying that "We didn't cross the border! The border crossed us!"

But the immigrant nation that is the U.S. has a short memory and is in denial of its own historical facts. This government is descended from the invaders who forcibly took our lands and resources from us, and then denied us the use of our languages and cultures. One again, we ask the question: Who is the illegal alien, Pilgrim?

In the various discussions of so-called "illegal immigrants," the settlers laud their own achievements, claiming that "America is a nation of immigrants," while ignoring the centuries of murder and violence perpetrated against African and Native people by these same immigrants. Surely the deaths of tens of millions of Native and African people at the hands of marauding, malicious European invaders should be worth bearing in mind.

Wearing red to honor MMIWG2S

Murders continue today. Looking around right now, you will see that some people are wearing red to honor Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirits (MMIWG2S), and we will have a red dress at the front of our march.

In Canada, Indigenous women are



SLL PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD

Mahtowin Munro

Talk given at the
50TH NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING
in Plymouth, Mass., on Nov. 28, 2019.

murdered at a rate seven times higher than non-Indigenous women. In the United States, 84 percent of Alaska Native and Native American women have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime, ranging from psychological to sexual and physical violence, most often perpetrated by non-Native men.

In Latin America, femicide—the murder of women because of their gender—is rampant, and the vast majority of cases go unpunished. Indigenous women are most at risk for this violence.

Underlying factors of poverty, racism, marginalization from justice and government services, legacies of colonial violence, and hypersexualized images of Native women in the media have made Indigenous women frequent targets. This crisis has largely been ignored and undercounted. Indigenous women are often not even included in statistics, even in regions with large Indigenous populations.

Trump announced on Monday of this week that the federal government is creating a task force on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Having extensively followed the many pitfalls of Canada's similar task force, I do not believe that this task force will enact real change. This task force will be grossly underfunded. The families and tribes of the missing and murdered may not be sufficiently involved and centered in the process so that they can get answers about what happened to their loved ones.

Unfortunately, the many underlying reasons for why MMIWG2S is a crisis will not be addressed. Will tribal legal sovereignty and jurisdiction be respected? Will racist settler attitudes toward Indigenous women change? Will there be an end to pipelines such as the Keystone XL and man camps?

Attacking the Earth and attacking Indigenous women are intertwined. The man camps and the resulting impact on Indigenous women is one of the many reasons why Indigenous people are fighting pipelines and mines and fracking.

End capitalism to fight climate collapse

We come together at a time when people are terrified about climate collapse and the future and there is so much suffering already. I read this week that 60 percent of the world's animal population has been wiped out since 1970.

I want to say that individual actions are not going to save us when corporations and the U.S. military account for 70 percent of the world's pollution. Promoting a narrative of individual responsibility is not going to save us. Recy-

cling and REDD and carbon offsets are not going to save us.

Hoping that capitalism will get kinder is not going to save us. The Green New Deal is not enough to save us. Only by listening to Indigenous people and dismantling the capitalist system, which allowed climate collapse to happen in the first place, will we be able to save the planet.

Indigenous peoples have always been caretakers of the land, water and the life therein, despite intense efforts of settler governments to stop us from doing so. For generations, Indigenous peoples have been warning about climate change.

It is not too late to achieve some climate justice on this planet, but Indigenous voices must be acknowledged and centered.

One of the many ways that people are working to center Indigenous voices is through education and legislation. Here in Massachusetts, we have an MA Indigenous Agenda that is supporting five bills: a bill to ban the use of Native mascots in public schools, a bill to redesign the racist state flag and seal, legislation to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day instead of Columbus Day, an education bill and a bill to protect Native heritage. There's a lot you — can do to help us get those bills out of committee. Please go to MAIndigenousAgenda.org for more information.

I end with a proposal, a starting place for the decolonization of our lands and a way to address climate collapse:

First, ensure that no projects can go through any Indigenous nation's land without free, prior and informed consent.

Second, take all of the land that is currently being mismanaged by all settler governments, such as the National Parks or the Amazon rainforest, and let Indigenous nations manage that land. That would mean the restoration of millions of acres of our lands to us. It would also mean the end of desecration of our sacred sites, such as the Black Hills or Mauna Kea.

Third, cancel the leases, the pipelines, the mining and corporate contracts and start over.

Finally, since we all live here on this planet together, and since it is the only planet we have, we need to support and listen to Indigenous peoples all over the world who are on the frontlines of dealing with climate change.

I don't want anyone who hears this to give up. We can fight for climate justice. We can end settler colonialism. We can reclaim our lands. We are not vanishing. We are not conquered. We are as strong as ever. 



SLL PHOTO: MIRANDA ETEL

'The Thanksgiving myth celebrates genocide'

By Moonanum James

Once again on the fourth Thursday in November, United American Indians of New England and those who support us are gathered on this hill to observe a National Day of Mourning. Today marks the 50th time we have come here, in all kinds of weather, to mourn our ancestors and speak the truth about our history.

Those who started National Day of Mourning could not have envisioned that generations would still be here, year after year, carrying on this tradition.

Many of the elders who stood on this hill and organized the first Day of Mourning are no longer with us, but we feel their spirits guiding us today. We are thinking today of so many, including Shirley Mills, a beautiful person who passed into the spirit world this fall. We mourn her loss here today.

Fifty Thanksgivings ago, my father, an Aquinnah Wampanoag named Wamsutta Frank James, was invited to address a gathering celebrating the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the Pilgrims. When asked by the organizers to provide an advance copy of the speech he planned to deliver, Wamsutta agreed. When they saw his speech, the planners told him he could speak only if he were willing to offer false praise of the Pilgrims.

According to the organizers of the event, "The theme of the celebration is brotherhood and anything inflammatory would be out of place." The organizers even offered to write a speech for him, one which would better fit with their settler-colonialist narrative. He refused to have words put into his mouth, and National Day of Mourning came into being as a result of that refusal. Instead of speaking at the banquet, he and a group of allies from throughout the Americas gathered here, on this hill, and observed the first National Day of Mourning in 1970.

A tradition of struggle

That first year, my father never did get a chance to deliver his speech on this hill — although some who don't actually know our history say he did. Maybe 100 or 200 Native people and allies gathered, depending on which person is giving their recollection of the day. Indigenous peoples from this region and members of the Boston Indian Center organized and were joined by others, including some famous members of the American Indian Movement. They spoke out about the Pilgrim invasion and issues throughout Indian Country, marched around Plymouth, boarded the Mayflower II replica, and even buried Plymouth Rock in sand — a tradition I am proud to say we continued well into the 1990s.

In the 1970s, UAINE demanded the return of Wampanoag artifacts, including bones, that were being held by the gravedigger settlers at the Pilgrim Society Museum. At the fourth National Day of Mourning, the bones were returned to my father and given a proper burial. In 1972, the police



Moonanum James speaking on Cole's Hill on the 50th National Day of Mourning in Plymouth, Mass., on Nov. 28, 2019.

SLL PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD

followed us around with police dogs, and a young woman, Judy Mendes, who had a U.S. flag draped around her shoulders, was attacked and arrested.

Over the years, we repeatedly disrupted the Pilgrim Progress parade, a tradition we continued until 1996. The following year, in 1997, we were blocked on Leyden Street and arrested without warning when we simply tried to march. The resulting defense of the Plymouth 25 led to the National Day of Mourning plaque you see here on Cole's Hill, and the Metacomet plaque we will visit when we march.

Consistently, our organization has not collaborated with the Pilgrims or their institutions, whether museums or the Mayflower Society or the Plymouth 400. We have our own story to tell, in our own way. Consistently, we have sought to present issues that Indigenous people are facing internationally, not just here, because we are indeed all related.

Pilgrim myth vs. Indigenous truth

So, what really happened at the first Thanksgiving — or what some of us call the first "thanks-taking?" According to popular myth, the Pilgrims, seeking religious freedom, landed on Plymouth Rock. The Indians welcomed them with open arms, and then conveniently faded into the background and everyone lived happily ever after. The end.

Here is the truth:

First, the Pilgrims are glorified and mythologized because the circumstances of the first permanent English colony in North America, Jamestown, were too ugly to hold up as an effective national myth. There are efforts now to teach schoolchildren about the African slaves kept at Jamestown. But no curriculum seems to want to teach the kids about settler cannibalism. Pilgrims and Indians are a much more marketable story.

Second, the Pilgrims came here as part of a commercial venture. They didn't need religious freedom — they already had that back in the Netherlands. The Mayflower Compact was merely a group of white men who wanted to ensure they would get a return on their investment.

When they arrived — on outer Cape Cod, by the way, not on that pebble down the hill — one of the first things the Pilgrims did was to rob the Wampanoag graves at Corn Hill and steal as much of their winter provisions of corn and beans as they were able to carry. The writings of the colonists themselves describe

these actions taking place.

The next part of the mythology is true: Some Wampanoag ancestors did welcome the Pilgrims and save them from starvation. And what did we get in return for this kindness? Genocide, the theft of our lands, slavery, starvation and never-ending repression.

The first 'thanks-taking'

It is also important to remember that the first official Thanksgiving did not take place in 1621 when the Pilgrims had a harvest-time meal provided largely by the Wampanoag. Instead it was officially proclaimed by Gov. Winthrop of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 to celebrate the massacre of over 700 Pequot men, women and children on the banks of the Mystic River in Connecticut.

William Bradford of the Plymouth colony wrote of this event: "Those that escaped the fire were slain with the sword; some hewed to pieces, others run through with their rapiers ... they thus destroyed about 400 at the time. It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire ... horrible was the stink and scent thereof, but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the prayers thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them."

And yet the history books call us the savages.

So why does any of this matter? It is simple: When people perpetuate the myth of Thanksgiving, they are not only erasing our genocide, but also celebrating it.

But we did not simply fade into the background as the Thanksgiving myth says. We have survived and thrived. We have persevered. The very fact that you are here is proof that we did not vanish. Our very presence frees this land from the lies of the history books and the mythmakers. We will remember and honor all

of our ancestors in the struggle who went before us. We will speak truth to power as we have been doing since the first Day of Mourning in 1970.

That first Day of Mourning in 1970 was a powerful demonstration of Native unity. It has continued for 50 years as a powerful demonstration of Indigenous unity and of the unity of all people who speak truth to power.

Capitalist crimes in Indian Country

Sadly, many of the conditions that prevailed in Indian Country in 1970 still prevail today. In 1970, our average life expectancy was just 44 years. Today, it is up, but for Native men, it is still six years below that of white people. Native women's death rate has increased 20 percent over the past 15 years. In 1970, the average Native yearly income was \$4,347. In 2019, 20 percent of Native people still earn under \$5,000. In 1970, our suicide and infant mortality rates were the highest in the country. This has not changed.

We all know that racism is alive and well. All of us are struggling under the oppression of a capitalist system which forces people to make a bitter choice between healing and eating. We will continue to gather on this hill until corporations and the U.S. military stop polluting the Earth. Until we dismantle the brutal apparatus of mass incarceration.

We will not stop until the oppression of our Two-Spirit siblings is a thing of the past. When the homeless have homes. When children are no longer taken from their parents and locked in cages. When the Palestinians reclaim the homeland and the autonomy Israel has denied them for the past 70 years. When no person goes hungry or is left to die because they have little or no access to quality health care. When insulin is free. When union-busting is a thing of the past. Until then, the struggle will continue.

In 1970, we demanded an end to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It is still a demand today. Native nations should not need federal oversight to govern ourselves or take control of our own lands.

I hope you will stand with the

Indigenous people resist

Continued from page 1

Houma Nation along the Louisiana Gulf Coast, reported on numerous challenges facing her people, including the Bayou Bridge Pipeline, "which is the tail end of the same pipeline that Standing Rock brought attention to, the Dakota Access Pipeline. That pipeline goes through a lot of communities of color.

"And now, another pipeline is being planned to cut through the already fragile swamps. LNG wants to put a 283-mile, across 14 parishes, natural gas pipeline in through the wetlands that help break hurricane destruction," Aronson said.

"The fact is that the land is changing. The climate is changing. We cannot replace what has already been lost. But we can, and do, try to

preserve what is left, whether it be the land, our culture and traditions, or even just the memories of what was. We bring this knowledge forward with us, into the future."

'Don't give up'

Led by a massive banner proclaiming "National Day of Mourning," the crowd marched from Cole's Hill through the main tourist area of Plymouth, before converging on the waterfront at the Plymouth Rock monument — another myth that everyone knows, but that has no connection to historical reality since the Pilgrims didn't land there.

En route, marchers passed the church that for many years hosted a community social following the Day of Mourning activities, but which was recently bought by the May-

Mashpee Wampanoag and support pending legislation that would give Mashpee the right to petition for land to be taken into trust. And please tell your congresspeople that this legislation should also be applied to Aquinnah and other tribes that were federally recognized after 1934.

As we did in 1970, we mourn the loss of millions of our ancestors and the devastation of the land, water and air.

We condemn all acts of violence and terrorism perpetrated by all governments and organizations against innocent people worldwide. Since the invasion of Columbus and the rest of the Europeans, Native people have been virtually nonstop victims of terrorism. From the colonial period to the 21st century, this has entailed torture, massacres, systematic military occupations and the forced removals of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral homelands.

Let us not forget that this country was founded on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery, and a policy of genocide and land theft. Let us not forget that under the pipelines, skyscrapers, mines and oil rigs, lie the interred bones, sacred objects and villages of our Native ancestors.

On our program will be only Indigenous speakers. This is one day when we speak for ourselves, without non-Native people, so-called “experts,” intervening to interpret and speak for us.

Today, on liberated territory, we will correct the history of a country that continues to glorify butchers such as Christopher Columbus, that makes slave-owning presidents such as Washington and Jefferson into god-like figures, and even carves their faces into the sacred Black Hills of the Lakota.

In 1970, very few people would have given any thought to the fact that the Indigenous people of this hemisphere do not look upon the arrival of the European invaders as a reason to give thanks. Today, many thousands stand with us in spirit as we commemorate the 50th National Day of Mourning.

In the spirit of Crazy Horse, in the spirit of Metacom, in the spirit of Geronimo. Above all, to all the people who fight and struggle for real justice.

We are not vanishing. We are not conquered. We are as strong as ever. 📌

Leonard Peltier, member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians [of Lakota and Dakota descent — SLL], is incarcerated at the U.S. Penitentiary in Coleman, Florida, for his 1977 conviction in connection with a shootout with U.S. government forces, where two FBI agents and one young American Indian lost their lives.

Peltier, who is considered a political prisoner of war by many, released this Thanksgiving statement through the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee:

Message from Leonard Peltier: ‘Walking on stolen land’

The year of 2019 is coming to a close and with it comes the day most Americans set aside as a day for Thanksgiving. As I let my mind wander beyond the steel bars and concrete walls, I try to imagine what the people who live outside the prison gates are doing, and what they are thinking. Do they ever think of the Indigenous people who were forced from their homelands? Do they understand that with every step they take, no matter the direction, that they are walking on stolen land? Can they imagine,

even for one minute, what it was like to watch the suffering of the women, the children and babies and yes, the sick and elderly, as they were made to keep pushing west in freezing temperatures, with little or no food? These were my people and this was our land. There was a time when we enjoyed freedom and were able to hunt buffalo and gather the foods and sacred medicines. We were able to fish and we enjoyed the clean clear water! My people were generous, we shared everything we had, including the knowledge of how to survive the long harsh winters or the hot humid summers. We were appreciative of the gifts from our Creator and remembered to give thanks on a daily basis. We had ceremonies and special dances that were a celebration of life.

With the coming of foreigners to our shores, life as we knew it would change drastically. Individual ownership was foreign to my people. Fences?? Unheard of, back then. We were a communal people and we took care of each other. Our grandparents weren’t isolated from us! They were the wisdom keepers and story tellers and were an important link in our families. The babies? They were and are our future! Look at the brilliant young people who put themselves at risk, fighting to keep our water and environment clean and safe for the generations yet to come. They are willing to confront the giant, multinational corporations by educating the general public of the devastation being caused. I smile with hope when I think of them. They are fearless and ready to speak the truth to all who are willing to listen.

We also remember our brothers and sisters of Bolivia, who are rioting in support of the first Indigenous President, Evo Morales. His commitment to the people, the land, their resources and protection against corruption is commendable. We recognize and identify with that struggle so well.



SLL PHOTO: MIRANDA ETEL

So today, I thank all of the people who are willing to have an open mind, those who are willing to accept the responsibility of planning for seven generations ahead, those who remember the sacrifices made by our ancestors so we can continue to speak our own language, practice our own way of thankfulness in our own skin, and that we always acknowledge and respect the Indigenous lineage that we carry.

For those of you who are thankful that you have enough food to feed your family, please give to those who aren’t as fortunate. If you are warm and have a comfortable shelter to live in, please give to those who are cold and homeless; if you see someone hurting and in need of a kind word or two, be that person who steps forward and lends a hand. And especially, when you see injustice anywhere, please be brave enough to speak up to confront it.

I want to thank all who are kind enough to remember me and my family in your thoughts and prayers. Thank you for continuing to support and believe in me. There isn’t a minute in any day that passes without me hoping that this will be the day I will be granted freedom. I long for the day when I can smell clean fresh air, when I can feel a gentle breeze in my hair, witness the clouds as their movement hides the sun and when the moon shines the light on the path to the sacred Inipi. That would truly be a day I could call a day of Thanksgiving.

Thank you for listening to whomever is voicing my words. My Spirit is there with you.

Doksha,
In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,
Leonard Peltier

Source: NativeNewsOnline.net

flower Society in preparation for the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims’ arrival in 2020.

UAINC organizers explained that the Mayflower Society is heading a huge promotional effort to bring tourists to Plymouth and, more importantly, to shore up the white-supremacist “thanksgiving” mythology. The call was put out to protest next spring, when a Mayflower replica will arrive in Boston Harbor to kick off these warped “festivities.”

Instead, this year marchers boarded buses and cars and rode about two miles to a church on the town’s outskirts that agreed to let UAINC use its facilities. Hundreds of people were able to have a hearty meal and fellowship with their siblings in the struggle before heading back home.

As I boarded the bus for the long ride back to Brooklyn, these words from UAINC’s Mahtowin Munro stuck with me:

“Hoping that capitalism will get kinder is not going to save us. The Green New Deal is not enough to save us. Only by listening to Indigenous people and dismantling the capitalist system which allowed climate collapse to happen in the first place will we be able to save the planet.

“I don’t want anyone who hears this to give up,” Munro concluded. “We can fight for climate justice. We can end settler colonialism. We can reclaim our lands. We are not vanishing. We are not conquered. We are as strong as ever.”

Support the UAINC 2019-2020 fundraising campaign: gf.me/u/vumxka 📌

Historic Alcatraz occupation honored

In the San Francisco Bay on Nov. 28, on the anniversary of the Alcatraz occupation, there was a sunrise commemoration. This year the International Indian Treaty Council, an organization of Indigenous Peoples from North, Central, South America, the Arctic, Caribbean, and Pacific Islands, chose to honor those who originally occupied Alcatraz Island in 1969. The nineteen month occupation by students of various tribal backgrounds focused attention on the rights of Indigenous tribal people



PHOTO: INTERNATIONAL INDIAN TREATY COUNCIL AND MORNINGSTAR GALI

MC Morning Star Gali with Laulani Teale & Liko Martin from the Protect Mauna Kea movement in Hawaii.

in the United States, raising issues ranging from treaty violations to termination and the removal of Indigenous children from their homes. 📌

Hundreds gather in Chicago to refound alliance against racist and political repression

By Bill Dores

Around 1,200 people packed the Jacqueline Vaughn Auditorium and the lobby of the Chicago Teachers Union hall the night of Nov. 22.

They were unionists, community organizers, students, former prisoners and police-torture survivors, kinfolk of those wrongfully incarcerated or murdered by police, Black Lives Matter activists, migrant rights activists and representatives of freedom struggles around the globe.

They came from Chicago itself and from over 100 other cities and towns in 28 states. They were there to open the three-day refounding conference of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, a coalition first formed in the early 1970s.

Standing beneath a banner saying “Fight Racist and Political Repression, Demand Community Control of the Police,” CTU Vice President Stacy Davis Gates greeted the crowd. The CTU just won a new contract after a militant 11-day strike, its second in seven years.

Davis Gates told how the CTU had changed its constitution in 2010 to make “our charge the fight for justice and the humanity of the children before us in our classrooms.” She welcomed the audience to a “house built by Black women who believed in the humanity of Black, Brown and poor children.”

Wide range of speakers

The speakers that night and throughout the weekend reflected the range of communities affected by state terror. Many had suffered personally and terribly at the hands of the state apparatus. All of them brought the crowd to its feet with chants and standing ovations.

Xicano activist and former political prisoner Carlos Montes, a co-founder of the Brown Berets, spoke of the fight against police terror and state repression in the Southwest in historic context and today. Bernadette Ellorin, North America vice chair of the International League of Peoples Struggle and spokesperson of BAYAN USA, linked the struggle against racism and repression in the U.S. to the fight against U.S. imperialism around the globe.

Amanda Shackelford spoke of the case of her son, Gerald Reed, one of many people tortured by the Chicago Police Department into signing false confessions. Reed has been in prison for 28 years. His conviction was overturned last year but he has not been released. “When I speak, I am not only speaking for my son,” Shackelford said. “I am speaking for the men who don’t have a family anymore.”

Deported Palestinian community organizer Rasma Odeh spoke by video from Jordan. Odeh is also a torture victim, imprisoned for 10 years after being tortured and sexually assaulted into signing a false confession by the U.S.-funded Israeli occupation forces. Jess Sundin of the Minnesota Antiwar Committee described the FBI raids on her home and those of other anti-war activists in 2010 and their victorious resistance to a state grand jury.

Former Black Liberation Army prisoner Masai Elehosi spoke of the struggle to free Jamil Al-Amin (f.k.a. H. Rap Brown) and other political prisoners, and Edwin Cortes, who served 19 years for fighting for Puerto Rican independence. Rosemary Cade spoke of her son Antonio Porter, tortured by the Chicago Police Department, wrongfully convicted and sentenced to 74 years. Toshira



Garraway spoke of her fiancé, Justin Tiegin, beaten to death by St. Paul police and his body left in a dumpster. Kimberly Handy-Jones, whose son was murdered by St. Paul police in 2017, spoke. Also addressing the assemblage were Dorothy Holmes, whose son Ronald Johnson was murdered by Chicago police in 2014, and La Tanya Jenifer-Sublett, who was arrested and tortured by Chicago cops at the age of 19 and spent 21 years in jail for a crime she didn’t commit. And many, many more.

Pastor Emma Lozano, founder of Centro Sin Fronteras, addressed a panel opposing police cooperation with federal agencies to oppress our communities. Her brother, Rudy Lozano, was assassinated in 1983. Sheridan Murphy, former director of the Florida American Indian Movement, spoke of the struggle to free Leonard Peltier.

Frank Chapman: ‘Taking struggle to a new level’

The guiding spirit of the conference was Frank Chapman, field organizer and educational director of the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression. Chapman was wrongfully convicted of armed robbery and murder in 1961 and sentenced to life and 50 years in a Missouri state prison. In 1973, the original NAARPR took up his case. He was freed in 1976 after 14 years behind bars and in 1983 was elected the alliance’s executive director. He is the author of a newly published book, “The Damned Don’t Cry: Pages From the Life of a Black Prisoner and Organizer.”

“We did not call you to this refounding conference to celebrate or commemorate what we did 40 years ago,” Chapman told the crowd. “We called you here to join us in rededicating ourselves to defend the inalienable democratic right of our people, oppressed people and workers, to rise up and overthrow their oppression in this present moment of history. We called you here to join us in consolidating and uniting all the pockets of resistance to police tyranny everywhere it exists in the United States of North America and to inscribe on our banners community



SLL PHOTOS: BILL DOARES

control of the police. We called you here to join us in renewing and taking to a new level and to new heights the struggle to free political prisoners and the wrongfully convicted.

“We called you here because we share the vision

of many of you to abolish the police and prisons and see it as part of the larger vision, changing and abolishing governments that enslave and oppress us. Ending racist and political repression is our central task in this moment in history. There can be no better world in birth without the carrying out of this task. This conference provides a historic opportunity for our movement to come together in a broad united front based on the inalienable right of the oppressed and the working class to organize and fight for radical systemic change. We are not fighting for some abstract ‘we the people’ democracy. We are fighting for a democracy that recognizes our right to rebel and overthrow the powers that be.”

Angela Davis: ‘For the abolition of prisons’

The keynote talk of the first evening was given by famed activist Angela Davis, a leader of the original NAARPR, whose struggle against her political frame-up in the 1970s won support around the world.

Recounting 20th-century battles against racist and political frame-ups from the Martinsville Seven to the Wilmington 10, Davis said, “We have to continue to get people out of jails and call for decarceration, but we must also make explicit calls for the abolition of the prisons entirely. On our work against racist police violence, we must call for community control of the police as opposed to police review commissions.”

The 17 talks of the opening night rally may be seen and heard at tinyurl.com/NAARPRrefounding

Over 800 registered delegates attended workshops and panels. Topics included “How to Build for Community Control of Police,” “It is Our Duty to Fight for our Freedom: The Fight to Free Political Prisoners and the Wrongfully Incarcerated,” “The Fight Against Racist and Anti-LGBTQ Violence,” and “Families to the Front: Families as Leaders in the Fight Against Police Murder and Unjust Incarceration.”

The success of the conference reflected ongoing community struggles around the country. The largest

number of participants came from the Chicago area but large groups came from California, Florida, Indiana, Texas, Minnesota, Missouri, Utah and Wisconsin.

Justice for those murdered, wrongfully incarcerated by police

In particular it reflected the hard work of the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, which has fought for years to win justice for those murdered or wrongfully incarcerated by the police. It is leading the movement for a Civilian Police Accountability Council in Chicago and led the successful fight to convict Chicago cop Jason Van Dyke for the murder of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald in 2014.

Among the many organizations represented were the the Anti-Police Terror Project from Oakland, the Arab American Action Network of Chicago, the Centro Community Service Organization in Los Angeles, Centro Sin Fronteras, Chicago Torture Justice Center, the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, the Innocent Demand Justice Committee, the International Committee to Free Leonard Peltier, the International League of People’s Struggle, the Jacksonville Community Action Committee, Justice for Brian Quinones and Justice for Cordale Handy from Minneapolis, the Lynne Stewart Organization, the New Abolitionist Movement, the North Texas Action Committee, the Tallahassee Community Action Committee, the Twin City Coalition 4 Justice for Lamar, Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation (SOUL), many chapters of Students for a Democratic Society and the U.S. Palestinian Community Network. Members of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists came from St. Louis. Several union locals from around the country were also represented. Members of Struggle-La Lucha attended from Baltimore and New York City.

The final session of the conference, on Nov. 23, resolved that “this conference re-establishes the National Alliance and a renewed Black-led, Left-led, multiracial, multinational movement to stop police crimes, mass incarceration and to end racist and political repression.” The full text of the resolution, photos and other material from the conference may be found at NAARPR.org

The assembled delegates elected Frank Chapman as executive director. A continuations committee will map out the next steps of the alliance in the immediate future. 📍

New York City remembers Fidel

By Stephen Millies

Nov. 25 — On the third anniversary of Fidel Castro's passing, people came to the Cuban mission to the United Nations to celebrate his life. The historical leader of the Cuban revolution, who was loved by poor people around the world, died on Nov. 25, 2016.

A film showed scenes of Castro and his comrades during the guerrilla war to defeat the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. Twenty thousand Cubans were killed by Batista's secret police.

Those were the "good old days" for U.S. corporations and organized crime that exploited the Caribbean country. Their immensely profitable \$2 billion investment — worth almost \$18 billion today — kept Cubans poor.

The Cuban Revolution changed that forever. In one year, volunteer teachers abolished illiteracy. Despite Wall Street's cruel economic blockade, Cuban children now have a low-

er infant mortality rate than kids do in the U.S.

Fidel Castro Ruz was also a teacher. The film showed Castro speaking to a 1992 UN conference in Rio De Janeiro about how capitalism was destroying the environment.

Helping poor people in the U.S.

Jorge Luis Cepero spoke for younger Cuban diplomats. "Fidel turned into a symbol of the anti-colonial, anti-apartheid and anti-imperialist struggle," he said. Castro was able to combine "the thinking of Simón Bolívar, José Martí and Karl Marx."

Ike Nahem spoke on behalf of the New York/New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition that fights to end the U.S. blockade.

Dariel and David, two young brothers from Santiago de Cuba, read the poem "Ronda de la fortuna" by the Cuban poet Nancy Morejón.

Gail Walker, executive director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO)/Pastors for Peace, reminded listen-



SLL PHOTO: STEVE MILLIES

Two brothers from Santiago read a poem.

ers that when Africa called, Cuba answered. Cuban volunteers fought alongside African soldiers that defeated the fascist army of the apartheid regime that then ruled South Africa.

Dr. Damián Suarez graduated in 2015 from the Latin American School of Medicine in Havana. Twenty years ago Fidel Castro founded this institution that has trained 30,000 doctors from 115 countries.

Among them are 200 hundred doctors from the U.S. who didn't have to pay a dime in tuition. They're helping poor people from Maine to Mississippi to Los Angeles. Cuban-trained doctors work in 10 New York City hospitals.

Her Excellency Ana Silvia Rodríguez Abascal, the Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, was the last speaker. She quoted the German playwright Bertolt Brecht: "There are people who struggle for a day and they are good. There are people who struggle for a year and they are better. There are people who struggle many years, and they are better still. But there are those who struggle all their lives: these are the indispensable ones."

Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution are indispensable. 🇨🇺

Cheryl LaBash:

What Fidel means to me today

Continued from page 8

ends, too. But when I heard Fidel was coming to Riverside Church on September 8, 2000, I had to go.

People who know me will not be surprised. Instead of going to work that Friday morning, I got into my car and hit the highway for the 10 hour drive to New York City. Then driving around and around lower Manhattan hoping for a free parking spot, and onto the subway up to Harlem. The mass of people already trying to get in was overwhelming, but I was one of the lucky thousands who did get inside the church. My seat was high in the balcony — to hear Fidel speak to us.

When Fidel physically left us three years ago, even in the U.S. we were able to watch the caravan that returned his ashes to Santiago de Cuba. Live internet television broadcast from Cuba showed us the assemblies in Havana and Santiago. I will never forget hearing Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega asking "where is Fidel?" And the quiet, mourning crowd answered "here" beginning a chant that became a roar "Yo soy Fidel."

I couldn't imagine such technology that would let me see a live broadcast from Cuba when I traveled there for the first time in 1985. At that time Fidel's speeches and interviews explained the external foreign debt was an unpayable burden for developing countries. Then it seemed a topic very removed from daily life in the U.S.

But today it has become very close — it is not only the IMF external debt. Debt extracts the life itself out of workers and families, student debt, credit card debt, mortgage debt, payday lenders — all unpayable. From Puerto Rico to Detroit, we have learned that our debt is very much like what Fidel taught.

More interesting to me in 1985 was Cuba's health care system that demonstrated it was possible to

reduce infant mortality with little resources but with maximum will. Detroit was headline news then. Scandalously, in Detroit, a city where nearly 90 percent of the people were Afro-descendent — babies died at a rate more than twice the US national statistics. In 1990, a stunning 23 per 1000 births and in 2017 still 15.5. Now maternal mortality for Black women is rising, too.

Is it a miracle that infant mortality in blockaded developing Cuba is 4 per 1000 live births? No, it is Cuba's will to prioritize human beings, in Cuba and everywhere through internationalism and an economic system that makes it possible to do it.

It was there in Riverside Church that Fidel explained how the Latin American medical school and scholarships for U.S. students came about. ELAM — the Spanish acronym for Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina — had been founded not even a year before Fidel spoke that night. He noted there was a "3rd world" inside the U.S. without doctors.

Twenty years have passed since ELAM was founded on Nov. 15, 1999. In those 20 years, 29,749 new doctors from 115 countries have graduated — including 182 from the United States. Of the 466 doctors graduating this past summer from 82 countries, 10 were from the U.S. [go to ifconews.org/medicalschooll]

U.S. students at ELAM volunteered and went to serve in Haiti after the massive January 2010 earthquake. A US graduate raised her own funds and volunteered to fight the West Africa Ebola outbreak.

ELAM is only a part of Cuba's internationalism that encompasses medical, literacy, sports, culture and much more. The Henry Reeve Emergency Medical Brigade mobilized to save lives five years after Riverside, when Hurricane Katrina drowned New Orleans. Blocked by the U.S. government, they went to the Hillside of the Himalayas after Pakistan's

earthquake. The "Yo si puedo" literacy tool developed by Cubans in Haiti was also explained by Fidel at Riverside.

What Fidel means to me today

An ideological campaign is being carried out against Cuba. It aims to cast doubt on Cuba's ideals by trying to reflect capitalism's crimes of exploitation, racism, human trafficking on Cuba. It is what Fidel called a Battle of Ideas.

This propaganda campaign zeroes in to discredit the very points mentioned in Fidel's speech at Riverside Church — Cuba's medical internationalism, that Cuba does not torture and disappear people, that Cuba actually practices equal rights for all regardless of gender, gender identity or skin color, and democracy for all to participate in elections and the direction of their country.

It is calculated and intentional, a weapon to justify the very real genocidal blockade. It is a propaganda campaign to create doubt, uncertainty and divide the millions of people who have come to know Cuba, its people, its socialism through going to Cuba to experience it for themselves.

This campaign regurgitates the same lies that permeated popular US culture about Cuba after the revolution, lies refuted by the solidarity movement especially in Black communities each time Cuban delegations and leaders came to the United Nations in New York.

Those lies cannot be reinserted into the minds of the people who have traveled to Cuba who have studied in Cuba, who have noted that Cuba has no foreign investments, bases or extractive concessions anywhere. Or the climate justice movement that knows Fidel spoke at Riverside about the danger of mass extinction due to climate change. But the lies can push Cuba lower on the list of concerns. It is why we in



PHOTO: GRANMA

Cuban doctors came under attack in Bolivia after the coup.

the U.S. must act in every sector and platform to #unblockCuba.

There are powerful tools in the battle of ideas, not only spoken or written, but deeds. Why else would the U.S. restrict visas for medical professionals to speak at conferences; for Cuban academics to participate at Latin American Studies Association?

The scholarships at the Latin American School of Medicine, the development of medicines to improve human life for example taking away the horror of limb amputation due to diabetic ulcers which is costly and profitable. Is there a working class family whose relative or friend who doesn't have diabetes and fear amputation? The very cities where human services have been cut to push debt service to banks and tax dollars directed to feed the military and police, are looking to Cuba.

Cuban doctors came to Chicago to help improve maternal and infant outcomes. Detroit is investigating health collaboration. And this month New Orleans signed a memorandum of understanding with Cuba.

For me, and I would humbly suggest for us in the U.S., engaging in the battle of ideas is the important message for today.

But why Cuba? The example of Fidel, the Cuban revolution, and the generations who were raised to be like Che, are the powerful antidote to the dehumanizing, divisive, consumer culture driven by capitalism and its mass media.

It is a legacy of Fidel we can all build with for the better world that is possible and necessary.

Source: MinRex – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Cuba

Cheryl LaBash:

Lo que Fidel significa hoy para mí

Me siento muy honrada de estar hoy en este panel. No tengo una historia personal profunda como la que hemos escuchado en los últimos dos años sobre el trabajo en conjunto con el líder histórico de Cuba, Fidel Castro, cuya vida, trabajo y ejemplo recordamos hoy aquí. Realmente he sido la joven en la fila de atrás, que aunque ahora ya no es joven y a menudo ya no está en la fila de atrás, todavía trata de absorber lecciones de la revolución cubana, de entender el mundo y actuar para cambiarlo.

Mi trabajo de solidaridad con Cuba se interrumpió cuando comencé un nuevo trabajo en la década de 1990. Inspeccionar la construcción de carreteras de Detroit me requirió trabajar horas extras de abril a noviembre, desde el amanecer hasta el anochecer, y también los fines de semana. Pero cuando supe que Fidel vendría a la Iglesia Riverside [en Nueva York] el 8 de septiembre del 2000, tenía que ir.

La gente que me conoce no se sorprenderá. En vez de ir a trabajar ese viernes por la mañana, me monté en mi auto y conduje por 10 horas a la ciudad de Nueva York. Luego conduciendo alrededor del bajo Manhattan con la esperanza de encontrar un lugar de estacionamiento gratuito para luego montarme en el metro hasta Harlem. La cantidad de personas que ya intentaba entrar era abrumadora, pero yo fui una de los miles de afortunados que entraron a la iglesia. Mi asiento estaba en lo alto del palco para escuchar hablar a Fidel.

Cuando Fidel nos dejó físicamente hace tres años, incluso en los Estados Unidos pudimos ver la caravana que devolvió sus cenizas a Santiago de Cuba. La transmisión en vivo de la televisión por Internet desde Cuba nos mostró las asambleas en La Habana y Santiago. Nunca olvidaré oír al presidente nicaragüense Daniel Ortega preguntar ¿dónde está Fidel? Y la multitud callada y enlutada respondió "aquí" comenzando una consigna que se convirtió en un rugido: 'Yo soy Fidel'.

No podía imaginar esa tecnología que me permitiera ver una transmisión en vivo desde Cuba cuando viajé allí por primera vez en 1985. En ese entonces, los discursos y entrevistas de Fidel explicaban que la deuda externa era una carga impagable para los países en desarrollo. Entonces parecía un tema muy extraño en la vida diaria en los Estados Unidos.

Pero hoy se ha vuelto algo muy cercano — no es sólo la deuda externa del FMI, la deuda extrae la vida

misma de los trabajadores y las familias, la deuda estudiantil, la deuda de tarjetas de crédito, la deuda hipotecaria, los prestamistas de día de pago — todas impagables. Desde Puerto Rico hasta Detroit, hemos aprendido que nuestra deuda es muy parecida a lo que Fidel exponía.

Más interesante para mí en 1985 fue el sistema de salud de Cuba que demostró que era posible reducir la mortalidad infantil con pocos recursos pero con la máxima voluntad. Detroit era una noticia principal en ese tiempo.

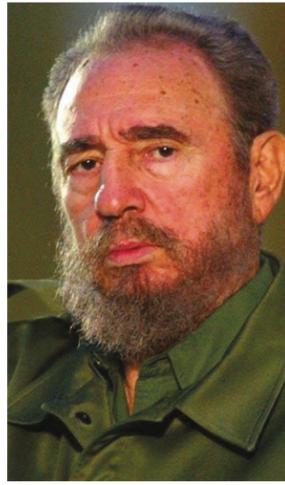
Escandalosamente, en Detroit, una ciudad donde casi el 90 por ciento de la gente era afrodescendiente, los bebés morían a un ritmo de más del doble de las estadísticas nacionales de Estados Unidos. En 1990, un asombroso 23 por cada 1000 nacimientos y en 2017 aún un 15.5. Ahora la mortalidad materna para las mujeres negras también está aumentando.

¿Es un milagro que la mortalidad infantil en una Cuba en desarrollo y bloqueada sea de solo 4 por cada 1000 nacidos vivos? No, es la voluntad de Cuba de dar prioridad a los seres humanos, en Cuba y en todas partes a través del internacionalismo y un sistema económico que lo hace posible.

Fue allí, en la Iglesia Riverside, donde Fidel explicó cómo surgió la escuela de medicina latinoamericana y las becas para estudiantes estadounidenses. ELAM, el acrónimo en español de Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina, había sido fundada ni siquiera un año antes de que Fidel hablara esa noche. Señaló que había un 'tercer mundo' dentro de los EUA sin médicos.

Veinte años han pasado desde que la ELAM fuera fundada el 15 de noviembre de 1999. En esos 20 años, 29.749 nuevos médicos de 115 países se han graduado, incluidos 182 de los Estados Unidos. De los 466 médicos que se graduaron el verano pasado de 82 países, 10 eran de los EUA. [ir a ifconews.org/medicalschooll] Los estudiantes estadounidenses de ELAM se ofrecieron como voluntarios y fueron a servir a Haití después del enorme terremoto de enero de 2010. Una graduada estadounidense recaudó sus propios fondos y se ofreció como voluntaria para luchar contra el brote del ébola en el África occidental.

ELAM es sólo una parte del internacionalismo de Cuba que abarca medicina, alfabetización, deporte,



Discurso de Cheryl LaBash en un panel organizado por la Embajada de Cuba en los Estados Unidos como un homenaje a la vida de Fidel Castro. LaBash es copresidenta de la Red Nacional sobre Cuba.

cultura y mucho más. La Brigada Médica de Emergencia Henry Reeve se movilizó para salvar vidas cinco años después de Riverside, cuando el huracán Katrina azotó Nueva Orleans. Bloqueados por el gobierno de Estados Unidos, se fueron a las laderas del Himalaya después del terremoto de Pakistán. La herramienta de alfabetización 'Yo sí puedo' desarrollada por los cubanos en Haití también fue explicada por Fidel en Riverside.

Lo que Fidel significa hoy para mí.

Se está llevando a cabo una campaña ideológica contra Cuba. Su objetivo es poner en duda los ideales de Cuba tratando de reflejar los crímenes de explotación, racismo y trata de personas del capitalismo sobre Cuba. Es lo que Fidel llamó una Batalla de Ideas.

Esta campaña propagandística se centra en desacreditar los mismos puntos mencionados en el discurso de Fidel en la Iglesia Riverside — el internacionalismo médico de Cuba, que Cuba no tortura y desaparece a la gente, que Cuba realmente practica la igualdad de derechos para todos, independientemente de la identidad de género o color de piel, y que hay democracia para que todos participen en las elecciones y en la dirección de su país.

Está calculado y es intencional, un arma para justificar el verdadero bloqueo genocida. Es una campaña de propaganda para crear dudas, incertidumbre y dividir a las millones de personas que han llegado a conocer Cuba, su pueblo, su socialismo a través de visitar Cuba y experimentarlo por sí mismos.

Esta campaña regurgita las mismas mentiras que impregnaron la cultura popular estadounidense sobre Cuba después de la revolución, [pero] se ve refutada por el movimiento solidario, especialmente en las comunidades negras cada vez que las delegaciones y líderes cubanos llegaban a las Naciones Unidas en Nueva York.

Esas mentiras no pueden ser reinsertadas en la mente de las personas que han viajado a Cuba, que han estudiado en Cuba, que han observado que Cuba no tiene inversiones extranjeras, ni bases ni concesiones extractivas en ninguna parte. O en el

movimiento de justicia climática que sabe que Fidel habló en Riverside sobre el peligro de la extinción masiva debido al cambio climático. Pero las mentiras pueden empujar a Cuba a la parte inferior de la lista de preocupaciones. Es por eso que en los Estados Unidos debemos actuar en todos los sectores y plataformas para #unblockCuba (#DesbloquearCuba).

Hay herramientas poderosas en la batalla de ideas, no sólo habladas o escritas, sino en hechos. ¿Por qué otra cosa los Estados Unidos restringirían las visas para que los profesionales médicos hablaran en conferencias; para que los académicos cubanos participen en LASA?

Las becas de la Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina, el desarrollo de medicamentos para mejorar la vida humana, por ejemplo, eliminando el horror de la amputación de las extremidades debido a las úlceras diabéticas que son costosas y rentables. ¿Hay una familia de clase trabajadora cuyo pariente o amigo no tenga diabetes y tema una amputación? Las mismas ciudades donde se han recordado los servicios humanos para pagar el servicio de la deuda a los bancos y donde los dólares de los impuestos [del pueblo] van dirigidos a alimentar al ejército y a la policía, están mirando hacia Cuba.

Los médicos cubanos vinieron a Chicago para ayudar a mejorar los resultados maternos e infantiles. Detroit está investigando la colaboración en salud. Y este mes Nueva Orleans firmó un memorando de entendimiento con Cuba.

Para mí, y humildemente sugeriría para nosotros en los Estados Unidos, participar en la batalla de las ideas es el mensaje importante para hoy.

Pero, ¿por qué Cuba? El ejemplo de Fidel, la revolución cubana y las generaciones que se criaron para ser como el Che, son el poderoso antídoto contra la cultura deshumanizadora, divisiva y de consumo impulsada por el capitalismo y sus medios de comunicación de masas.

Es un legado de Fidel con el que todos podemos construir el mejor mundo que es posible y necesario.

Fuente: MinRex – Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, República de Cuba

Cheryl LaBash:

What Fidel means to me today

Cheryl LaBash's speech on a panel organized by the Cuban Embassy in the United States as a tribute to Fidel Castro's life. LaBash is a co-chair of the National Network on Cuba.

I am humbled and honored to be on this panel today. I do not have a deep personal story like we have heard in the past two years about working together with Cuba's historic leader Fidel Castro whose life, work and example we remember here today. Really I have been the young woman in the back row, who though now no longer young and often no longer in the back row, still tries to absorb

lessons from the Cuban revolution, to understand the world and act to change it.

My work in solidarity with Cuba was interrupted when I began a new job in the 1990s. Inspecting Detroit road construction required me to work overtime from April to November — sun up to sun down and week-

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