



Toronto Forum on Cuba

Newsletter

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Volume #61

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Issue #2

May Day, Romerías de Mayo ... MAY 30TH

This May has been one of the most blessed in many aspects.

May Day was welcomed in the morning by a wide participation in a cross-unions solidarity action for the 18-month long striking Steelworkers. The message was clear, *"one day longer one day stronger"* declared the striking workers and their supporters as they showed their determination against the giant multinational Crown Cans in response to its drive to cut wages, benefits and union busting.

In the afternoon, we witnessed the thousands of people who turned out declaring that *No One Is Illegal*, as supporters of undocumented migrants marched alongside their indigenous brothers and sisters for justice and for an inquiry into the deaths and disappearances of thousands of indigenous women and girls. The air was palpable with joy and solidarity as May Day is slowly being reclaimed in Toronto as a historical achievement of the working people!

Later, I was on my way to Holguín, Cuba to take in the 22nd edition of the Romerías de Mayo International Festival of Young Artists (visit our website's culture section for more info). A gathering of artists from 25 countries, performing all elements of culture throughout Holguín (also known as the City of Parks), inspired by the festival's motto: *"Porque no hay hoy sin ayer" - "Because there is no today without yesterday"*.

Under the leadership of the Hermanos Saíz Association (the Cuban organization of young artists and writers), Cuban youth and its collectives certainly gave the festival their all. Alexis Triana, Romerías de Mayo's founding member and President, along with his troupe of hundreds (mainly university students and young student volunteers) proved that it is possible to "do more with less". Organizing a World Festival of Culture without the benefit of a governmental budget and with the aim of preserving a culture which is founded on the principle that **"Homeland Is Humanity"**.

First class art exhibitions; poetry master lectures; dance, song and theatre performances, and much more. It was truly an eye-opening experience to attend such an arts extravaganza representing a multitude of cultural backgrounds, freely available for everyone to enjoy in parks and cultural centers throughout the city and with the readily available assistance to satisfy all of the participants' and delegates' needs.

Yes! Romerías de Mayo, also featured a meeting of some of the Cuban internationalist healthcare workers who fought Ebola face to face in West Africa with young medical students and other festival goers. The Minister of Culture, Julián González Toledo, the General Secretary of the Workers' Central Union of Cuba, Ulises Guilarte, and the Advisor to the President of the Councils of State and Ministers, the former Minister of Culture Abel Prieto, listened to the concerns and discussions, as well as taking part in the exchange.

And Yes! The young cultural activists of Cuba humbly proved that it is possible to treat life as a right, as the island nation of Cuba does when it sends its medical troops to save lives, rather than sending troops for death and destruction.

Toronto and Halifax join in!

This year's Romerías de Mayo was important for some Torontonians as well. For the first time, Social Work Studies students from George Brown College participated as delegates to perform and they enjoyed learning and deepening their understanding on the issue of culture. In addition, the young members of New Tradition Music performed at the Casa de la Rumba, sharing their Colombian-African rhythms with Cuban musicians, dancers and with the audience. I would also like to mention that about 43 students from a Nova Scotia Art School also attended and they were just amazed during the inaugural activities of the Festival on the 3rd of May.

The energizing impact of this festival prompted many delegates to plan on doubling our efforts in order to have a much larger participation from here and from other nations in the future.

The second week of May blessed us with a masterful presentation by Professor Michael Keefer in a packed venue at Beit Zatoun, a cultural centre dedicated to raising issues concerning social justice, for the launch of his new book *"Hard Truths for Canada about Israel and Palestine"*. The lively discussion and the audience's participation emphasized the continuous need for declaring our solidarity with the Palestinian people and they also

emphasized the reasons for which everyone shall oppose Bill-C51 and its traps for activists in the boycott movement against Israel.

On Friday, May 15th we heard the humble yet moving words of Dr. José de Jesús Portilla García at A Different Booklist, as he explained to the audience why "healthcare is not a business but a human right" in Cuba. Through his elaborate facts and figures slide show presentation, the audience learned of Cuba's unquestionable internationalist and humanist approach towards the healthcare needs of humanity. Whenever and wherever Cubans could save lives with their expertise and medical achievements (such as vaccines and medications) they will be there, from the U.S. to West Africa to Toronto, where Nabeel Yar Khan was the first student from Canada to be granted a medical scholarship to Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine.

The event commemorating Malcolm X on Saturday May 17th at Beit Zatoun, forged memorable impressions. Organized by the African Canadian Muslim Association, the event brought together spoken word artists, drummers, musicians, poets, historians, community leaders and activists. It was decided that Malcolm X Day will take place every year on the same day so that, throughout the year, we could explore more of Al Hajj Malik Al-Shabazz' contributions to fighting injustice anywhere, while he never ever allowed anyone to take away his uncompromising dedication to the cause of justice for all and, in particular, for those of us of African ancestry and for the Muslim communities that are ever more under attack, bearing the brunt of the racist slurs which Malcolm X had so firmly stood up against.

Sunday Poetry at Ellington's Café was dedicated to the cause of political prisoners of the Empire and its allies. A drum circle, music and poetry accompanied dialogues about Mumia Abu Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Oscar López Rivera, Irish Prisoners of War and about the issues facing the indigenous communities as they resist the destruction of their traditional and cultural way of life and the threats resulting from the possible application of Bill-C51.

Since the beginning of the month, young Muslim poets/activists in Toronto have begun organizing a Walk for Palestine action of solidarity that, in of itself, speaks volumes of not only the energy and the depth of the international solidarity with the cause of the occupied and oppressed Palestinian people, but it also shows that the imperialist propaganda machine of racist slurs name-calling and the imperialist system's unjustly imposed wars on Muslim peoples and others, have neither broken the will, nor scared the very youth and teenagers that they are trying to stamp out!

On May 30th we will be marching in solidarity with Palestinians in the daytime, led by very young Muslim cultural activists and in the evening we will join Dr. José de Jesús Portilla García and Fernando González. Fernando is one of the Cuban Five anti-terrorist political prisoners of the empire, who spent over 15 years of their youth defying U.S.-based terrorism against his and other nations, will be Toronto's guest. It will truly be a historical day for those who believe that unjust wars of occupation and imperialist-backed terrorism must be fought against.

For photos/video reportage of the events mentioned please visit www.torontoforumoncuba.com and [Sunday Poetry's Facebook page](#)).

As a small collective, we promise to make sure that the end of May activities will be as fruitful and history-making as the ones that took place from the beginning of the month.

Join us so that, together, we can do more to bring out the truth to as many people as possible.

Take care and have a nice day.

Brotherly,

Morteza Gorgzadeh
Coordinator
Toronto Forum on Cuba

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Recent additions to our Gallery

- * *Romerias de Mayo 2015*
- * *Celebrate Malcom X Day*
- * *Sunday Poetry: Breaking the Chains - Imperialism, Colonialism and political prisoners*
- * *Celebrating the Life of Padre Romero*
- * *No More Silence*

Sign the petition: [Obama Repeal the Executive Order](#)



We seek to find links with associations, foundations, organizations, universities, etc, with which we can establish a bridge of cooperation and cultural exchanges with artists and intellectuals of the province of Matanzas, Cuba. **[PLEASE CLICK HERE](#) for more details and for our contact information.**

Buscamos encontrar enlaces con asociaciones, fundaciones, organizaciones, universidades, etc, con las que podemos establecer un puente de cooperación e intercambio cultural con artistas e intelectuales de la provincia de Matanzas, Cuba. **[HAGA CLICK AQUÍ](#) para más detalles y para nuestra información de contacto.**

*****CALENDAR OF EVENTS*****

SAT. MAY 30

WALK-FOR-PALESTINE

BEGINS AT Yonge-Dundas Sq.

3:00 PM

WALK TO the U.S. Consulate, 360 University Ave.

MAY 15, 1948 - THE DAY THE ILLEGAL STATE OF ISRAEL WAS CREATED - and it is the day Palestinians and the world alike, remember as **AL-NAKBA** ("The Catastrophe").

By the end of 1948, terrorist (Zionist) militias had driven out 750,000 Palestinians and there are 5 million Palestinian refugees waiting to return to their homeland today.

This marks the beginning of Palestinian exile and ethnic cleansing from Palestine - cleansing that continues today.

With this in mind, as a collective, we intend to mark the month of May in remembrance of the Nakba, encouraging solidarity with the Palestinian people for their resistance and their right to return, and a continued effort to raise awareness of the Palestinian plight.

The Walk for Palestine is a day for all people from all walks of life to come together in solidarity for the people of Palestine.

This year the walk will be held at Yonge-Dundas Sq. at 3PM and we will walk to the US Consulate (360 University Ave).

For more info, endorsements and to volunteer please contact: walkforpalestine@gmail.com
Visit our FaceBook Page: Walk For Palestine

Cross-Canada Tour

**Cuban Doctor to Speak on
Cuba's struggle against Ebola in West Africa**

Saturday May 30 at 7:30 p.m.

Steelworkers Hall at 25 Cecil Street
(East of Spadina Avenue, 1 block south of College Street)

DR. JOSÉ PORTILLA GARCIA has worked in solidarity and humanitarian medical missions around the world including fighting Ebola in West Africa. This will be the last stop on his three-week cross-Canada tour to raise awareness of Cuba's extensive international humanitarian work.

FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ one of the Cuban Five heroes, and now, Vice-President of "Instituto Cubano de Amistad con Los Pueblos" (ICAP – English translation: "Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples"). Fernando was released and returned to Cuba after 15 years in a U.S. prison for fighting terrorism against Cuba. He will speak about US Aggression in Relation to Cuba

FREE ADMISSION

The tour is organized by the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC).
For information contact Isaac Saney, CNC Co-chair and National Spokesperson at isaney@hotmail.com or cell: 902-449-4967.
www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca

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ROMERÍAS DE MAYO - 2015



- [Cuba offers free medical school to Black and Latino Americans](#)
- [Cuba doctors in action again!](#)
- [Cuba's medical magicians](#)
- [Cuba-US: What Happened in January 1961, as Seen in May 2015](#)
- [Latin America's 1st Climbing Park Opens in Cuba](#)
- [How Cuba Could Stop the Next Ebola Outbreak](#)

- [Como funciona la USAID contra los pueblos de nuestra América](#)
- [Cuba.- EU.- Sucedido en Enero 1961, Visto en Mayo 2015](#)
- [Momentos de la VIII Jornada Cubana contra la Homofobia y la Transfobia](#)
- [Cuña radial Cierre 2da Caminata Nacional x Oscar](#)
- [Sudor Patrio](#)

- Raúl: "We stand by and support Algeria"
- Japanese Foreign Minister visits Fidel
- Oscar López: 'Emulate revolutionary Cuba!'
- Venezuela Rejects Attacks against Cabello, Government Launches Campaign
- The Venezuelan Revolution is Invincible; Affirms Cuban Antiterrorist
- OPERATION CONDOR: National Security Archive Presents Trove of Declassified Documentation in Historic Trial in Argentina
- US is out to destabilise Venezuela
- And what about Washington's terrorists in Miami?
- The Second American Revolution Is Underway
- If Baltimore were not in the United States
- Cuban 5: The True Story Told on teleSUR
- Chávez's dream fulfilled
- Gerardo Hernández: Without solidarity, we would not have returned
- Shimon Yelinek: cara oculta del Mossad contra Venezuela y el 9/11
- La USAID es una fachada para financiar la guerra de Cuarta Generación
- Homenaje y decisión en la Plaza Roja
- Fundador de Reporteros Sin Fronteras, denunciado por fichar niños musulmanes
- La educación pública en Florida y en Miami acosada por políticos, cabilderos y mercaderes
- La Segunda Revolución Estadounidense Está en Camino
- Si Baltimore no fuera Estadounidense
- La Bienal de Venecia abre hoy sus puertas con obras centradas en temas políticos
- Se cumplió el sueño de Chávez
- Gerardo Hernández: Sin solidaridad, no habríamos regresado
- Cuba le salvó la vida a Ronald Reagan



[LINKS / ENLACES](#)

- [National Committee to Free the Cuban Five](#)
 - [Int'l Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five](#)
 - [Antiterroristas](#)
 - [Canadian Network on Cuba](#)
 - [Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Network](#)
 - [Embassy of Cuba in Canada](#)
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