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IRAQ

U.S. imperialist agenda & the deepening crisis in Iraq

By Alison Bodine

September 3rd was the last time US President George Bush set foot on Iraqi soil, bloodied and wrecked after over 4 years of US occupation. At this time he had a few words to share with the people of Iraq and the world:

"When we begin to draw down troops from Iraq, it will be from a position of strength and success, not from the position of fear and failure."

For the people of Iraq who have endured an estimated 1.2 million deaths (UK-based ORB polling agency), and countless humiliations since the March 2003 military invasion, the idea of ever seeing the US leave seems distant or impossible, let alone from a position of "success" and "strength." The US has a long-term plan for their continued occupation of Iraq and it includes continued death and

Iraq, the largest in the world. It will eventually staff an estimated 4,000 regular employees, contractors, local Iraqi employees and visitors. It will also house 619 apartments and 27 separate buildings behind the well-secured walls of the "Green Zone"

provision and the legal loop-hole allowing them to escape charges under US law came under fire from people internationally. As a way to avoid further embarrassment and scrutiny the US government signed a new agreement in December 2007.

This agreement means that contract mercenaries are now accountable under US law. Unfortunately, this still does not mean that they will be charged and they are still not held accountable under Iraqi law.

Human Crisis: Daily Life in Iraq

Over the past four years of US-led occupation, the human crisis has deepened in Iraq. Iraqi women and children have felt the greatest impact from the presence of hundreds of thousands of foreign military troops

been another part of the deepening economic crisis in the US. This crisis has been marked most recently by the devaluation of the US dollar, the crisis in mortgage and the banking market and the continued growth of poverty in the US. The crisis that the US has created in Iraq is directly tied to the crisis in the US and the disgusting amount of money spent to fuel death and destruction.

Resistance to the Occupation: in Iraq and World-wide

For over four years the US has been relying on its' consolidation of the occupation to demoralize the Iraqi people, and the movement of resistance against their continued presence in Iraq. Contrary to their hopes, the number of demonstrations, strikes and attacks on occupying forces has increased drastically as the occupation has continued. The US is now confronted with a deep political, social and military crisis. This is why they need permanent presence in Iraq. This is also why



Protesting an occupation-built concrete barrier in Baghdad. April 23, 2007.



Protesting an occupation-built concrete barrier in Baghdad. April 23, 2007.

in Baghdad and serve as the main base for representing US interests in Iraq.

After 4 and a half years of occupation the US has not established anything close to stability or the assurance

husbands have been killed by the occupation and the violence it has created (Aljazeera News: "Debating the US troop 'surge')."

destruction for the people of Iraq and a rising massive humanitarian crisis.

How the US is turning Iraq into a permanent military base

In a declaration of principles signed by George Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki on November 26th 2007 the ground work was laid for a long-term agreement on future cooperation between the US and Iraq. In the political, economic and security (military) sphere the US and the installed Iraqi Prime Minister are starting to plan for an "enduring" relationship to last well into the future. The plan will include United States support for the "democratic regime in Iraq against domestic and external dangers," according to Al-Maliki. It also includes plans to protect the US-drafted Iraqi constitution, give preferential treatment to US investments and continued support for a strategic partnership. This is the beginnings of their plans for "enduring" occupation.

Another part of continued US presence in Iraq are the 14 "enduring" (read: permanent) bases whose construction began as soon as the US invaded. These bases are long-term encampments for US forces in Iraq and outposts for military and government policy advisors that will remain in Iraq beyond any troop withdrawal or formal end to the occupation of Iraq.

To compliment US bases and the continued occupation, the US has also built a \$740 Million Embassy in

of a successful US proxy regime in Iraq. They know that after a troop

withdrawal there will be an internal struggle in Iraq and that it is very possible that its' outcome will not be in favour of the US. As an insurance plan for all the work they have done to fuel US interests in Iraq, they now have the military bases and US Embassy at their back.

Mercenaries and Continued Occupation

Continued US presence in Iraq would not be possible without the assistance of 120,000 mercenaries in Iraq, the contract employees of military corporations such as Blackwater USA, DynCorp International and Armor Group. According to US "Order 17", issued in 2004, all mercenaries operating in Iraq are exempt from obeying Iraqi law. In this way mercenaries are allowed to operate without rule of law or accountability to anyone, except the corporations that employ them. This has meant numerous tragedies, with the lives and dignities of Iraqi people disappearing under the radar.

After a September 16th shooting in which 17 Iraqi civilians were needlessly killed by a Blackwater guard in a Baghdad square, this

taking away their basic human rights to housing, food, water, education and a future with guns, bombs and tanks.

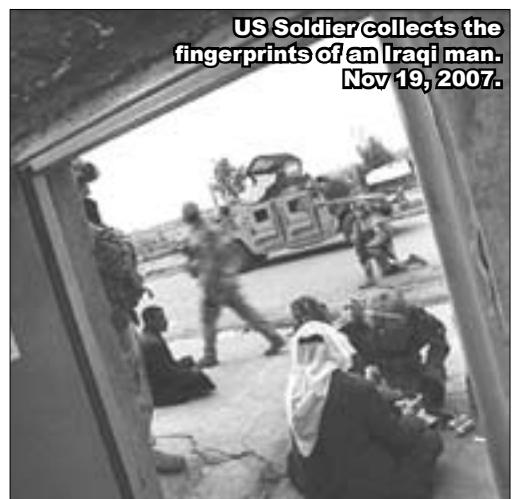
According to the Iraq Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, over 1.6 million children under the age of 12 have become homeless in Iraq. This is almost 70 percent of the 2.2 million homeless and internally displaced persons in Iraq. To make the situation even worse, internally displaced Iraqis are not finding the infrastructure and basic aid that they need anywhere in Iraq. As one example, the Basra province in Southern Iraq can no longer handle families and children seeking refuge. A senior Iraqi official in the Basra Governing Council, Hassan Abdul-Kareem, explained to IRIN News Service. "We cannot cope

with any more families seeking refuge in our province, whatever their reasons. The governorate is seriously affected by the high number of displaced families, health services have deteriorated, schools are overcrowded and we aren't even able to offer a good service to our locals. Things have become worse since the high influx of new arrivals,"

The situation has also deteriorated for girls hoping to attend school in Iraq. Families and mothers are worried about sending their girls to school for fear that they will be raped or killed. They are also needed to stay at home as one-million families are now headed by widows whose

The Heavy Costs of the Occupation

Everyday the US spends \$280 Million towards death and destruction in Iraq. According to the American Friends Services Committee, a US based peace and justice organization, if you include not just the immediate costs of the war, but also ongoing factors such as long-term health care



US Soldier collects the fingerprints of an Iraqi man. Nov 19, 2007.

for veterans, interest on debt and replacement of military hardware, that number grows to \$720 Million a day. The American Friends Services Committee also broke down these numbers into what the money could have bought for social service in the US including: homes for almost 6,500 families or health care for 423,529 children, or could outfit 1.27 million homes with renewable electricity. The US-Congressional report entitled "The Hidden Costs of the Iraq War," stated the cost of the war from 2002 to present as being \$1.3 Trillion.

Not only does this money mean the destruction of civil society and human life in Iraq, it has also

the people of Iraq will keep fighting any way that they can for their land, lives and dignity.

The continued struggle of the Iraqi people against the occupation and the US crisis in Iraq has also meant that its own enlisted fighters, the US military forces, are demoralizing. US Army suicide rates are at a record high of 18.4 per 100,000 active duty soldiers, according to military reports. A CBS News investigation also showed that military veterans aged 20-24, meaning those whom have served during the so-called "War on Terror" in Iraq and Afghanistan, had the highest suicide rate among all veterans, estimated between two and four times higher than civilians the same age. The US cannot fight without a willing army, and suicides rates are only one of the signs that the US is losing ground with the troops.

If the Iraqis kick the US out of Iraq it will mean a weakening of the position of the US and Israel that would accelerate the struggle of people all over the Middle East against Imperialism. In this new era of war and occupation which emerged as the "War on Terror" following Sept 11th 2001, we must come together as poor and working people against the occupation of Iraq. As peace and human loving people, we have no other choice but to work to build a united and effective antiwar movement to end this brutal war and echo the demands of the Iraqi people for life and self-determination!

US Out Now! Bring the Troops Home Now!

Self-determination for all oppressed nations!



Rally in Tehran, November 4, 2007.



Protesting the war in Iraq at the British Embassy in Tehran, May, 2004.



Iran, May 2005.



NO WAR ON IRAN!

WHY THE US HAS TARGETED IRAN

By Ali Yerevani

In 2 parts

Part 1: Deception and Lies as a Method of Politics Against Iran - National Intelligence Estimate [NIE] - McCain: "Bomb, Bomb, Bomb Iran" - US relations with Iran: Hostility Then, Hostility Now, and Hostility Tomorrow

Part 2 (in the February issue of FTT): Iranian Revolution - Who is Dangerous and threatening the World, Iran or US? - Military Build Up for War - Why the New Era of War and Occupation - No Confusion: Our Tasks Inside and Outside of Iran - Iranian Community Unite - Don't Attack Iran

Part 1

Deception and Lies as a Method of Politics Against Iranian People

On August 28, 2007 US President George Bush declared that the

163,000 US troops in Iraq, claimed "there is very clear evidence of Iranian involvement in attacks on US forces in Iraq". US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (who always feels she shouldn't get behind in the race to blame every problem in Iraq on Iran), in response to Petraeus' report, stated that, although security has improved in Iraq, Iran is to blame for slowing the pace of security improvements since Iran has always been a "troublesome neighbor."

For many years the US has also been accusing Iran of developing nuclear weapons. This accusation has been used by the US to label Iran as a 'terrorist threat' and part of an 'axis of evil' that should be internationally sanctioned, isolated and potentially militarily invaded.

In October 2007 the US escalated its drive for war and invasion against the people of Iran with the

European and international banks joined the US to tighten financial transactions to limit Iran's ability to do business with the outside world. They did this in order to keep Iran in a dire position, to make Iran vulnerable to a lack of exchange and goods, and to eventually cripple the Iranian economy to make it easier for imperialists to attack Iran militarily.

While the Iranian government has never accepted the accusation that they are developing nuclear weapons, and while there has never been any proof of this allegation, on December 3, 2007, the US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) reported that Iran stopped any nuclear arms work or research in 2003. Although this report somehow indicates that Iran had a plan to make an atomic bomb up to 2003, at the same time it was indeed a blow to the US war drive propaganda against Iran. Despite this set back however,

the announcement of the NIE report on December 3, Russia delivered the first shipment of nuclear fuel to Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant. Suffering from this partial defeat George Bush accelerated his Islamophobia campaign by calling Muslims Islamofascist; and he accelerated his Iranophobia campaign by saying that Iran is dangerous to world security regardless of the NIE report. Then, during his latest tour to the Middle East in January 2008, he tried to sell this rhetoric by turning up the heat and saying that Iran is a "threat" to the international community and must be "confronted" before it's "too late". With all the positive and

McCain: "Bomb, Bomb, Bomb Iran"

It hasn't been very long since millions of people around the world



Picket action in Vancouver BC demanding "No War on Iran". Dec 10, 2007.

watched the inhuman and shameful youtube video of Sen. McCain of Arizona expressing his wish to bomb Iran to settle accounts with the government of Iran. In the video he mockingly sang a Beach Boys song, substituting the words with

US would "confront Tehran's murderous activities" in Iraq. In his report to the US Senate on Monday September 10, General David Petraeus, the commander of

announcement of new sanctions attacking the Iranian Defence Ministry, Revolutionary Guards, and major Iranian banks. The US state and treasury departments also labeled the Revolutionary Guard Corps "proliferates of weapons of mass destruction" and "a supporter of terrorism". This truly was an unofficial declaration of war on the Iranian government and the Iranian people. Major

George Bush maintains that Iran is still a "danger to the world" and the US will keep "all options on the table" - a statement that brings a terrible threat against the people of Iran.

National Intelligence Estimate [NIE]

The US, France and the UK were indeed very disturbed by the NIE report. Although the report was not suggesting that the imperialist ruling classes should stop their war drive against Iran, the report itself was indeed an interruption to the imperialists' rhetoric for war against Iran. The first loss came when Russia and China announced that the NIE report eliminated the foundation of further sanctions against Iran. On December 14, just two weeks after

negative aspects of the NIE report it is correct to state that this report exploited the lies and hypocrisy of the George Bush anti-Iran propaganda to some significance. This could be sensed very clearly when ruling class spokespersons criticized the Bush Administration's handling of anti-Iran rhetoric and the failure of the containment policy, which we saw in the latest George Bush tour to the Middle East. Such criticism came in the New York Times Editorial on December 27 in response to NIE scandal, "While the risk that Tehran might divert the low-enriched uranium for weapons use is relatively small, the political significance of the shipment is not. It is the latest reminder that the Bush administration's Iran policy is not working..."

"Bomb, bomb, bomb Iran". After carefully observing the motions of the US government, Congress and the military forces, one can claim that Sen. McCain pretty much represents the attitude and desires of the whole US ruling class toward Iran and its people. Since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the US government has always looked for the opportunity to go to war against Iran - either to invade militarily or by massive bombing.

Many people in the activist or progressive community saw the NIE report as a decisive blow to the US war drive. While partly true, nonetheless, their wishful thinking led them to believe that military attack on Iran has been taken off the agenda of the US ruling class. Some even suggested that the report was a coup d'etat by one wing of the US ruling class against another wing. This is the most false reading of the US ruling elite and their intentions. The US ruling elite in its entirety, with the exception of some insignificant individuals, are for war against Iran. With a careful study of most of the statements by the US government, and other individuals within the ruling class, it becomes clear that the question for them is not whether they attack Iran or not, the question is what is the best time or better to say, WHEN to do it. The NIE report was a cautionary warning based on the bitter experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq. It brought the message to the US ruling class as a whole that there is a need for more preparation and more careful planning before the execution of any attack on Iran. Democrats and Republicans are both for war but with differences in tactics. *continued on page 3*



Picket action in Vancouver BC demanding "No War on Iran". Dec 10, 2007.

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By Thomas Anthony Davies

Another chapter in the fight for Sudan was opened in the Libyan capital of Tripoli, as two of three phases in another United Nations/African Union peace process have been completed. Leaders from around the world, including all 15 UN Security Council members, joined together once again to address the issue of "peace in Darfur". Unlike usual, they chose to include the Sudanese government, and had also invited all the major rebel groups in Sudan's Darfur region. What did they accomplish?

Nothing, is the consensus among most observers. Six of the many Darfur rebel groups who were supposed to be principal participants in negotiations with the Sudanese government refused to attend. Among those publicly boycotting the talks was the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), a major military power in the region. Another was the largest faction of the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA).

Concretely what this means is that the option for a negotiated solution becomes smaller and smaller, and many of the "rebel groups" have a responsibility for this. This becomes even more crucial as the UN attempts to push ahead with a 26,000 strong military force.

Manipulation

Why is the blame for this forced military solution heaved entirely on the shoulders of the Sudanese government by the UN, US, and UK? "They come to blame us. It's very much unfair," Sudan's UN Ambassador Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem told reporters. Sudan has already agreed to resolution 1769 authorizing 26,000 UN troops to take over from the 8,000 beleaguered African Union forces currently in the

country. It is consistent in engaging in international negotiations, while continuing to insist on the "African character" of the force stipulated in resolution 1769.

Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno blamed Sudan for not facilitating the acquisition of land and flight operations rights for UN aircraft, but then admitted that the UN still lacked the vehicles to perform many operations. This includes one heavy and one medium transport unit (18 helicopters) and one light tactical helicopter unit (six helicopters). In addition, a pledge for a reconnaissance company had been withdrawn, and he suggested they might "borrow" from other peacekeeping operations.

Despite some mention of the necessity of the rebel groups' participation in negotiations, the UN's focus has clearly been on getting the additional hardware for the military operation, or increasing troop levels to "compensate" for their absence.

Grounds for Suspicion

Following the second Libyan meeting, Justice and Equality Movement leader Khalil Ibrahim threatened 135 Chinese engineers and medical workers who had entered the country under resolution 1769, "I am not saying I will attack them. I will not say I will not attack them. What I am saying is that they are taking our oil for blood." His justification is China's growing economic links in Sudan, which have risen 124 percent in the first half of this year compared to 2006.

Does he not remember the US' huge investments in oil fields in Sudan? In 1981, the US corporation Chevron and the dictatorship of Sudanese President Jaafar al-Nimeiri (1964-1984) formed the White Nile

Petroleum Corporation to oversee oil production in the South. The US had little to say about human rights violations at that point, until Chevron suspended its southern Sudan operations in 1985, obviously underestimating their profitability.

Many Sudanese also died of totally preventable and treatable diseases because of a US cruise missile attack ordered by President Bill Clinton against the El Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum on August 20, 1998. The plant provided 60 percent of the available medicine in Sudan.

Why does JEM have so little to say about the US, UK, and Canada's involvement in all of this? These same countries who are playing principle roles in getting troops on the ground in Sudan, are the same countries which were responsible for getting troops on the ground in the current bloody and vicious occupations in the resource-rich Middle East. Where does he think the term "oil for blood" came from? Certainly not from 135 Chinese engineers and medical workers.

Whose Side Are You On?

On October 23rd, JEM kidnapped five Chinese oil workers, and have followed this with the December 11th attack on another oil field in the Kordofan region.

Whether they or the five other groups which boycotted the UN/AU peace talks will acknowledge it – by making negotiations impossible and attacking China their actions coincide with the imperialist campaign to invade Sudan and overtake the country. According to figures from the Investment Ministry, foreign

Taking Sides: Imperialist Campaign Against Sudan Continues



Sudanese students demonstrate in Khartoum against UN intervention.

investment in Sudan has quadrupled since 1996 to about \$2.3 billion last year, and the US, UK, and Canada have been missing out for longer than they can stand.

This is not, and has never been, an issue of supporting the government of Sudan. This is not, and has never been, an issue of denying the huge human crisis in Darfur. This is not an issue of ideology. This is an issue of humanity. This is an issue of seeing clearly what has happened to Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, and

Sudan's neighbor Somalia after interventions orchestrated by the same countries which push for a military force in Sudan. "Democracy", "Peacekeeping", "The War on Terrorism" – have any of these justifications ever been real? Even a brief look at Sudanese history will show that what *is* real is their capacity to fight and to develop their own society. This is the right of all oppressed people, one which we must all defend.

US/UN HANDS OFF SUDAN!

Iran

continued from page 2

The NIE report is basically a pretext for war since it suggests that there is no guarantee that Iran will not restart the so-called nuclear weapons program that they allegedly stopped in 2003.

US relations with Iran: Hostility Then, Hostility Now, and Hostility Tomorrow

Understandably it is very difficult for Iranian people to trust the US government's intentions towards Iran. The Iranian peoples' suspicions towards the United States are not based on a cynical national psychology but are based on historical facts and a long history of the plundering of the resources of Iran. In the last 50 years this relationship has been based on exploitation, suppression and the pillaging of Iranians by the various United States governments. In 1953 the CIA, with help from the UK, organized a coup d'état against the democratically elected, popular government of Mohammad Mosaddegh. The government of Mosaddegh was a progressive nationalist government which successfully nationalized Iranian oil in April 1951 with the support of millions of masses in Iran. The newly installed monarch, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, with the help of the CIA and the US government, jailed, tortured and killed thousands of Iranian working people, political activists and progressive people in order to consolidate itself. All progressive institutions that had

previously been formed during the Mosaddegh government, including political parties and unions, were shut down. Severe repression was imposed on the Iranian people in order to guarantee the interests of imperialist countries, especially the United States.

The US and the CIA then formed and developed one of the most vicious secret police forces in the world, SAVAK. Until the Iranian revolution of 1979, SAVAK tortured and killed more than 100,000 Iranian people, also with the help of the Israeli secret police MOSSAD. From the coup d'état of 1953 to the revolution of 1979, US corporations stole billions of dollars out of the pockets of Iranian working and poor people. They elevated poverty and misery to such an unprecedented level that a combination of repression and the economic/social crisis caused the opposition of millions of people to the US imperialist domination and its puppet Shah regime.

The process ended with departure of Shah Mohammad Reza in January and the victory of the Iranian revolution in February 1979. The three main slogans of the Iranian revolution were 'Down with the Shah', 'Down with the US', and 'Free all Political Prisoners'. Heroic Iranian masses, with intelligence, determination and discipline, created advanced political consciousness and powerful political will. With overthrowing the monarchy, who was supported not only by a vicious secret police but by the presence of more than 35,000 US military advisors and troops, as well as by kicking out US imperialism from

Iran, they opened a new anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist chapter around the world. This occurred not only in the Middle East, but the wave and message of this anti-imperialist liberation movement shook countries as far as West Africa, Indonesia and central Asia. The US ruling class has never forgotten and forgiven the Iranian people for their historical precedent.

Iranian and US relations after the Iranian revolution got worse, basically for the US, immediately after the revolution imposed all kinds of harsh measures on the Iranian people. This hostile attitude became more apparent when the US immediately froze some Iranian financial and non-financial assets in the US. Then a series of economic embargos were imposed on Iran, including refusing to sell parts and other important goods that Iranian industry needed very badly in order to function and produce. In November 1979 Iranian students and young people took over the US embassy in to protest to the US assisting the Shah to reside in the United States. Their demand was that US must extradite the Shah to Iran in order to put him on trial for the crimes he had done during his reign. The US government never gave any response to this legitimate demand of Iranian people. In September 1980

Saddam Hussein, tyrant of Iraq, attacked and invaded Iran with the encouragement and support, especially of the US, and of some Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. This American planned supported war killed more than 2 million of people on the both sides. During the war the US, UK, Germany and France armed and financed the Saddam war drive and even supplied him with all kinds of chemical weapons. None of these imperialist governments or the UN Security Council said anything against this inhuman and criminal act, let alone to condemn it. The hypocrisy becomes even more apparent when the same countries, especially the US attacked and occupied Iraq for having chemical weapons, which they themselves provided to Iraq.

In July 1989 an American navy

ship, the USS Vincennes, shot down an Iranian civilian plane, killing all 290 passengers and the crew in hopes of provoking Iran for a large scale confrontation. In January 2002, George Bush in his State of the Union speech referred to Iran – as well as N.Korea and Iraq – as part of an "axis of evil," saying the country is actively pursuing weapons of mass destruction. In 2006 US Congress appropriated \$75 million to the State Department to use towards "democracy building" in Iran. This is was a turning point for how the US ruling class has finalized its war drive against Iran. Since October 2006, the US has been carrying out a massive military build up in the Persian Gulf. Provocations, Sanctions and military build up are all about a war drive. Without a doubt the US is preparing for a vicious military attack on Iran.



By Shannon Bundock

An indignant Stephen Harper was quoted by CBC news on September 9th stating that he “profoundly disagrees” with a recent decision by Elections Canada to allow Muslim women to vote with their faces covered by burkas or niqabs. He went on to claim that this contravened a law passed in June 2007, Bill C-31, which according to Harper is “a law designed to have the visual identification of voters.” Interestingly, however, the law Harper refers to has no requirement for visual identification, and in fact allows a person to vote with 2 pieces of non-photo ID or if another voter vouches for their identity.

Now, this is really only a fragment of the long and drawn out dispute that has been stirred up by a collection of politicians. Through this they have effectively put into question the right of Muslim women to vote in Canada. As such, they have re-opened an aspect of a most fundamental right in the struggle for women’s equality - the right for women to vote.

The Nature of the Attack

After Elections Canada confirmed that there is no barrier to voting with a niqab or burka in Canada, a flood of protest came from a range of political parties. Conservative House Leader Peter Van Loan, who is the minister responsible for the country’s electoral laws called on “...all parties to form a united front and ask Elections Canada to reverse this decision.”

Along with the comments made by Stephen Harper, on October 26th his government introduced “An Act to Amend the Canada Elections Act (visual identification of voters)” which “expressly mandates that voters be required to have their faces uncovered when being identified to

vote”. Commonly in the media, this is referred to as the “show-your-face” bill.

The issue was already hot in Quebec before it hit the federal playing field. During Quebec elections in March, Quebec’s chief election officer ruled that Muslim women wearing niqabs or burkas had to show their faces when voting. Quebec Premier Jean Charest insisted that this policy should be applied across the board in Canada.

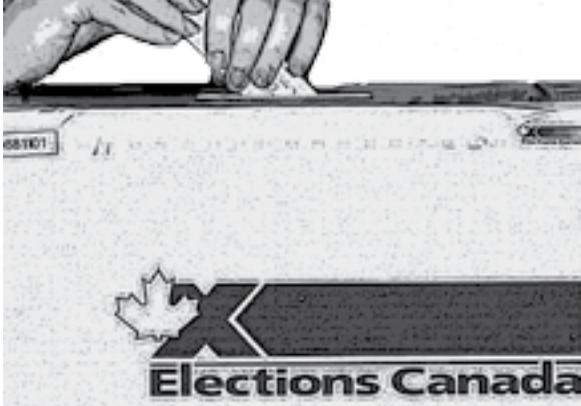
On November 27th NDP MP Yvon Godin stated that his party will support the “show-your-face” bill proposed by the Conservatives. With NDP support the government will have enough votes to pass the bill through the House of Commons.

The Bloc Québécois has forwarded concerns, but not in sympathy with the rights of Muslim women. Rather they think the law is *too* accommodating. According to a Globe and Mail article on November 28th, “the Bloc Québécois MPs told Mr. Van Loan they disapprove of one section in the bill that would allow veiled Muslim women to show their faces only to female electoral officers. Bloc MP Michel Guimond argued that in small communities, it is possible that only males will be available.”

As far as the Liberals are concerned, they initially supported the demand that Muslim women be required to remove their face coverings in order to vote. As the debate got a little hotter however, on November 30th, Liberal Party leader Stéphane Dion turned back on his words and stated that the Liberals had “over-reacted” and now in fact would not be supporting the Conservatives’

ELECTIONS IN CANADA Inclusive or Exclusive?

When the Hijab Exposes the Racist Electoral System



bill. No further explanation has come out as to why this change.

Effectively, however, the damage is already done. According to Conservative House leader Van Loan, there were 70 instances in the September federal by-elections in Quebec of voters showing up at the polls wearing face masks. Each of these cases was an apparent “protest” to the fact that currently Muslim women are not forced to remove their face coverings. This begs the question: would this have ever been an issue had it not been conjured up by the ruling parties in Canada? In commenting on this self-created crisis Van Loan then used the masked protests as round-about reasoning that the issue of

face coverings in elections must be addressed. “When people start to ridicule the rules that are in place for an election, that starts to erode public confidence in our system and I don’t think we as parliamentarians can stand by and allow this to continue,” said Van Loan.

Punching Holes in the Islamophobic Arguments

Despite the fact that there has been a very heavy campaign launched behind the “show-your-face” bill, there has also been serious criticism. The Toronto Star published an editorial on November 4th tearing apart the bill and pointing out “... there is not one shred of evidence that such a problem existed in the first place. Even Harper’s Conservative



The struggle for Women suffrage in Canada.

government has admitted ‘there was no apparent case of fraud’ in three federal by-elections that were held in September in Quebec, when unjustified hysteria over veiled Muslim women first boiled over.”

The editorial went on to conclude that “Harper has tried to dress up the bill as a means to ‘enhance public confidence in the democratic process.’ But it has nothing to do with electoral integrity and everything to do with pandering to narrow-minded fears about minorities.”

In September, Muslim journalist Yvonne Ridley responded to the controversy, stating, “the niqab is being used as a distraction here...The person in charge of a polling station cannot know every single voter by looking at them.”

Commenting on the subject, Montreal activist Samaa Elibiyari pointed out, “Muslims are criticized for not

engaging in democratic issues ... yet here is a group of women who want to engage in a democratic process and are being criticized for their style of dress.”

In more than one instance it has been pointed out that on the question of “visual-identification”, shouldn’t politicians in Canada be more concerned with the some 80,000 votes coming in via mail rather than a few Muslim women who would like to exercise their right to participate in Canada’s elections?

The following comment posted on an online forum on the issue also raised some more very interesting points: “I am stunned that so many care about what I choose to wear when there are so many other important issues simply devastating the country... through poverty, homelessness, war, the ever increasing amount of fallen soldiers, declining health care and the end of the world, the hot topic in Ottawa is if I reveal my face or choose to keep it covered when I go to vote in the upcoming election.”

In order to really smash the arguments in support of this bill, one must dig into the issue a little deeper to understand not only the baselessness of the attack, but why this attack was cooked up in the first place.

Digging Up the Roots of Attacks on Oppressed People

First of all, let’s take an example. In Quebec there are an estimated 50 Muslim women who wear a niqab or face covering. According to Sarah Elgazzar, a

spokeswoman with the Council on American Islamic Relations Canada, Muslim women in Canada have not asked that this issue be raised. And there was no veiling incident that preceded this political uproar. Now the question that really looms is how did this non-issue suddenly become front and center? And *why*? To understand this better, perhaps we should examine a few other cases where attacks on the Muslim community hit the news headlines.

A campaign emerged in Canada in 2004 and 2005 to stop the so-called “threat” of Sharia law in Canada. Since 1991 in Ontario it was legal for certain civil disputes to be settled through voluntary “faith-based-arbitration”. This was not regarding any particular faith and in no way superseded Canadian law. In 2004 a review of the Arbitration Act was held in Ontario and one recommendation was that “The Arbitration Act should continue to allow disputes to be arbitrated using religious law, if the safeguards currently prescribed and recommended by this review are observed.” Since it was instituted, Jews, Catholics, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mennonites had in some cases used faith-based arbitration to settle family or civil disputes. In 2003,

however, the Islamic Institute of Civil Justice said it wanted to set up its own faith-based arbitration panels under the Arbitration Act.

Don’t Attack Islam

After nearly 15 years on the books, a flood of fear-mongering hype rolled in. In November 2003, an inflammatory article was published on WorldNetDaily entitled “Canada prepares to enforce Islamic law”. Articles filled the news wires, threatening that Canada would be plunged into the dark ages by “backwards, anti-woman Muslim law”. The impact of the hype added fuel to the Islamophobic campaign that was already raging throughout Europe and North America. “The Threat of the Muslim World” was not only a justification for attacking Islamic countries in the Middle East, it was also the justification for suppressing Muslims at home. And in the end this stirred up more prejudice, more fear, and more hatred against Muslim people.

This hype and spin grew until finally in September 2005, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty said he was concerned religious family courts could “threaten our common ground”. He went on to announce “there will be no Sharia law in Ontario. There will be no religious arbitration in Ontario. There will be one law for all Ontarians.”

Similarly, in January 2006 an Islamophobic attack shook the world. Among others, a cartoon emerged in Denmark depicting the Prophet Mohammed with a bomb drawn onto his head. These racist and Islamophobic cartoons were published at a time when an intensive anti-Muslim campaign was, and still is, being engineered by the strategists of imperialist countries.



The campaign to demonize Muslims acts as a part of the strategy in the imperialist war drive aimed to plunder the wealth of the Middle East.

Islamophobic attacks are meant to further drag down, humiliate and dehumanize Muslims in the Middle East and throughout the world. More importantly, however, such attacks are fuel for the growth of Islamophobia and racism amongst oppressed people outside of the Middle East. By ridiculing and generating suspicion, hatred and division against Muslims, it makes it much easier for the leaders of war mongering countries to bomb and kill Muslim people, without a word of protest from the primarily non-Muslim populations residing in their own countries.

As such, the hype and fear mongering being drummed up with the “show-your-face” bill, is an equally vicious attack. It intends to foster anti-Muslim sentiment among non-Muslims in Canada and place the Muslim population in conflict with the rest of so-called “Canadian” society. As such it contributes to hammering a wedge between Muslims in Canada and the non-Muslim population. It plays upon the ignorance of non-Muslims in Canada and encourages

them to be suspicious and fearful of their Muslim neighbors.

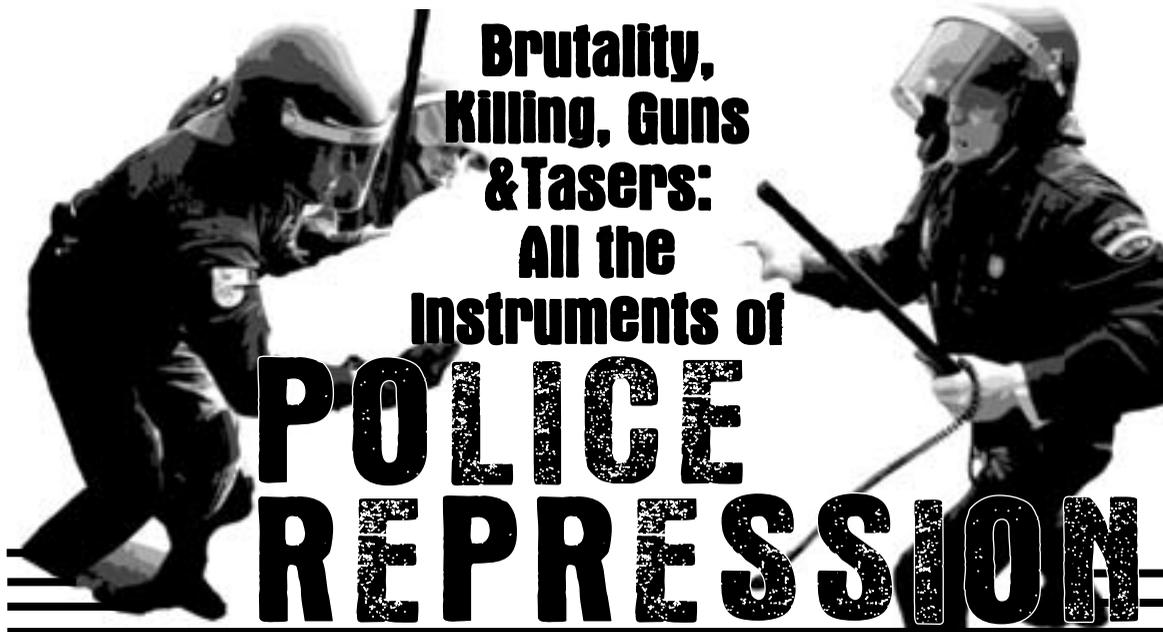
Islamophobia, The War At Home and The War Abroad

The fact is that right now the Middle East is the most critical and strategic region for imperialist countries to gain control over. The countries under attack, Iraq, Afghanistan... Iran, all have majority Muslim populations. To make the murders of Muslim people more “bearable” to people in the imperialist countries, they demonize and dehumanize Muslims by any means necessary. The formula is not new. Millions of crimes have been perpetrated against oppressed people by cutting them off from their potential allies and leaving them isolated, persecuted and less able to fight back. During WWII this method was used to make the internment of Japanese people generally “acceptable” to the non-Japanese population.

With the campaign of Islamophobia, the government of Canada is also looking for one of two things. Either they want a cheerleading squad on their side supporting the destruction and devastation of Afghanistan, or they want people to be confused, silenced and useless in opposing war and occupation. Moreover, they want to maintain a low to moderate level of hostility among working and oppressed people. They are attempting to make Muslim people “the enemy” in order to keep the spot light off of their criminal actions and reduce the threat of any effective opposition to their criminal war in Afghanistan.

If people in Canada overcome the divisions of race, religion etc

continued on page 7



Brutality, Killing, Guns & Tasers: All the Instruments of POLICE REPRESSION



Stills from the video of the RCMP murder of Robert Dziekanski.

Memorial for Robert Dziekanski at the Vancouver Airport.



By Mike Chimenti

This fall, one of the worst crime waves in the history of Canada swept across the country, catching the attention not only of people living in Canada, but people across the world. Despite the major media's recent attempts to focus public attention on gang violence, the most violent crime wave was perpetrated by police forces and agencies across the country.

Between September 18th and November 21st, five people were killed by Tasers, bringing the total in this country to 21 deaths in four years.

A Brutal History

The most high profile of these police murders happened at Vancouver International Airport on October 14th, when Robert Dziekanski's murder was caught on video tape, later to be released to the world on the internet. The video exposes the brutal reality of police in an imperialist country - shoot first, forget about questions. Roughly 25 seconds after arriving at the Canada Border Services Agency centre inside of the airport, the RCMP had shot Robert Dziekanski with a Taser, delivering 50,000 volts, multiple times. Mr. Dziekanski died within minutes.

On the same day, Quilem Registre was Tasered by Montreal police. Thirty hours later, he was delivered to a hospital in critical condition where he died after three days.

Quilem Registre's death came a month after the death of Claudio Castagnetta in Quebec City. After being Tasered by police on September 18th, Mr. Castagnetta was taken to the Quebec City jail, where he was to be



Protest in Vancouver against the RCMP murder of Robert Dziekanski. Nov 24, 2007.

held before being transferred to another prison the next day. According to officers, he began hitting his head against the wall during the day of September 19th. Despite this, he was transferred, with a helmet on, to the second prison as planned. Some time after arriving at the second jail, Claudio Castagnetta was taken to hospital and pronounced dead.

On the 19th of November, RCMP in Chilliwack BC, pepper sprayed, tasered, and beat Robert Thurston Knipstrom with batons. After all three forms of 'non lethal' force were used against him, Mr. Knipstrom was taken away lying face down on a gurney with his hands bound behind his back. Five days later, Robert Knipstrom was dead.

Two days later, Howard Hyde became the 21st person in Canada to die from a Taser assault. Mr. Hyde was taken to hospital in medical distress immediately after being Tasered but was cleared by hospital staff and transferred to jail, where he soon died - 30 hours after being shocked by a Taser.

The firestorm of public outrage in Canada and worldwide sent the ruling class into an emergency damage control campaign. No less than eight separate inquiries, reviews or

statutory requirements, unaware that the Department was not meeting the requirements, or consciously chose to ignore the statutory requirements." - taken from Judge Josiah Wood's audit of 294 public complaints against police in BC.

In all of these cases, the police involved in the deaths were investigated by other police. No outside eyes or 'impartial' parties were involved in deciding whether or not the cops had committed murder.

According to the audit mentioned above, the former judge found that "complaint files from a number of Departments... demonstrated an unawareness of, or an inability or unwillingness to abide by, the legal and constitutional limits of police powers of search and seizure... [I]n most, if not all, of these cases, no attempt was made...to follow the other requirements under...the Criminal Code. In virtually all such cases, complaints were routinely dismissed without any or any significant investigation..."

"Unlike the RCMP, I actually conducted a reconstruction with actual human models to try and prove or disprove Const. Koester's

hearings were announced in the days after the video of Robert Dziekanski's death was made public. Inquiries and 'policy reviews' were announced by the federal government, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), the BC government, the RCMP and even the government of Poland.

Police, A Killing Machine

"Deaths at the hands of police are not rare events ... No one knows the scope of the problem" - Murray Mollard, Executive Director of BC Civil Liberties Association, September 23, 2007, CanWest News

Unfortunately for regular working people in Canada, this is not the first spate of inquiries into police violence that governments of all levels in Canada have needed to stage in order to trick working people into believing that these incidents of violence are random occurrences, and not the systematic norm.

Unfortunately, concrete statistics on the number of deaths in police custody are very difficult to find, regardless of the high number across the country. There are however, some extremely telling indicators:

In British Columbia, at least 22 people were killed by police between 2002 - 2006. 267 people in BC died while being held by police from 1992 to 2007, or roughly 18 people per year. More than one a month.

Some of these cases are notoriously well known. Frank Paul, an Indigenous man dragged unconscious from a holding cell and left to freeze to death in an alleyway in the Downtown Eastside (DTES). Jeff Berg, hit in the neck with the butt of a gun while being arrested in an East Vancouver alley, was killed by a brain aneurism 2 days later. Gerald Chenery, shot 12 times in a DTES alley by 2 rookie cops. Ian Bush, a 22 year old man, shot in the back of the head while in the Houston RCMP jail.

"There were Departments that appeared to ignore certain clear requirements under the Police Act...In most cases, these problems persisted for some years, which suggests that the Discipline Authority was unaware of the

version of the positioning in the context of the observed blood stain evidence. I was not able to prove his version and I am still waiting for someone to show me otherwise," - Constable Joseph Slemko, National Post, November 30, 2007.

In the case of Ian Bush, the young man shot in the back of the head while in the custody of a lone RCMP officer, the RCMP conducted their own internal investigation and found that the 'evidence' supported the claims of Constable Koester, the officer who shot Ian Bush.

But, according to Joseph Slemko, an Edmonton police officer and internationally recognized blood stain expert, the evidence doesn't match the statement. Slemko was hired by the Bush family to analyze the evidence and see if officer Koester's story held up to science. Koester claims that Ian Bush was choking him from behind, and that he reached backwards and shot Bush in the back of the head. Slemko's reconstruction shows that Koester was standing either behind or beside Ian Bush when he was killed. Regardless of this evidence, RCMP Public Complaints Commissioner, Paul Kennedy, stuck to the RCMP's own internal investigation and defended Koester. Commissioner Kennedy is the same person in charge of the 'investigation' into Robert Dziekanski's killing.

The Killing of Robert Dziekanski

"He was breathing and had a pulse, and so first aid was not required," - RCMP spokesman Cpl. Dale Carr - Nov. 30, 2007, National Post



Protest in Vancouver against the RCMP murder of Robert Dziekanski. Nov 24, 2007.

"We were doing our assessment, and we found no breath and no pulse," - Geoff Lake, Richmond Fire-Rescue Deputy Chief - Nov. 30, 2007, National Post

Can we expect a different outcome from this new inquiry? Already there are conflicting reports about what happened after Robert Dziekanski lost consciousness and collapsed on the floor.

According to members of Richmond's Fire-Rescue unit, Mr. Dziekanski was not breathing and had no pulse when they arrived on scene. RCMP admit they did not perform any first aid on Mr. Dziekanski. Regardless, Mr. Dziekanski was still in handcuffs, which the RCMP refused to remove "because officers had a safety concern". The handcuffs were finally removed at the request of paramedics who arrived moments after the fire department, and also found no breathing or pulse.

Will any real changes come from all of the review panels, inquiries, inquests and complaints? Who will answer for the RCMP's policy change in August that now allows

RCMP officers to torture victims with multiple shocks? Will police forces, government agencies and politicians listen to the UN Committee Against Torture's decision that Tasers are a form of torture? Will the police that use Tasers be worried about being charged for crimes under the UN Convention Against Torture?



Protest in Vancouver against the RCMP murder of Robert Dziekanski. Nov 24, 2007.

The answers to all of these questions depend on the actions of regular poor, working and oppressed people in Canada. Until the political interests of the masses of working people in Canada are represented, the systemic racism and violence of police forces will continue. In order to protect ourselves and each other from police brutality, we must stand together and demand that police be accountable to each and every person in Canada, and not to other police officers or political appointees. Control over police forces must come from the grassroots level. Under the capitalist system, the police department is the killing machine of the state to protect private property and maintain capitalist rule. The killing of Robert Dziekanski, Ian Bush, Frank Paul and many others is good proof of that. This institution cannot be reformed but only dismantled. Policing is the responsibility of people and must be operated and controlled by communities and mass base local committees.

Punish All Criminal Police!
Stop Police Brutality!
Ban All Types of Tasers!



Damaged US military vehicle after a bomb attack in Kabul, Afghanistan. Oct 6, 2007.



WHERE
is AFGHANISTAN GOING?



Afghans shout anti-occupation slogans after a car bomber attacked an American convoy in Barayekab in Nangarhar province. March 4, 2007.



Protest against the killing of civilians by NATO forces in Sanzari village. Sept 26, 2007.

Vancouver Activists Protest

Canada/NATO War & Occupation in Afghanistan

By Nita Palmer

November 2007 Picket

Since July 2005, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) has organized nearly 40 consistent picket actions against the ongoing Canada/NATO war drive in Afghanistan. For the 35th picket action on November 6th 2007, over 30 Vancouverites protested in front of the Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment Office in downtown Vancouver, demanding "Canada/NATO Out of Afghanistan NOW!" Several media outlets filmed the picket and interviewed organizers about MAWO's Canada Out of Afghanistan campaign, which has collected over 13,000 petition signatures to date. The picket was opened by MAWO Co-chair Janine Solanki, who read the statement to the press. "NATO sends air

condemned the political targeting and arrest of MAWO co-chair Alison Bodine, who is currently facing a two-year ban from Canada. David Whittlesey, a veteran civil rights activist and an organizer with MAWO, connected the war on oppressed people in Canada to the crimes against humanity carried out by occupation forces in Afghanistan. MAWO-SFU organizer Nicole Burton closed the picket with an emphasis on the need for working and oppressed people to organize and fight back against the criminal occupation of Afghanistan.

pockets. They are destroying the people of Afghanistan as they are doing to Indigenous people here at home," said Kerri.

To end off, MAWO executive committee member Kira Koshelanyk wrapped up the picket by emphasizing the need to build a consistent, broad and effective anti-war movement. Kira's speech was met with cheers and more demands of "Canada Out of Afghanistan NOW!"

and a foreign occupation, the people of Afghanistan have said "enough!" and are fighting for their self-determination and their dignity. The occupation forces have failed to achieve their goals of profit and plunder in Afghanistan, but they are desperately clinging to the possibility that they will be able to achieve their interests there.

strikes under the cover of darkness that have whole villages, children, women and elders as their targets. These are the real terrorists, not the Afghan people who continue to resist and fight back against the occupying forces." Activists began picketing, yelling loud and clear their demands of "Troops Home Now!" and calling for an independent public inquiry into the Canadian war drive.

MAWO Executive Committee member Andrew Barry spoke about the war at home against immigrants, refugees, and non-status people in Canada. He

December 2007 Picket

On a rainy day on December 4th 2007, 30 people rallied at the recruitment centre once again to demand an end to the Canada/NATO war in Afghanistan. The picket was opened by MAWO executive committee member Lindsay Clarke, who read the statement to the press. Strong anti-war sentiment filled the streets with picketing and chants of "End the Occupation Now! Self-determination Now!"

Lindsay introduced US War Resister Brad McCall, who spoke on his experience as a US soldier who refused to fight in the war on Iraq. Picketers were again joined by David Whittlesey, who shared his perspective as a veteran anti-war organizer. Andrew Barry spoke as well with new updates on the case of Alison Bodine.

Next to speak was Oji-Cree Indigenous rights activist and MAWO organizer Kerri Goodwin. "They are stealing the land and resources that is rightfully ours and for what? To benefit their own

Why We Are Picketing?

MAWO's pickets are a strong response to the ongoing Canada/NATO campaign of bloodshed and terror in Afghanistan. As their occupation slips more and more into crisis, occupation forces are increasingly resorting to bombings of entire villages to get rid of the Taliban. In recent months, the Taliban has taken control of more and more areas of Afghanistan, as poor Afghans with no option left but to fight for their self-determination and survival join what is, whether we like it or not, the strongest and most organized resistance force – the Taliban. A senior British officer in Afghanistan recently admitted that NATO controlled "at most" 20% of southern Afghanistan. Even in the so-called "Green Zone" of Kabul, occupation forces are beginning to come under attack.

Afghanistan's occupation-backed government is another crisis and source of anger for Afghan people. A 2006 poll by the Asia Foundation found that 77% of Afghans believed that corruption was a major problem in their country. This so-called "democratically elected" government is in reality still run by warlords who reap the profits of the occupation while others starve.

Canada and NATO are today trapped by a monster they have created. After six years of being stuck under the thumb of a corrupt government

Here in Canada, we must continue the campaign of monthly picket actions and other events to stand with our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan and demand:

Canada/NATO Out of Afghanistan Now!

Independent Public Inquiry Now!



Janine Solanki, MAWO Co-Chair, is interviewed outside the Canadian Forces Recruitment Centre. Nov 6, 2007.



Picketers demand Canada/NATO Out of Afghanistan! Nov 6, 2007.



Kira Koshelanyk, member of MAWO Executive Committee, speaks at picket. Dec 4, 2007.

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MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG

Lift the 2-Year Ban on Alison Bodine!

10,000 Signatures Petition Drive

Alison Bodine Defence Committee Gains Momentum in Defending Democratic and Human Rights

By Nita Palmer

November 17th 2007, marked the beginning of a two-year ban from Canada for Vancouver anti-war and social justice activist Alison Bodine – and the opening of a new phase in her defence!

Alison Bodine, 22, a US citizen originally from Broomfield, Colorado and a recent graduate of the University of British Columbia. She is currently a co-chair and spokesperson for the Vancouver anti-war coalition Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) and is also a social justice and Cuba solidarity activist.

Canada Border Services Agency Violates Civil Liberties

On September 13th Alison was arrested when she attempted to legally cross the border from Canada back into the US at the Peace Arch border crossing. Three days earlier, as she was coming into Canada, she was targeted and harassed by border officials after they searched her vehicle and found various political materials and progressive newspapers. After being questioned extensively by border officials, she complied with their request that she voluntarily return to the US. When she returned to the border later that same day, she was legally

return to the border within 40 days to pick up these items.

As she was returning to the US on September 13th Alison attempted to claim these items. Upon presenting the receipt to claim the materials, she was arrested, handcuffed and told there was a Canada-wide warrant for her arrest. She was then transferred to detention.

Working People Fight Back! The Birth & Growth of the Defence Campaign

This unjust arrest and imprisonment was met by a major campaign by the Committee to Free Alison Bodine, formed immediately after her arrest. On September 14th on just five hours notice, over 80 people rallied at the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) building in downtown Vancouver to demand her release. Following this rally, as well as major local and national media coverage, a major victory came in the campaign. Although Alison had been told repeatedly that she would be detained at least until her immigration hearing on Monday September 17th she was



events to raise awareness about the case. The Alison Bodine Defence Committee blog was also launched at <http://alisonbodine.blogspot.com>.

Just a few hours before her scheduled admissibility hearing on September 17th Alison was informed by a CBC reporter that her hearing had been cancelled for that day. When she presented herself at the CBSA offices the next day with dozens of

until October 31st.

By October 31st the Alison Bodine Defence Committee received dozens of letters of support from organizations and individuals such as the Green Party USA, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the Hospital Employees' Union, NDP MPs Bill Siksay, Alex

Atamanenko, and Libby Davies, the North American Baptist Peace Fellowship, and Seattle Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (ANSWER), just to name a few.

The ABDC used the next 20 days to continue to build the campaign in defence of Alison. By October 31st the ABDC collected over 3,000 signatures demanding that the CBSA drop charges against Alison. The campaign gained another victory when the BC Civil Liberties Association

announced that they had decided to support Alison's case.

October 31st-November 17th: Support Continues to Grow...

On October 31st with over 60 of her



Gathering signatures at UBC. Nov 27, 2007.

Justice Activist Under Attack!"

On November 13th over 40 people gathered at the SFU Harbour Centre in Vancouver to participate in a public forum on Alison's case, "Why is Canada Banning Antiwar Activists? The Case of Alison Bodine". "The Canada Border Services Agency may have decided to impose this ban against me, but our campaign for human and democratic rights has just begun and will only continue and expand from here," Alison explained.

The campaign made another huge step forward on November 16th when delegates at the BC Provincial Convention of the New Democratic Party (NDP) passed a resolution that Alison speak about her case to the convention. Alison spoke to the nearly 1,000 delegates in attendance at the convention, including MPs and MLAs from across BC. Following her



Alison speaking at the Mobilization Against War & Occupation Conference. Oct 28, 2007.

her supporters rallying outside, she was informed that the CBSA had requested a delay in the hearing until September 28th. It was clear that the CBSA's manoeuvre to cancel the hearing was their desperate attempt

allowed to enter Canada. To reduce harassment by border officials, she had transferred the political materials and other items into the car of a friend from Vancouver. He legally returned to Canada, but the political materials and all other items in his car were seized. A receipt was issued, saying that Alison could

released at 8pm on Friday September 14th. She then joined over 65 activists who had come together in an emergency meeting to organize for her release.

The focus of the campaign then became the demand for the Canada Border Services Agency to drop all charges against Alison. The newly-formed Alison Bodine Defence Committee (ABDC) started a major political campaign. On one hand, this included a petition campaign demanding that all charges against Alison be dropped, as well as an appeal for letters of support to be sent to the CBSA and Minister of Public Safety, Stockwell Day. On the other hand, it included dozens of forums, rallies, and other public speaking

to take away momentum from the massive campaign that had come together in her defence. They knew they had no proof for the charge of "misrepresentation" they held against her.

Over the next weeks, the ABDC organized consistent rallies in front of CIC offices and launched the Alison Bodine Speaks Out! Campus Speaking Tour. By September 28th the campaign had received dozens more letters and over 1,200 signatures of support.

As of September 28th Alison and her lawyer still had not received the disclosure of evidence that would be used against her by the CBSA. A new victory came as it was ruled that the CBSA had to give a full disclosure of their evidence. As a result of this new evidence, the hearing was postponed until October 11th.

In three weeks alone, the "Drop All Charges Against Alison Bodine" petition gained over 3,000 signatures of support. The campaign of events also continued, with Alison speaking at the "Student Week in Solidarity with the Cuban 5" and at a forum called "Why I Was Targeted: CBSA Violates Civil Liberties".

With a strong crowd of supporters rallying outside, Alison entered her hearing on October 11th to win another partial victory. During the hearing the prosecution tried to introduce new evidence that was not included in their disclosure. This was denied by the adjudicator. In admissibility hearings, if the adjudicator is not convinced of the argument by the defence it is typical for an immediate exclusion order to be issued, forcing the defendant to leave the country within a few hours. It was clear that the prosecution had a weak case when the adjudicator announced that the final decision would not be heard

supporters gathered outside and with the 3,000 ABDC petitions in her hands, Alison received the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) decision in her case. After reviewing the case, the adjudicator announced that although he found the CBSA's actions in initially turning Alison away from Canada "bewildering", the charge of "misrepresentation" would be upheld. An exclusion order, effective November 17th 2007, and a two-year ban from Canada were imposed.

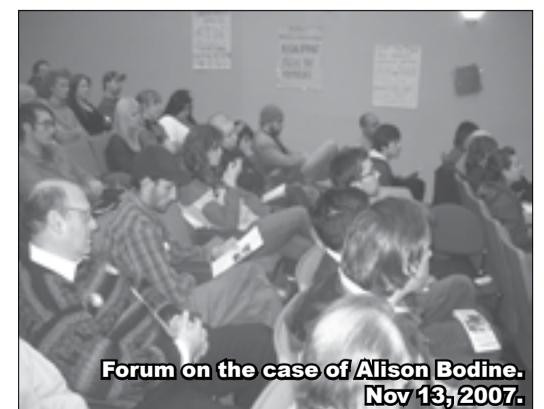
But the ABDC was not stopped or silenced by this decision. Alison and her supporters vowed that the defence campaign and the struggle for human and democratic rights for social justice activists and for all immigrants, refugees and non-status people in Canada would continue. Within the next days, the outcome of Alison's case was picked up by the Globe and Mail, the Canadian Press, and the Associated Press (AP). The AP article was published on MSNBC, one of the largest online news sources in the US. Within 24 hours, supporters were already sending letters demanding that the 2-year ban against Alison be lifted.

The ABDC launched a new petition with the demand of "Lift the 2-Year Ban!" This petition first hit the streets with a petition stop at the Vancouver Art Gallery on November 10th. Later that evening, the ABDC held a successful fundraiser at El Rancho Restaurant in Vancouver, featuring many local musicians as well as the film "Defend Alison Bodine: Social

speech, Alison received a standing ovation and collected over 100 signed letters of support demanding that the ban against her be lifted.

November 17th Border Send-Off!

Despite appeals for an extension of Alison's stay in Canada, the exclusion order against Alison took



Forum on the case of Alison Bodine. Nov 13, 2007.

effect November 17th. However, the Alison Bodine Defence Committee had a message for the CBSA before Alison's departure from Canada: They may be able to impose this ban against a single person, an individual – but they cannot stop the massive tide of support for her and for the fight for human and democratic rights. Near midnight on November 17th, nearly 70 of Alison's supporters gathered at the border to see her off. The unjust decision to ban Alison was once again brought to people across Canada, with CBC TV and CKNW radio covering her departure.

Lift the 2-Year Ban! 10, 000 Signature Campaign

Following Alison's departure, the ABDC's dual political and legal campaign entered a new phase,

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Gathering signatures in downtown Vancouver. Dec 1, 2007.

Elections

continued from page 4

and collectively see people in Afghanistan as our brothers and sisters, if we build solidarity and sympathy, there will be no way the occupation of Afghanistan can continue one more day. Likewise, if the people in the US feel that Iraqis are their own flesh and blood, the US war drive would have been over before it began.

At their core, Islamophobic attacks are the expression of the "war at home" and must be opposed by all peace-loving people in Canada. In the case of the "show-your-face" bill, people in Canada must outright reject it as part of the racist, fear mongering campaign of Islamophobia being waged by the ruling class of Canada. Poor and working people must reject the division of "Muslim-vs-non-Muslim" and embrace our brothers and sisters regardless of religion,

race or manner of dress. We must defend the most basic democratic rights of Muslim women (and all women for that matter!) to participate in elections regardless of the clothing they are wearing. Defending the democratic rights of the most oppressed layers of society puts all poor and working people in a better position to defend and expand our rights further.

Additionally, it is through overcoming divisions and building unity that we have the potential to build a broad, effective antiwar movement that confronts the real issues facing poor, working and oppressed people in Canada and Afghanistan. At the top of that list is the Canadian war drive in Afghanistan, which is draining money from social services to pump up the military budget and bomb Afghanistan to dust.

No to Islamophobic attacks!
No the "show-your-face" bill!

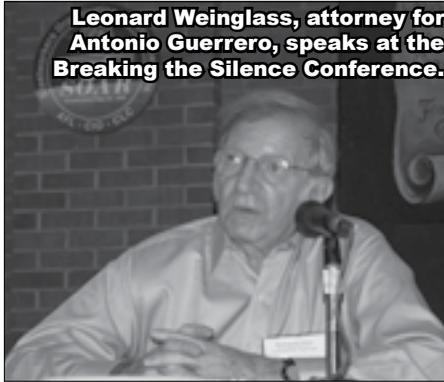


Our Job is to Break the Silence!

By Tamara Hansen

“The silence surrounding the Case of our Five Cuban Heroes is beginning to shake and crack... our job is to break it!”

There were 8 organizers with Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) and the Free the Cuban 5 Committee – Vancouver (FC5C-Van) who flew across Canada with pride and excitement to attend the first International conference co-organized by the US National Network on Cuba (NNOC), the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC), and the Table de Concertation de Solidarité Québec-Cuba (TCSQC). This conference, entitled “Breaking the Silence”, was an important landmark in the over 9 year struggle for the Freedom of the 5 Cuban Heroes unjustly held in US jails. The Vancouver delegates joined together with groups and organizers from all over the U.S., Québec and Canada along with prominent guests from Cuba and the honoured Cuban diplomats from the Cuban Embassy in Canada for this important event.



Leonard Weinglass, attorney for Antonio Guerrero, speaks at the Breaking the Silence Conference.

then having information about terrorists living and working in their country the US government chose to go after the 5 Cubans who had collected the evidence. On September 12th 1998 the 5ive were arrested and put in solitary confinement for 17 months. In 2001, their seven-month trial was held in Miami, a city well

known for its heavily anti-Cuban bias. After what was at that time one of the longest trials in U.S. history, the 5ive were sentenced to between 15 years and two life sentences, on charges of “conspiracy to commit espionage” and in one case “conspiracy to commit murder”. Interestingly, not a word of all of this was mentioned in the US mainstream media outside of

fighters around the world have started and pushed forward the campaign for justice. This led to the most recent development in the case. On Monday, August 20th 2007, the 5ive anti-terrorist fighters were in court for another round of appeals hearings in Atlanta, Georgia. The Cuban 5 set out to prove that the 1998 trial in which the US government sentenced them had many flagrant violations of court process and convicted them without substantial evidence. The results of this appeals hearing are still pending, but this conference was an important opportunity to organize and coordinate our actions for whatever the US government will try to impose on the 5ive next.

The Conference

“The solidarity movement for Cuba, for the Cuban Revolution, is the most precious treasure we have. Because they are with us despite governments, they are with us anytime. And you know, to have friends like that also fuels us to keep fighting for the faith and for the good of humankind.”
- Ernesto Senti, Cuban Ambassador to Canada

The morning of November 9th marked the first day of the International Conference. It

Who are the Cuban 5ive and why must the silence around their case be broken?

Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, René González and Gerardo Hernández are held in U.S. prisons for defending the people of Cuba against U.S.-sponsored terrorism. Between 1994 and 1995, Cuba sent five unarmed men, on a mission to infiltrate and expose Miami-based terrorist groups such as Alpha 66, Omega 7, Brothers to the Rescue and the Cuban American National Foundation. The list of atrocities committed by these groups is long, one of the most horrendous attacks was the bombing of a Cuban airliner, which took the lives of 73 people in 1976.

After gathering evidence to expose the terrorists, Cuba released the information to the US government. Despite

Miami. However, as people have learned about this case they have not stood by and waited for this injustice to mend itself.

“If preventing the deaths of innocent human beings, defending our two countries from terrorism, and preventing a senseless invasion of Cuba are the reasons I am being sentenced today, then I welcome that sentence! I will wear the prison uniform with the same honor and pride with which a soldier wears his most prized insignias! This has been a political trial and therefore we are political prisoners! All of the evidence is here; this is where history is written. And it is history that will do us true justice!”

- Ramón Labañino, one of the Cuban 5 at this sentencing hearing, December 13th 2001.

The 5ive, their families, the people of Cuba and social justice

began in Toronto’s City Hall with a press conference, a first step in breaking the mainstream media’s silence. Representatives with the NNOC, CNC and TCSQC welcomed the 150 supporters and media reps who had gathered for the press conference. The meeting was very informative and featured Elizabeth Palmeiro, the wife of Ramón Labañino and Livio Di Celmo, the brother of Fabio Di Celmo, an Italian resident of Canada who was killed in a Cuban hotel by a bomb placed by anti-Cuban terrorists in 1997.

The afternoon session, “Sharing and Learning,” was also held at City Hall on November 9th. This was a dynamic discussion, facilitated by Tim Louis, former Vancouver City Counselor. This was an important time to be updated on the work groups across Canada, Quebec and the US are organizing for the Case of the Cuban 5 and some perspectives on where we need to go with our work.

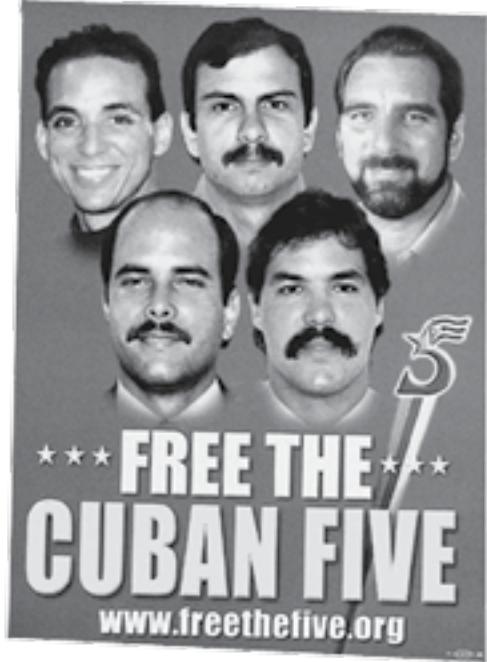
The evening was a decisive free public event, “The Cuban 5 – a Tragedy of Justice”, attended by over 400 people and held in the Council Chambers of City Hall. The program featured a prominent list of speakers, who delivered motivating and inspiring talks. From Basilio Gutierrez from the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP); to the honourable ambassador of Cuba in Canada, Ernesto Senti; to Gloria La Riva, coordinator of the



Breaking the Silence Conference. Toronto. Nov 9-10, 2007.

REPORT FROM: International Conference In Solidarity with the Five Cuban Heroes Held in US Jails! Nov 9+10 2007

Breaking the Silence

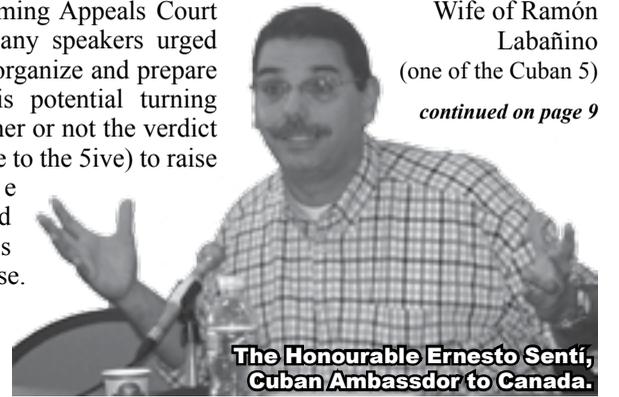


National Committee to Free the Cuban Five; to Cuban 5 attorney and keynote speaker, Leonard Weinglass; to the featured guest Elizabeth Palmeiro; to Livio Di Celmo; to Soffiyah Elijah, Deputy Director of the Criminal Justice Institute at Harvard Law School; to Judge Claudia Marcom and wrapping up the evening with Alicia Jrapko from the International Committee to Free the Cuban Five. The speakers outlined the importance of the upcoming Appeals Court decision. Many speakers urged activists to organize and prepare and use this potential turning point (whether or not the verdict is favourable to the 5ive) to raise knowledge and awareness about the case.

“We, the relatives of the Cuban 5 have been used by the American government to cause more suffering and pain in this sad experience we are living. Mothers without their sons, children without their fathers and wives without their beloved ones. From this tribunal, I denounce the US government for having double-speech in this world marked by their war on terror. They are the real terrorists.”

-Elizabeth Palmeiro, Wife of Ramón Labañino (one of the Cuban 5)

continued on page 9



The Honourable Ernesto Senti, Cuban Ambassador to Canada.



Noah Fine and Estéban González of the Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver present a board of media coverage about the Five Heroes.

The second day, November 10th, was held at the Steelworkers' Hall and featured three sessions to develop ideas and dynamism to carry forward our work for the freedom of our 5 Cuban heroes. The first panel was the "Lawyers' Panel" which outlined the legal injustice of this case. The second was "Where do we go from here?" in which speakers explained their ideas for the next steps in the campaign, expanding and building the movement, and the conference's action plan. After this panel, an important example of breaking the silence was presented, which was a recent interview of Leonard Weinglass, one of the Cuban 5's lawyers, on CNN's "The Situation Room". The third panel of the day was entitled, "Cuban 5 and Human Rights" which touched on a lot of the more human aspects of this case, including the rights of the 5ive's family members to visit them in prison. As the conference came to a close there was a special letter for the Cuban 5 and action plan passed by the general membership of the conference.

Soon after the Noche Cubana began, this was a special evening hosted by the Cuban Consulate in Toronto. It featured a delicious

dinner, poetry about the Cuban 5 read by James Cockcroft, Catherine Boemen and Keith Ellis; the powerful songs of local musician Faith Nolan; and a special song for the Cuban 5 sung by a choir made up of members of the Vancouver delegation and the Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade 2007.

What Next? Steps to Breaking the Silence

"What we need is unity, action and coordination."
 - Basilio Gutierrez, Vice President of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP)

Some of the most important ideas established by the conference were that work around this case needs to become more consistent. We need take on the case of the 5ive heroes as a campaign, this means that



our work must be ongoing and focused. Consistency in action is the key to their freedom.

Groups that have had the most success in broadening the case have been those who have reached people beyond leftist and progressive communities. They have gone to regular people, and new communities who might not have regular access to progressive news and information. This can include but is not limited to religious groups, unions, high schools, colleges and universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), cultural groups and basically anyone who is against injustice. Along with this, a number of groups have had success reaching out to politicians at a national, provincial/state, and local level.

The single most important reason to host a conference entitled, "Breaking the Silence," is that we need to popularize the case of Cuban 5 heroes. The reason there is not more support for this case is simply because people do not know about it. We need to make the Cuban 5 a household name!

By the end of the conference the energy and inspiration brought from a weekend of amazing speakers could be felt. As the resolution and action plan passed there was a collective agreement to stand with our 5ive heroes until they are free!

Join the world wide campaign to free the Cuban 5:

<http://www.vancubasolidarity.com/freethefivevan.html>

<http://www.freethefive.org/>

<http://www.antiterroristas.ca/>

Visiting Cuba Through the Eyes of a Young Canadian Activist - Memoir of a Trip with Adventure, Education & Politics

OR "How I Learned to Love Cuba!"

By Sophie Ziner

Available for \$1 ea.
 To Order Contact:

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC)
 778-882-5223
 or cubacommunities@yahoo.ca

Back-to-Back in Spanish AND English!



Letter sent on behalf of the conference to the Cuban Five.

November 10, 2007

To our dearest Brothers, Co-fighters, Compañeros and Heroes - Antonio, Gerardo, Ramón, Fernando and René,

"The truth must not only be the truth, it must be told." - Fidel

We gathered this weekend, November 9th-10th 2007, to break the silence surrounding your most important fight against terrorism and for all of humanity. We are more than 250 people who gathered in these two days as members of the National Network on Cuba (U.S.), Canadian Network on Cuba, La Table de Concertation de Solidarité Québec-Cuba and many independent people interested in advancing your cause, which is the cause of all human beings. This is the first conference where these groups have come together and we know, based on our unity and commitment to the Cuban Revolution and to your case, this conference is the start of many. Our conference tackled many important issues surrounding your cause: the legal injustice, the abuse of human rights and the continued struggle for your freedom.

We know the truth, and now our task is to make sure it is told. This conference is a turning point to reinforce our commitment to continue fighting until the day you are free and to continue telling your story after you are free.

With love and solidarity,

Breaking the Silence: Solidarity Conference for the Cuban 5

(Organized by: The National Network on Cuba (U.S.), Canadian Network on Cuba & La Table de Concertation de Solidarité Québec-Cuba)

FINAL RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE "BREAKING THE SILENCE" CONFERENCE

CALL FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE CUBAN FIVE

We, participants in the two-day conference held in Toronto, Canada, "BREAKING THE SILENCE: Solidarity Conference for the Cuban Five" issue this call to all people of good will who want a world of peace and justice:

- To increase the momentum developed in countless movements around the world to free Gerardo Hernández, René González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando González, five Cuban anti-terrorist political prisoners incarcerated in the United States since 1998, whose only crime was to work to prevent planned terrorist acts of Miami-based, anti-Cuba groups responsible for nearly 3500 deaths and thousands of injuries in Cuba since 1959.
- To join together in an immediate response and a "Week of Free the Five" actions whenever the decision of the Atlanta federal appellate court is reached.
- To support the formation of an international commission for the rights of family visits to help secure U.S. visas for Adriana Perez and Olga Salanueva to visit their husbands who they have been prevented from seeing for nine years, and to issue timely visas to all family members. To distribute the "100 Women in Each City" petitions for women to sign demanding the right of family visits for Adriana and Olga.
- To demand the extradition to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of the terrorist Luis Posada Carriles whose acts included the bombing of a Cubana civilian airliner that caused the death of all 73 people aboard in 1976.
- To call on the U.S. government to end its double standard on terrorism, to cease its plans to change the constitutional order of Cuba and to end the blockade.
- To pressure the Canadian government not to cooperate with U.S.-imposed "security" requests but rather to expand its bilateral relations and strengthen its independent foreign policy towards Cuba.
- To call for organizations all over the world to urge their elected officials (parliamentarians, mayors, etc.) to sign letters and petitions addressed to the U.S. Attorney General, U.S. Ambassadors and Ministers of Foreign Affairs to demand justice for the Five and their families.
- To join together in broadening the international campaign to free the Cuban Five, to incorporate more youth, to link with other social movements including movements in support of political prisoners, and to engage in more frequent actions to "break the silence" of the mass media on the rights of the Five and their families.

Issued and adopted on November 10, 2007 at: "BREAKING THE SILENCE: Solidarity Conference for the Cuban Five," at Toronto, Canada, organized by the Canadian Network on Cuba, la Table de Concertation de Solidarité Québec-Cuba, and the National Network on Cuba (U.S.) and attended by hundreds of activists and prominent figures in the struggle for constitutional and human rights.

MAWO 5TH ANTIWAR FILM FESTIVAL: A HUGE SUCCESS!

By Nita Palmer

December 15 & 16, 2007 - More than 400 people from in and around Vancouver came together at the Britannia Community Centre to take part in Vancouver's 5th annual anti-war film festival organized by Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO). This major annual event was established as an institution by MAWO to bring



together the art and power of film with anti-war politics. Over the last five years, it has gone beyond being a grassroots event to being an institution in Vancouver's cultural scene. This year's festival featured major media coverage, with reviews and articles in newspapers such as the Vancouver Sun, the 24HRS, and the Westender.

The theme of the festival was "The Battle of Ideas", contrasting imperialist destruction, war and occupation with the struggle for a better world that is being led by revolutionary Cuba. Saturday featured films on the theme "The New Era of War & Occupation" and Sunday featured films on the theme "A New World is Possible: Films from Cuba & Latin America".

One of the highlights of the festival was a moving presentation given on Saturday afternoon by Fernando Suarez, the father of a Mexican-American US soldier killed in

the first week of the Iraq war in 2003. Fernando greeted the crowd and introduced his feature film on his son's life "Jesus, A Soldier Without a Country". As soon as the film ended Fernando was given a standing ovation and people from the audience reached out to shake his hand.

Premiering Saturday was the film "Antiwar & Social Justice Activists Under Attack: The Case of Alison Bodine" by Mario Lee, an award winning member of the Korean Independent Film and Video Association as well as the Seoul Visual Collective for Documentary Film Making. (For more on Alison's case visit <http://alisonbodine.blogspot.com>)

Both days also featured two powerful art displays. One was the "4 years of art + politics: MAWO poster campaign in motion + action", presenting hundreds of posters from MAWO rallies, forums, pickets, and other anti-war activities over the past 4 years. The second art display was a very unique and special contribution capturing the attention of participants of this year's film festival. The display consisted of dozens of Cuban solidarity posters reflecting struggles of oppressed people around the world from OSPAAAL (Cuba's Organization of

Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America).

Sunday featured many dynamic films on struggles in Latin America, and particularly on Cuba's fight for humanity. The day's highlight was special guest speaker Gloria La Riva, the coordinator of the US National Committee to Free the Five. She detailed the terrorist networks based in Miami who have for decades attacked the sovereignty of Cuba and how the government of the US arrested five Cubans who went to Miami to document and expose these terrorist networks. Gloria then introduced the new film "The Trial" which outlines this attack on the Cuban Five.

The 5th Annual Vancouver Anti-war Film Festival was yet another important step in broadening and popularizing the anti-war movement through the creation of an anti-war cultural institution. The hundreds of people who attended came away from the festival not just having seen another film, but with a deeper understanding of the important "battle of ideas" and fight for a better world that we are a part of, along with people from Afghanistan to Palestine to Venezuela to Cuba.



A Poem to the Cuban 5 by Katharine Beeman

*Para quienes se aman, separados
por las guerras y el terror*

Después de 5 días juntos
y todo lo que existe entre nosotros,
cada vez más fuerte,
no hay lugar para la tristeza.

Entonces más fuerte la ola de mi corazón
rompe contra la orilla rocosa de América
por Los Cinco y sus familias,
a causa de la separación por las guerras,
a causa de la parodia triple
de los EE.UU. –

pretendiendo no tener ningún preso político
proclamando la libertad
negando así a las almas mismas
de los numerados y sin número
presos que detienen.

Del imperialismo
somos todos prisioneros.

Eso es mi gota en el océano
salado con nuestras lágrimas,

Eso es mi canción de honor
para Los Cinco
como aclara los ojos
la espuma del mar,

Nos rebelamos
pensando con el corazón
amor y resistencia
rompen las barrotas.

Aunque algunos tienen celdas más agradables
tenemos todos los mismos carceleros
somos todos amenazados por los mismos torturadores.

Nuestra libertad es la libertad de Los Cinco.

*Separated by war and terror,
for those who love*

After 5 days together
and all that exists between us,
each time more,
there's no way to be sad.

So stronger breaks the wave
of my heart on America's rocky shore
for The Five and their families,
for separation by war,
for the triple travesty
of the U.S. of A -

claiming no political prisoners
proclaiming freedom
denying so the very souls
of counted and countless
prisoners they hold.

Of imperialism
we are all prisoners.

This is my drop in the ocean,
salt with our tears.

This is my honor song
for The Five,
as sea spray clears our eyes,

We rise
thinking with the heart
love and resistance
breaking the bars.

Though some have nicer cells
we all have the same jailers
under threat of the same torturers.

Our freedom is the freedom of The Five.

Alison Bodine

continued from page 7

with the goal of collecting 10,000 signatures of support on the petition demanding "Lift the 2-Year Ban!" Letters and petitions are directed to Immigration Minister Diane Finley, who has the power to lift the ban at any time. On the legal front, the ABDC has begun the process of applying for a judicial review of the case in federal court.

The Alison Bodine Defence Committee has held three major petition stops so far. The first, at the University of British Columbia on November 27th collected 155 signatures from Alison's former schoolmates, demanding that the ban against her be lifted. The ABDC hit the streets again on December 1st at the Vancouver Art Gallery, collecting nearly 150 signatures in an hour, despite cold and snowy weather. The most recent petition drive, at the Vancouver Public Library on December 8th collected 431 signatures from Vancouverites. Another recent victory in Alison's case was the resolution passed by the national convention of the Canadian Federation of Students to support Alison's case.

The campaign has continued south of the 49th Parallel as well. On December 3rd Alison spoke at an event organized by the Seattle chapter of the anti-war group International ANSWER. The campaign has received media attention in the US also, with Alison's case being covered by US National Public Radio (NPR).

Onward to Victory! The Struggle Continues!

Alison has been banned from Canada not because she has violated any laws or is a threat to anyone. She has been banned from Canada for expressing political views that do not match up with those of the government of Canada, particularly their policies of war and occupation in

Afghanistan. She has been banned from Canada because, as a person without status in Canada, she was easy to target. They thought she might be easy to silence – and to use as an example for immigrants, refugees and working people to say: this is what will happen if you stand up for your ideas and your rights.

Alison is not alone – since her arrest, there have been a number of other similar cases. Just three weeks after her arrest, two organizers from CODEPink Women for Peace were barred from Canada because of FBI records for civil disobedience. US soldiers who come to Canada because they refuse to fight in the war in Iraq have been targeted as well. An outspoken social justice activist and organizer within the Montreal Muslim community, Imam Jaziri was recently deported to Tunisia after facing charges of misrepresentation by Canada Border Services.

But the Alison Bodine Defence Committee and people across North America have met this attack on our democratic and human rights with a strong message for the Government of Canada: we will not cave in to your attempts to silence anti-war and social justice activists. It is critical that we build a strong movement now to defend our human and democratic rights while they are under attack in order to maintain and advance them. It is critical that we take action to defend the antiwar movement that we have built in order to advance the struggle for social justice in the future.

The Alison Bodine Defence Committee is calling on all those who defend human and democratic rights to get involved in this important campaign. For information and updates on upcoming events and actions, check out the blog at <http://alisonbodine.blogspot.com>. Send a support letter, sign a petition, get involved!



Brutalization of Indigenous People: Public Inquiry Into the Death of FRANK PAUL begins

By Aaron Mercredi

It has been nine years since the tragic death of Frank Paul, a 47-year old Miqmac man who was found frozen to death in a Vancouver alley, a victim of the Vancouver Police Department (VPD). After years of demands for justice ringing through the streets of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, after lobbying and pressure from Indigenous and social justice organizations, a public inquiry into the death of Frank Paul is finally underway, a full nine years after his death.



Activist Kat Norris is interviewed about the case of Frank Paul.

What Happened?

On December 6, 1998, Frank Paul showed up on a Vancouver Police station security camera. His lifeless, rain-soaked body

was dragged in to the police station. He was known to the VPD, and was taken in to custody twice the night before to spend time in the drunk tank. He was released, and taken in again. This time, he was intoxicated to the point where he could not stand up or walk on his own. Yet, the head sergeant on duty declared that he was fit enough to be 'breached', meaning relocated out of the downtown area. The still unresponsive Frank Paul was caught on camera again, leaving a wet streak on the floor as his body was dragged out of the police station into a waiting paddy wagon. This paddy wagon delivered a Native man to his death. The two police officers leaned him against a wall in an alley in the Downtown Eastside, leaving him to freeze to death in the cold winter rain.

Public Outcry

For nine years, the VPD has avoided being held accountable for their actions on that night when they knowingly left a Native man to die in the cold. The Paul family was originally told that he had died as the result of a hit-and-run accident. The empty internal investigations that only brought a two-day suspension for the jail sergeant and a one-day suspension for a police officer were an insult to the memory of Frank Paul and the people who were trying to bring justice in his case. They only showed that the police will not be held accountable for their actions. While those responsible for this crime kept their mouths shut, activists kept the issue alive.

A public inquiry which began on November 13 was finally called to probe into what happened on the night of Frank Paul's death. Former Supreme Court Justice William Davies, who is heading up this inquiry, has stated that the focus is not to put anyone on trial, but to examine the overall failures of the different parties involved in the death of Frank Paul, and the response from the government departments and agencies to his death. However, the racist conduct involved in this case is undeniable, and this is a phenomenon everywhere in Canada. Because of this, the results of this case will have big implications for the many other incidents around Canada where Indigenous people have been abused or died at the hands of the police.

Centuries of Brutality

Historically, Native people have always been victims of Canada's racist police agencies. From the formation of the North-West Mounted Police to deal with the 'Native problem' and to secure land and treaties for the government to the RCMP kidnappings of Native children from their homes and communities for the



Still image from the police video showing Frank Paul being dragged through the police station.

residential school system, Canada's police have always been used against Indigenous people. What proof is there that this systemic racism and genocide doesn't exist today? Five hundred Indigenous women have gone missing in this country without a proper investigation. Police are still arresting Indigenous people who are asserting their rights to their land. Young Native men in Saskatchewan are taken to the outskirts of the city to be beaten, stripped of their clothes and forced to fend for themselves in the prairie winter - cops there call this practice 'Starlight Tours.'

In fact, the only thing that has been proven is that there is no justice for Native people on stolen land.

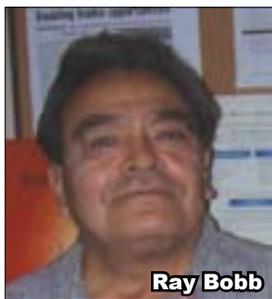
When the inquiry into Frank Paul's death re-adjourns, the support rallies are going to start up again as well. Supporters are encouraged to come out to the Federal Court building (701 W. Georgia) at noon on January 7th, to bring the message to people in Vancouver and Canada that we demand justice for Frank Paul.



Colonial Government of Canada and Treaties

By Aaron Mercredi

Despite the passing of 10 years since the landmark *Delgamuukw* decision in the Supreme Court of Canada, the fight of Indigenous people to have recognition of their rights over their land and resources continues with as many government barriers as before. Despite that decision which acknowledged Aboriginal Title, Indigenous nations within Canada today are in the same position of dealing with governments that are hell-bent on their extermination.



Ray Bobb

While Indigenous people fight for the fundamental right to have control over their own land, resources and form of governance, Canada and the provinces are undermining that by pushing through different agreements and, in BC, modern-day treaties. These are meant to secure more land and resources from Indigenous people and to secure 'economic certainty' for investors, continuing Canada's long colonial legacy of trying to exterminate Indigenous nations.

The following is one of many views from the community on this issue. We were able to discuss the following questions with Ray Bobb, a long-time Indigenous activist living in Vancouver.

Aaron: In one of the agreements between Canada and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), they introduced a way of speeding up the unresolved land claims through the Specific Claims Tribunal Act. How do you think this Act will affect the status of land claims in Canada?

Ray: I am not familiar with the proposed Act. However, specific land claims are different from comprehensive land claims that

I addressed in the previous issue of *Fire This Time* (*See Fire This Time Vol.4 Iss.9-10*). Specific land claims relate to reserve of treaty land that has been illegally seized by government in the past. There are now over 800 such claims in Canada. Comprehensive land claims, on the other hand, are the subject of modern day treaties which deal with aboriginal

title. Aboriginal title exists in Canadian law but remains undefined. The treaty process is circumscribed by the federal government's Comprehensive Land Claims Policy that requires tribes, upon entering the treaty process, to cede aboriginal title, disenfranchise as Indians under the meaning of the Indian Act and incorporate into Canada as, first nations, municipalities.

Aaron: What do you think the government of Canada is trying to accomplish with this?

Ray: Government spokesmen have stated that billions of dollars in investments are being lost annually due to unresolved land claims based on aboriginal title. The federal government's treaty process is designed to achieve "certainty" for investors by removing the legal source of uncertainty, i.e., Indians.

Aaron: How do you think this proposed act will affect the treaty process in Canada?

Ray: I don't know, but, as I've said, they are different things. In regard to specific land claims, Indians only want redress for land unjustly seized by the government in the past. Specific land claims do not require treaties. Treaties, by definition, are made between nations and, in the comprehensive treaty process, small groups of Indians are recognized by the government as nations for the purpose

An Interview with Ray Bobb



of legally extinguishing them. Indians are internally colonized by Canada and, therefore, there exists a national question and a right, under international law, to self determination. Present policy of the federal government is aimed at "decolonizing" by legislation the colonized out of existence.

Aaron: In your opinion, in what position does the treaty process and this way of dealing with unresolved land claims put Indigenous people in this country?

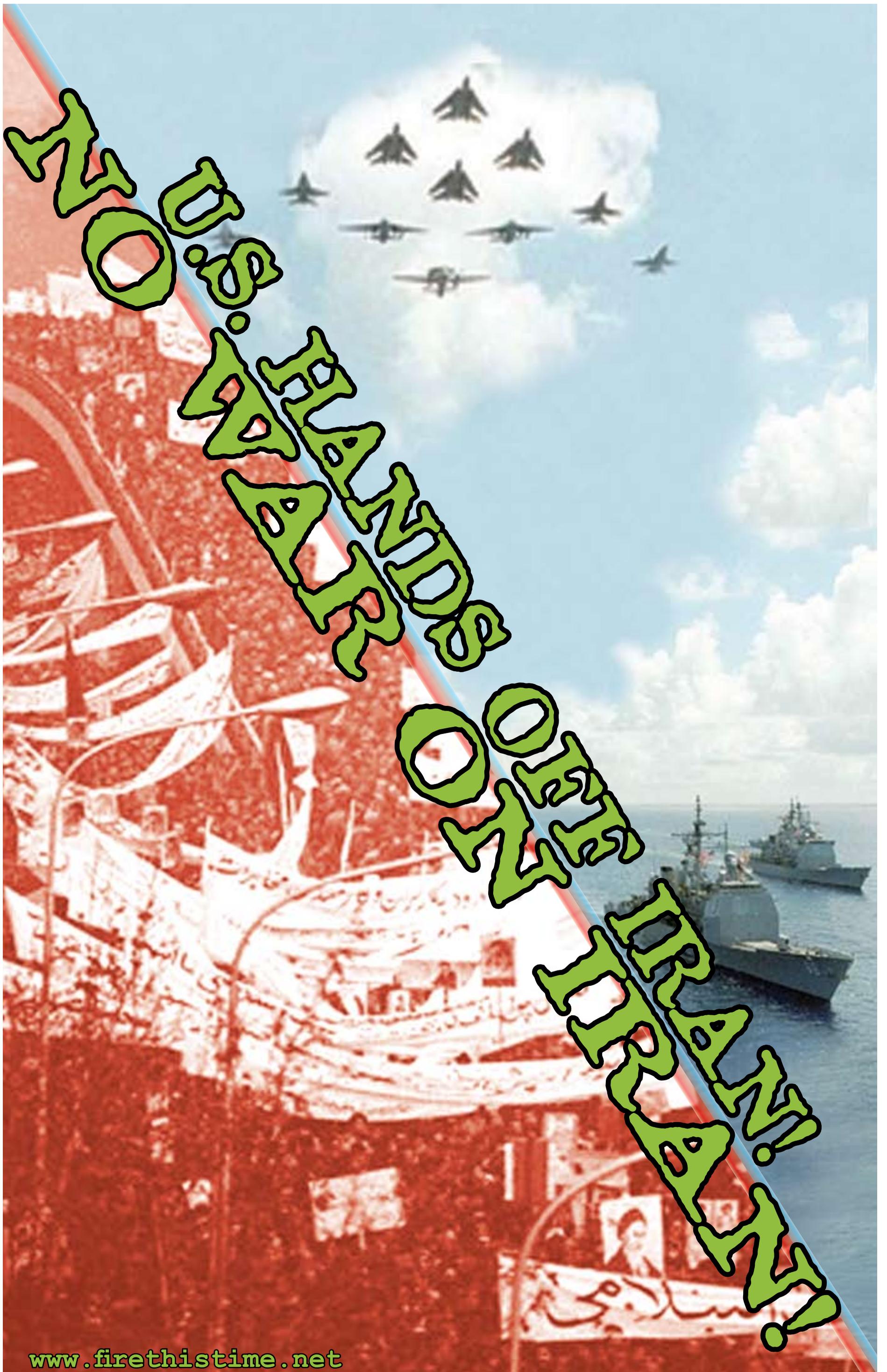
Ray: In the comprehensive treaty process the government has spent (in B.C. only) nearly 1 billion dollars. One quarter of that billion is in the form of loans to tribes in the treaty process. This means that government desperately wants to do away with Indian status. What the government is doing in the comprehensive treaty process is totally racist. Indians fully comprehend that the government wants to eliminate them.

Aaron: Is there reason for Indigenous people

in Canada to have faith in this sort of process?

Ray: In the system operated by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Indian leaders, although elected by the people, acquire their funds from the government and can only implement government policy. Present policy as seen in the treaty process is to eliminate Indians as a legal entity. Indian policy on the part of the Canadian settler-state has never deviated from genocide. Indians have faith only in their own survival.

Aaron: Thank you, Ray.



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NO WAR ON IRAN!

“About Us: The Public Call”

By Dr. Naser Zarafshan (Original in Farsi on Page 15)

*Translated by Ali Yerevani
and Shannon Bundock*

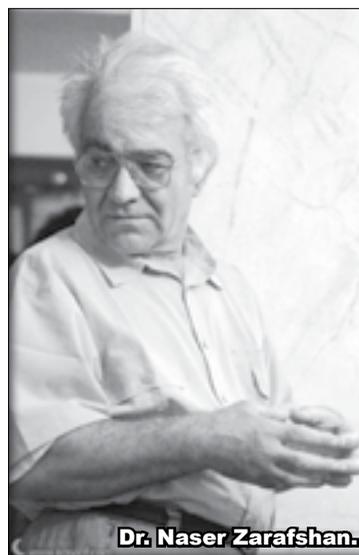
“War, Business and Robbery are inseparable” Goethe

Iranians, peace-loving people of the world;

The ugly devil of war has captivated the Middle East, and is tightening its grip on the people of this region. Iraq has been sinking in bloodshed for about four years. Now the spectre of war is haunting Iran. Among our people, however, the reality of this danger has not been completely understood. Our society has not yet adopted a clear and precise picture of what the consequences of this impending war on Iran will be.

Many followers and believers of the United States’ foreign policy propagate that the war on Iran will truly only target the Islamic Republic regime.

They also believe that this war will ultimately result in Iran being governed by those people who support US foreign policies in Iran and in the region. They believe that the war on Iran will be a smooth and well planned project with a foreseeable outcome with a bright and rational conclusion. Afterwards, these people promote the unfounded perspective that this coming war is a path to democracy in Iran. They covertly, and overtly, support the war on Iran under the premises of supporting democracy. Their assumptions, however, are all imaginative and unreal. If war breaks out, Iran will be under attack and the Iranian people will be under the rubble of pain and suffering. This will be a war with an unpredictable final result. As well, in essence, democracy is an internal development of a society and must be achieved by the struggle of the



Dr. Naser Zarafshan.

Iranian people themselves. The natural developments and changes that take place within any phenomenon or occurrence are the products of its internal process and contradictions.

Democracy is therefore the result of social and economic changes within society itself, and like any other reality it must come from the social contradictions of that society. It must be the result of the struggle of the masses against the ruling class. There has never been one intellectual or political trend since the constitutional revolution [of 1906] that naively and immaturely believed that democracy could be imported to Iran like a car or cosmetic goods for the purpose of consumption. To have the expectation and hope of importing democracy, especially through war and military occupation, is truly irresponsible. Those people who advocate this way of thinking do not want to take the difficult road, to take charge and to make the commitment to build democracy. In fact, they do not want to pay the price that is required to bring democracy.

continued on page 14



By Janine Solanki

VANCOUVER, BC - In the winter chill of the late afternoon, more than 90 people picketed and marched in front of the US Consulate in Vancouver demanding, "No War on Iran!"

The urgent picket action was a show of opposition and anger by Iranian community members and many other Vancouver residents to the US Government’s increasing threats of military aggression on Iran. Picket MCs Janine Solanki, MAWO Co-Chair, and Ali Yerevani of the Iranian Committee Against War, opened the picket action with a round of picketing and chanting "No War on Iran!" Janine rallied the participants by stating that they had all come to the streets that day to show the importance of opposing, protesting and stopping the US military, destructive attack on Iran. She emphasized how important it was for people all over the world, Iranian and all others, to defend the people of Iran against this vicious attack.

Ali also spoke and read a statement to the picket explaining that the US government has used the accusation that Iran is developing nuclear weapons to justify international isolation, sanctions and attacks on Iran for years. While the Iranian government has never accepted the accusation or claimed to be doing so, last week the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) reported that Iran stopped any nuclear arms work or research in 2003. Ali said that, despite this blow to the US war drive’s rhetoric against Iran, George Bush maintains that Iran is still a "danger to the world" and the US will keep "all options on the table" – statements that bring a terrible threat against the people of Iran.

Pickers marched, waving signs, shouting, "U.S. Hands Off Iran!" Many new faces joined from the sidewalks, soon building a

Picket Action in Vancouver Demands:

No War on Iran! Don't Attack Iran! US Hands Off Iran!

picket line that was twice the length of the U.S. Consulate building. As the evening turned darker, picket placards could still be seen from the streets, as rush hour traffic showed support by honking their horns and waving to protesters.

The picket speakers included David Whittelsey, a MAWO organizer and veteran of the US Civil Rights and of the Vietnam antiwar movement; Brad McCall, a former US soldier turned 'war resister' who left the US Army and fled to Canada in opposition to the occupation of Iraq; Aaron Mercredi, a Métis youth organizer with the Indigenous Rights and Action Project and MAWO, who explained that the current era of war and occupation is an extension of a long history of genocide against Indigenous people in North America; and finally, Payvand Pevjack of the Iranian Committee Against War and a student Simon Fraser University.

Payvand said that we have not "turned a blind eye" to the years of brutal US occupation in Afghanistan or Iraq, and that we won't turn away as the US now sets its crosshairs on Iran: a country of 72 million people, rich in human history and culture, that has been independent of US control since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Amidst cheers, she said that we must continue to defend the



Picket at the US Consulate in Vancouver, BC. Dec 10, 2007.

Iranian people to stop any attacks.

After several more rounds of picketing and chants, the picket was wrapped up by words from the Co-MCs of the picket who emphasized the necessity for an expanding and ongoing campaign of action to oppose, protest and stop US military aggression against Iran. The protestors shouted their words that rang out again among the buildings around the US Consulate "No to War on Iran!" In response to these increasing attacks on Iran’s sovereignty, MAWO and ICAW called this urgent picket action as part of a

worldwide campaign of growing importance: to defend Iran and its people against US military aggression. We encourage all those opposed to this threat to join us and get involved!

Reminder - Vancouver Emergency Action Plan: In the case that the US starts bombing or marching on Iran, come to the US Consulate (1075 W Pender @ Thurlow St) on the day of attack at 4pm, and for the next week at the same time, with daily protests for the first week. This action plan is being called by the Iranian Committee Against War and is endorsed and supported by MAWO.



Picket at the US Consulate in Vancouver, BC. Dec 10, 2007.

The foundation of this illusion among these wishful thinkers is simply that they have demoralized and given up. They feel hopeless and incompetent to bring about any change to our society. However, contrary to their perspective, our society has a great capacity for change. Masses of people in Iran, although currently inactive, are waiting and seeking opportunities within this widespread crisis that is accelerating day-to-day. They will use their own method, and consequently, this deepening crisis will get them involved in the struggle for change. The basis of the US war drive against Iran stems from the fact that all strategies for colorful, backdoor "revolutions" have been unsuccessful. However, if a war by the United States and the Islamic Republic is imposed on our people, it will not result in democracy, rather it will worsen the suppression of the Iranian people by the government, and further limit political space within the society. Ultimately it will re-enforce the consolidation of the regime.

For those who sabotage the effort and struggle against war by hiding themselves behind "democracy"; either their interest is the same as the United States, or they have

have appealed to foreign powers to seek solutions. However, those foreign powers have never brought any good or any better life for our people.

It is equally true that there are people who believe in the propaganda of the Islamic regime that the US is not in a strong position to launch a military attack on Iran because of their heavy involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the internal differences within the US ruling class. These wishful thinkers are indeed underestimating the US imperialist military might and the danger of an attack on Iran. One must say that this way of thinking is unfounded because the plans and interests of imperialism in the Middle East are serious and it's indeed a matter of life and death for the survival of the imperialist system.



Antiwar rally in London, England.

Under no circumstances does war have any fruitful outcome for the people. Only the ruling elites who initiate it get benefits out of it. People's share of

bought the US lies and propaganda and therefore have developed illusions.

The struggle against war is part of the struggle of the Iranian people for democracy. These two—the struggle against war and the struggle for democracy—in essence are interconnected and they also develop within the same process. Those political tendencies, who try to separate these struggles from each other and try to campaign on these two components of the same process in two different unconnected political motions, are weakening the struggle against war. They are setting the ground for the manipulation of public opinion to welcome a US military attack against the people of Iran. This is a political deception that is insinuated and propagated by the United States. Indeed defeatism and seeking salvation through a foreign aggressor is not a new story in our history. The most tyrannical and despotic regimes, out of weakness and from fear of mass pressure and mass movements,

war is nothing but death, destruction, suffering and dread. War brings nothing but the destruction of the wealth of the entire society, wealth which has been produced and maintained by generations of working people. With imposing war on Iran, the United States government is seeking complete control over the



Antiwar demonstration in London, England.

region's natural resources, especially oil and gas, to maintain and reinforce its strategic position, and to secure the defense of Israel in the Middle East. The Islamic Republic regime will benefit from this war by using more repression and further consolidating its position. At the same time, local and domestic capitalists and the rich, especially hoarders, will take advantage of the shortage of goods and resources in wartime to turn this miserable situation, which brings suffering, anxiety and shortages, into a money making business.

Surprisingly, in the United States—the country that will start this military aggression—people are more sensitive to this impending war. The attitude of the antiwar movement in the US is more serious and antiwar sentiment is more widespread than in Iran, the country who

bombs and rockets in order to realize that a war has in fact begun? Isn't it true that at that time it will be too late to stop the war? Isn't it true that we need to anticipate the problem and think in advance for a solution?

However, the progressive and independent efforts to stop the war require an organized force and collective activity. Many independent and human-loving forces have warned about the possible US war on Iran and the necessity of confronting it and suggested different forms of resistance. Yet, these efforts and warnings have been sporadic, separated, isolated and therefore have remained on the level of cautionary alerts.

In order to connect and to coordinate all these efforts, I extend my arms to all Iranians and all progressive, peace-loving people of the world. I invite

will be the victim of the impending war. Historical experience has shown that people who don't care about their fate, and are not prepared, sensitive or alert to this critical situation, will become indifferent and will later suffer from a heavy price in damage and casualties. Do we really have to hear the sound of

them to present their ideas and plans, to together arm ourselves with an action program to educate the public about the immediate danger of this war. We need the participation and involvement of every individual to organize an opposition to war against Iran.



For the sake of connections, coordination and networking, and for the purpose of exchanging our ideas and suggestions so that we can come up with practical collective activities everywhere, we have created a website www.nowaroniran.org and email address info@nowaroniran.org for you to communicate with us. Your people and all Iranians against war are waiting to receive your ideas and suggestions through these addresses. Iran is in danger, we must do something about it.

Nasser Zarafshan

November 2007
Teheran, Iran





“About Us: The Public Call”
By Dr. Naser Zarafshan Original In Farsi
(English begins on Page 13)

درباره ما

جنگ، تجارت و دزدی دریایی
 این سه از یکدیگر جدائی ناپذیرند
 «گفته»

فراخوان

هموطنان، مردم آزاده و صلح دوست
 جهان

دیو مهیب جنگ بر خاورمیانه چنگ
 انداخته و هر روز عرصه را بر مردم
 این منطقه تنگ تر می کند. نزدیک به
 چهار سال است که عراق در آتش و
 خون دست و پا می زند، و اکنون سایه
 شوم جنگ بر ایران افتاده است. اما در
 میان مردم هنوز واقعیت این خطر
 آنگونه که باید و شاید احساس نشده و
 جامعه تصویر درست و دقیقی از عواقب
 واقعی یک جنگ احتمالی و حساسیت
 لازم نسبت به آن پیدا نکرده است.

از یکسو برخی فریفتگان سیاست
 خارجی آمریکا تبلیغ می کنند که اقدام
 نظامی احتمالی آمریکا، تنها علیه رژیم
 جمهوری اسلامی صورت خواهد گرفت
 و تصور می کنند نتیجه نهایی آن سلطه
 هواداران آمریکا و سیاست آن در منطقه
 خواهد بود. آنان گمان می کنند که اصولاً

راه آن تحمل شود. زمینه و بستر رشد
 چنین توهمی در ذهن کسانی که خود را
 به آن دلخوش کرده اند، تسلیم قبلی آنان
 در برابر این فکر است که آنها خود از
 مبارزه و تغییر شرایط موجود در ایران
 عاجزند. اما برخلاف این گروه، جامعه
 سرشار از ظرفیت تغییر و تحول است و
 خیل عظیم مردم هم که اکنون در حالت
 انفعال، اما مترصد و منتظر بسر می
 برند، به اقتضای بحران همه جانبه ای
 که روز به روز در حال تشدید است، به
 شیوه خود، به مبارزه برای این تحول
 کشیده خواهند شد. اما درجانب آمریکا
 تمایل به جنگ ناشی از این واقعیت است
 که استراتژی "انقلاب" های مخملی و
 رنگین بی نتیجه بوده و با عدم موفقیت
 روبرو شده است. چون نسخه ها و
 داروهای تجویزی بی اثر از آب در آمده
 تمایل به جراحی شدت یافته است. اما
 اگر جنگی بوسیله آمریکا و جمهوری
 اسلامی به مردم ما تحمیل شود، نه تنها
 به تأمین دموکراسی منجر نخواهد شد،
 بلکه موجب تشدید سرکوب از ناحیه
 نظام حاکم بر ایران و بسته تر شدن
 فضای سیاسی جامعه و تقویت و تحکیم
 نظام موجود میگردد. کسانی هم که
 امروز با بهانه قرار دادن دموکراسی و
 پنهان کردن خود در پس این شعار،
 مبارزه علیه جنگ را تخطئه می کنند یا
 منافع آنها همسو با منافع آمریکاست و یا
 زیر تأثیر تبلیغات آمریکا دچار توهمی
 شده اند که در سطور بالا مورد اشاره
 قرار گرفت.

کنند. سهم مردم از جنگ، جز مرگ و
 ویرانی و رنج و وحشت و به باد رفتن
 ثروت ها و دستاوردهای جامعه که
 حاصل کار نسلها نسل مردم زحمتکش
 است، چیز دیگری نخواهد بود. آمریکا
 از این جنگ تحمیل سلطه و کنترل خود
 بر منابع طبیعی منطقه بویژه نفت،
 تقویت موقعیت استراتژیک خود و دفاع
 از اسرائیل را در نظر دارد؛ جمهوری
 اسلامی از آن برای تشدید سرکوب و
 تحکیم موقعیت خود استفاده خواهد کرد؛
 و سرمایه داران و محترکان داخلی و
 غارتگران ثروتهای عمومی که وابسته
 محافل قدرتنند و قحطی و رنج و
 اضطراب مردم را هم به پول تبدیل می
 کنند، از هم اکنون برای بهره برداری از
 شرایط جنگی و انباشتن کیسه های خود
 در کمین نشسته اند.

شگفتا که در این میانه در آمریکا- که

طرف مهاجم و آغاز کننده این جنگ
 احتمالی خواهد بود- حساسیت مردم و
 جنبش آنها در مخالفت با جنگ علیه
 ایران جدی تر و گسترده تر از ایران
 است که قربانی احتمالی چنین جنگی
 خواهد بود. تجارب تاریخی نشان می
 دهد مردمی که در چنین مواردی نسبت
 به سرنوشت خود و عوامل موثر در آن
 آگاهی و حساسیت لازم را نداشته و با
 بی تفاوتی و بی خیالی از کنار آن عوامل
 و تحولات گذشته اند، بعداً تاوان سنگینی
 را بابت این بی تفاوتی و بی توجهی
 پرداخته اند. آیا ما هم باید فقط با صدای
 بمب ها و موشکها متوجه شویم که عملاً
 جنگی شروع شده است؟ در چنان زمانی
 دیگر از کسی کار چندانی برای متوقف
 کردن جنگ ساخته نیست. علاج واقعه
 قبل از وقوع باید کرد.

مبارزه علیه جنگ، بخشی از مبارزه
 مردم ایران برای دموکراسی است و این
 دو ذاتاً از یک جنس و در راستای
 یکدیگرند و سیاستی که تلاش می کند
 این دو را در برابر یکدیگر قرار دهد و
 از این طریق مبارزه علیه جنگ را
 تضعیف و افکار عمومی را برای
 استقبال از حمله نظامی آماده کند،
 سیاستی است که مزورانه از ناحیه
 آمریکا تبلیغ و دنبال می شود. البته
 شکست طلبی و چشم نجات داشتن از
 مهاجمین خارجی در تاریخ ما قصه تازه
 ای نیست. غالباً حکومت های خودی آنقدر
 خودکامه و ستمگر و مردم آنچنان در
 فشار و به جان آمده بوده اند که برای
 رهائی خود چشم امید به مهاجمین بیگانه
 می بسته اند. اما این مهاجمین بیگانه هم
 هیچگاه برای مردم منشاء روز و
 روزگار بهتری نبوده اند.

از سوی دیگر برخی فریفتگان تبلیغات
 جمهوری اسلامی نیز گمان می کنند
 آمریکا به دلیل درگیری در عراق و
 افغانستان و برخی مخالفت های داخلی،
 قادر به هیچگونه اقدام نظامی علیه ایران
 نیست و توان نظامی آن کشور و خطر
 تهاجم امپریالیستی را دست کم گرفته اند.
 این تصور نیز غیر واقعی است نقشه ها
 و مطامع امپریالیسم برای خاورمیانه
 جدی است و با موجودیت و بقاء نظام
 امپریالیستی ارتباط دارد.

جنگ در هیچ شرایطی به سود مردم
 نیست و فقط قدرتهای حاکم که این آتش
 را می افروزند، از آن بهره برداری می

اما تلاش مردمی و مستقل برای
 جلوگیری از وقوع یک جنگ احتمالی به
 نیروی متشکل و فعالیت سازمان یافته
 صلح طلبان نیاز دارد. بسیاری از
 نیروهای مستقل و مردم دوست تاکنون
 نسبت به خطر بالقوه جنگ و ضرورت
 مقابله با آن، به شکل های گوناگون هشدار
 داده اند؛ اما این اقدامات و هشدارها
 پراکنده و جدا از یکدیگر بوده و در
 سطح هشدار باقی مانده است.

برای مربوط ساختن این تلاشها با
 یکدیگر و هماهنگ کردن آنها، من دست
 یاری به سوی همه هموطنان و همه
 مردم آزاده و صلح دوست جهان دراز
 کرده و از آنها دعوت می کنم با
 راهنمایی و طرح نقطه نظرهای خود در
 این زمینه، با ارائه ایده ها و پیشنهاد

شیوه های عملی برای آگاه کردن و بسیج
 مردم علیه خطر موجود، بستر انجام یک
 مبارزه هماهنگ را در این زمینه فراهم
 ساخته، و آنگاه با مشارکت عملی خود
 در اجرای این تلاشها، سهم خود را در
 مخالفت با خطر جنگ ادا کنند.

به این منظور، و برای تماس و دریافت
 نظرات، تبادل آگاهی ها، ایجاد هماهنگی
 و اجرایی کردن کار، سایتی به نشانی
www.nowaroniran.org و پست
 الکترونیکی
nowaroniran@info.org تدارک

شده است. هموطنان شما و ایرانیان
 مخالف جنگ در این نشانی ها منتظر
 تماس و دریافت نظرات شما هستند.
 ایران در خطر است، کاری باید کرد.

ناصر زرافشان آبان 86



Free the Cuban



Report on a Successful direct action by Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver

By Tamara Hansen

September 12th to October 8th 2007 marked an international month of action for the freedom of the Cuban 5. Groups around the world organized special events to further broaden the case of the 5ive and raise awareness in their countries. Since that period the campaign for our five heroes has continued forward with energy and momentum.

Who are the Cuban 5?

Between 1994 and 1995, five Cubans: Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González infiltrated and exposed Miami-based terrorist groups. The list of atrocities committed by these anti-Cuban groups is long; one of the most horrendous attacks was the bombing of a Cuban airliner, which took the lives of 73 people in 1976. These five men were unarmed and harmed no one; their reason for being in the US was solely to protect their country, Cuba, from these terrorist groups.

Through their infiltration, the 5ive successfully thwarted many violent actions by these groups against Cuba. However, when the Cuban government gave the information they collected to the US government, instead of arresting the terrorists, the FBI arrested the 5ive anti-terrorist Cubans. The 5ive were illegally held in solitary confinement for 17 months. Then, despite five motions for a change of venue out of Miami (because of its heavy anti-Cuba bias) the judge denied them. After a 7 month trial in Miami, where they had no chance at a fair trial, the Cuban 5

were unjustly convicted of “conspiracy to commit espionage”, along with other charges. They are currently serving 4 life sentences and 77 years collectively, in prisons throughout the US.

In August 2005 a new trial was granted, when a 3 judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled unanimously for a change of venue. However, in a surprising and underhanded move, 11th Circuit Court bowed to US government pressure to review the 5ive’s appeal again before their full 12 judge panel. Exactly one year after the victorious decision made by the 3 judge panel, the full panel refused the change of venue and denied the 5ive a new trial.

Then on August 20th 2007 arguments were heard again in defence of the Cuban 5 by the 3 judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta. Nine key issues of appeal were presented by the lawyers of the Cuban 5.

“This hearing was one more step in the long appeal process of these five men since they were sentenced in 2001. As in the past, the Government of the United States was once again unable to refute the arguments of the Defense and sustain the accusations against the five. For its part, the Defense, demonstrated irrefutably that the improper conduct of the Government during the entire legal process against the five constituted a flagrant violation of due process that influenced the entire proceeding, primarily by the way in which the Prosecutor invented facts that were not proven at trial, promoted a hostile environment and

manipulated the evidence and the jury. Other key arguments of the Defense that demonstrate the arbitrariness of the process is lack of evidence to sustain the two main accusations—conspiracy to commit espionage and conspiracy to commit murder in the first degree—and the imposition of completely irrational and unjustifiable life sentences. The Government itself admitted during trial that it could not present a single secret document to prove espionage and that it faced an “insurmountable obstacle” to prove the charge of murder. [...] This is a critical juncture in the case with freedom for The Five hanging in the balance.”

-Leonard Weinglass, one of the lawyers for the Cuban 5.

The 5ive’s families denied visas to visit the US

The case of the Cuban 5 is not only limited to René, Ramón, Fernando, Gerardo and Antonio. It is a case that has touched the hearts and lives of millions of people, but it has especially hit their families, who are left without their fathers, sons, husbands and brothers. Olga Salanueva the wife of René and Adriana Pérez the wife of Gerardo have been denied 8 visas respectively to visit the United States in order to visit their unjustly imprisoned husbands, who they have not visited since their arrests.

However, after 9 long years these women’s hope is not fading, it is growing. On December 12th 2007 a new initiative was launched by the International Committee to Free the Five. It is called the International Commission for Family Visitation Rights, according to Granma International, “More than 100

5



Press conference in Havana to announce the founding of a Committee for the Rights of Olga Salanueva and Adriana Perez to visit their husbands in jail. Dec 11, 2007

prominent individuals from 27 countries, among them Nobel Peace laureates Adolfo Pérez Esquivel of Argentina and Rigoberta Mechú of Guatemala, as well as actor Danny Glover and writer Alice Walker from the United States,” have signed their support to this new commission. Granma continues, “the group indicates that its position is based on humanitarian rights and family rights defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention Against Torture.”

Here in Vancouver, Canada the fight for the freedom of the Cuban 5 continues as well with regular events to raise awareness and support for the case of the 5ive. Below are two reports from recent picket actions at the United States Consulate demanding freedom for the 5ive.

Monthly Cuban 5 Pickets in Vancouver

October 18th 2007

On October 18th 2007 the Free the Cuban Five Committee-Vancouver held its 22nd monthly picket in front of the US consulate in downtown Vancouver. Despite heavy rain and cold weather over 25 picketers gathered to demand that the US government, free these five anti-terrorist Cubans immediately.

The event was opened by Sophie Ziner, an organizer with the Free the Cuban 5



Adriana Perez, wife of the imprisoned Gerardo Hernandez.

5! The governments of the US and Canada must stop harassing and imprisoning peace loving people!” The final speaker was the dynamic, Rosa Quiero, coordinator of the Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America, who chanted “Free the Cuban 5 NOW!”

November 29th 2007

Just over a month later, on November 29th 2007, the US Consulate was picketed for the 23rd time by the Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver. This was an especially important action coming off of the heels of an international conference



Picket action at the US Consulate. Nov 29, 2007.



Sarah Alwell, Coordinator of the Capilano College Free the Cuban 5 Committee speaks at the picket action. Nov 29, 2007.

Free the 5ive!



5 Cubans have been imprisoned in U.S. jails for over 9 years for simply investigating U.S.-backed terrorist groups which continue to attack Cuba to this day. On Monday, August 20th 2007, the Cuban 5 had an appeals hearings in Atlanta. Today they are still awaiting the decision from the appeals court. Join the Free The Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver and hundreds of thousands of people across the world in raising awareness about this case and to demand:

FREEDOM FOR THE 5 CUBAN HEROES NOW!

Thursday January 17th
U.S. Consulate (1075. West Pender)
4PM to 5PM

FREE THE CUBAN 5 COMMITTEE - VANCOUVER
www.vancubasolidarity.com/freethefivevan.html
cuban5_van@yahoo.com | 604-719-6947

entitled: “Breaking the Silence International Conference in Solidarity with the Cuban 5” (see article in this issue of Fire This Time) that happened in Toronto November 9th-10th 2007. The protest was MC’d by Noah Fine, Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver coordinator who introduced the exciting program at the picket and stressed the importance of solidarity with the 5ive now as we await the results of their latest appeals hearing that took place on August 20th 2007. The exciting group of speakers at the picket included: Sarah Alwell, coordinator of the Cuban 5 Committee at Capilano College; Andrew Barry, an organizer with the Alison Bodine Defence Committee; Phillipa Ryan, organizer with Grassroots Women, Indigenous Elder and long time supporter of Fidel and the Cuban Revolution; and Esteban Gonzalez, an organizer with Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) who wrapped up the picket with an electrifying quote by Cuban Foreign Minister, Felipe Perez Roque who stated “There is no human or natural force in the world capable of making the Cubans desist from their dreams of justice, freedom and independence.”

Between speakers, participants of the picket line shouted energized slogans and marched in front of the consulate, demanding freedom for the 5 Cuban Heroes, “Hey Bush, you will see, the Cuban 5 will be free!” The over 25 people at the picket committed to continue their support for the Cuban 5 and assured that they would be back for the next monthly picket action organized by the Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver.

Next Picket Action – For Freedom of the Cuban 5

~ PLEASE JOIN US! ~
THURSDAY JAN. 17th | 4pm-5pm
U.S. Consulate
(1075 W. Pender St. Downtown Vancouver)
Please visit:
<http://www.vancubasolidarity.com/freethefivevan.html>

Fidel Castro



THE EMPIRE'S ILLEGAL WARS

When the United States and its NATO allies started the war on Kosovo, Cuba immediately defined her position on the front page of the newspaper Granma, on March 26, 1999. This was done in a Declaration of her Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the title of "Cuba's appeal to end NATO's unjustified aggression against Yugoslavia."

I take essential paragraphs from that Declaration:

"After a number of painful and highly manipulated political occurrences, extended armed confrontations and complex, hardly transparent negotiations around the issue of Kosovo, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization finally launched its announced and brutal air attack against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, whose peoples fought most heroically in Europe against the Nazi hordes during World War II.

"This action, conceived of as a 'punishment of

the Yugoslavian government', is conducted on the margin of the UN Security Council.

[...]

"The war launched by NATO rekindles humanity's justified fears about the establishment of an offensive unipolar system, governed by a warmongering empire acting as a world gendarme and capable of dragging its political and military allies along to the most insane actions. Something similar happened at the beginning and in the first half of this century with the creation of militaristic blocs that brought destruction, death and misery to Europe, dividing and weakening it, while the United States strengthened their economic, political and military power.

"It is worthwhile wondering whether the use and abuse of force could solve the world problems and defend the human rights of the innocent persons who today are dying under the missiles and bombs falling on a small

country which is part of that cultured and civilized Europe.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba strongly condemns this aggression on Yugoslavia by NATO forces led by the United States.

[...]

"At this moment of suffering and pain for the Yugoslavian peoples, Cuba calls on the international community to mobilize its efforts

to bring an immediate end to this unjustified aggression, to avoid new and even more deplorable losses of innocent lives and to allow this nation to again take up the peaceful path of negotiations to solve its internal problems, a matter which depends solely and exclusively on the sovereign will and free determination of the Yugoslavian peoples.

[...]

"The ridiculous attempt at imposing solutions by force is incompatible with any civilized rationale and with the essential principles of international law. [...] To continue along this path, the consequences may be unpredictable for Europe and for all of humanity."

Because of these occurrences, I had sent a message to President Milosevic the day before, through the Yugoslavian ambassador in Havana and our ambassador in Belgrade.

"I beg you to communicate the following to President Milosevic:

"After carefully analyzing everything that is happening and the origins of the present dangerous conflict, we are of the view that an enormous crime is being committed against the Serbian people. At the same time, the aggressors are committing a huge error, which they won't be able to sustain if the Serbian people are capable of resisting, as they did in their heroic struggle against the

Nazi hordes.

"Unless the terribly brutal and unjustifiable attacks in the very heart of Europe cease, world reaction will be even greater and swifter than that triggered by the war in Vietnam.

"This time as never before in recent history, powerful forces and world interests are aware that such behavior in international relations is not acceptable.

"Even though I have no personal relationship with him, I have meditated extensively on the problems of today's world. I think that I have a sense of history, a concept of tactics and strategy in the struggle of a small country against a great superpower and I feel a deep hatred towards injustice, and so I take it upon myself to transmit to him an idea in just three words:

"Resist, resist, resist.
March 25, 1999."

Fidel Castro Ruz
October 1, 2007
6:14 p.m.



LAS GUERRAS DEL IMPERIO



Reflexiones del Comandante en Jefe

Cuando se inicia la guerra de Estados Unidos y sus aliados de la OTAN en Kosovo, Cuba definió de inmediato su posición en la primera página del periódico Granma, el 26 de marzo de 1999. Lo hizo a través de una Declaración de su Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores con el título de "Cuba convoca a poner fin a la injustificada agresión de la OTAN contra Yugoslavia."

Tomo párrafos esenciales de aquella Declaración:

"Después de un conjunto de dolorosos y muy manipulados sucesos políticos, prolongados enfrentamientos armados y complejas y poco transparentes negociaciones en torno a la cuestión de Kosovo, la Organización del Tratado del Atlántico Norte lanzó al fin su anunciado y brutal ataque aéreo contra la República Federativa de Yugoslavia, cuyos pueblos

fueron los que más heroicamente lucharon en Europa contra las hordas nazis en la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

"Esta acción, concebida como 'castigo al gobierno yugoslavo', se realiza al margen del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU.

[...]

"La guerra lanzada por la OTAN reaviva los justos temores de la humanidad por la conformación de un unipolarismo insultante, regido por un imperio guerrillero, erigido a sí mismo en policía mundial y capaz de arrastrar a las acciones más descabelladas a sus aliados políticos y militares, de manera similar a como ocurriera a principios y en la primera mitad de este siglo con la creación de bloques belicistas que cubrieron de destrucción, muerte y miseria a Europa, dividiéndola y

debilitándola, en tanto los Estados Unidos fortalecían su poderío económico, político y militar.

"Cabe preguntarse si el uso y el abuso de la fuerza solucionarán los problemas del mundo y defenderán los derechos humanos de las personas inocentes que hoy mueren bajo los misiles y las bombas que están cayendo sobre un pequeño país de esa culta y civilizada Europa.

"El Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de la República de Cuba condena enérgicamente esta agresión de la OTAN contra Yugoslavia, liderada por los Estados Unidos.

[...]

"En estos momentos de sufrimiento y dolor para los pueblos de Yugoslavia, Cuba convoca a la comunidad internacional a movilizar sus esfuerzos para poner inmediato fin a esta injustificada agresión, evitar nuevas y aún más

lamentables pérdidas de vidas inocentes y permitirle a esta nación retomar la vía pacífica de las negociaciones para la solución de sus problemas internos, asunto que depende única y exclusivamente de la voluntad soberana y la libre determinación de los pueblos yugoslavos.

[...]

"La ridícula pretensión de imponer soluciones por la fuerza es incompatible con todo razonamiento civilizado y los principios esenciales del derecho internacional. [...] De continuarse por este camino, las consecuencias podrían ser impredecibles para Europa y para toda la humanidad."

Con motivo de estos hechos, había enviado el día anterior un mensaje al presidente Milosevic, a través del embajador yugoslavo en La Habana y de nuestro embajador en Belgrado.

"Le ruego comunique al presidente Milosevic lo siguiente:

"Después de analizar cuidadosamente todo lo que está sucediendo y los orígenes del actual y peligroso conflicto, nuestro punto

de vista es que se está cometiendo un gran crimen contra el pueblo serbio y, a la vez, un enorme error de los agresores, que no podrán sostener, si el pueblo serbio, como en su heroica lucha contra las hordas nazis, es capaz de resistir.

"De no cesar tan brutales e injustificables ataques

en pleno corazón de Europa, la reacción mundial será aún mayor y mucho más rápida que la que desató la guerra en Vietnam.

"Como en ninguna otra ocasión en los últimos tiempos, poderosas fuerzas e intereses mundiales están conscientes de que tal conducta en las relaciones internacionales no puede continuar.

"Aunque no tengo relación personal con él, he meditado mucho sobre los problemas del mundo actual, creo tener un sentido de la historia, un concepto de la táctica y la estrategia en la lucha de un pequeño país contra una gran superpotencia y siento un odio profundo hacia la injusticia, por lo que me atrevo a transmitirle una idea en tres palabras:

"Resistir, resistir y resistir.
25 de marzo de 1999."
Fidel Castro Ruz.
1º de octubre de 2007, 6:14 p.m.



LOCKED OUT



WORKING PEOPLE UNDER ATTACK:



IBEW LOCAL 213



Sears Locks Out Lower Mainland Service Technicians

By Aaron Mercredi

For almost 10 weeks, service technicians employed by Sears in the lower mainland have been locked out of work. The workers, members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 213, were in the process of bargaining for a new collective agreement when management shut the doors on them for refusing to work under an imposed collective agreement.

On September 27th, bargaining had broken off between Sears and IBEW 213 when Sears demanded that the bargaining committee either reject or accept what they were offering right then and there, without even giving the union a chance to take this offer to its members to decide on.

Sears' offer included a longer work week with no overtime, cuts to holiday time, allowing the employer to impose split weekends (meaning no consecutive days off), and making no guarantee of wage increases over the four-year period of the new contract.

This 'my way or the highway' offer came at the 10th meeting of unsuccessful negotiations on September 27th, where the workers were fighting for decent working terms and conditions. The right to bargain for a collective agreement is a fundamental right for unionized workers, and Sears is undermining that right by imposing a lock-out because they didn't get what they wanted.

Sears, a Union-Buster!

When the bargaining committee refused to accept their offer, Sears then served notice that they would lockout the IBEW 213 members on October 1st at

8:30am. They also said that the lockout would be lifted at 10am, at which time the members would be invited to return to work under the terms of the rejected contract. Sears stayed true to its word, inviting the union members back to work and stating that they would not be required to pay union dues under this new 'agreement.'

It's obvious that Sears is not interested in the well-being of its workers. That should be crystal clear. From trying to impose a concession-filled contract to locking out its workers for refusing to bow down to unacceptable working terms and conditions, this giant corporation is trying to turn back the clock and strip away any gains that these workers have been able to make since they unionized. In 1997, the workers began to certify with IBEW 213 because of poor management and their terms and conditions of employment constantly

being chipped away by the bosses. And now, after trying to negotiate a new collective agreement with Sears, they have been left out in the cold by their employer. Many of these workers are long-term employees with families to support.

Support the Service Technicians!

IBEW 213 is asking people to not buy any Sears merchandise during this dispute, and to send a message to Sears to treat their employees fairly. At the BC Federation of Labour convention on November 28th, an emergency resolution was passed to support this callout to working people to stop shopping at Sears. This has also been joined by many other unions across the country, from coast to coast, who have joined the service technicians in their fight by boycotting Sears for being an unfair employer. This sort of solidarity action can bring

pressure on Sears, especially during the holiday season.

This basic fight of the Sears service technicians is a fight for dignity and respect, and it affects all working people. This can set a precedent for more companies to threaten to lockout workers who won't accept substandard working conditions, to make more profits off our backs while stripping us of more and more our rights. The Sears service technicians have no option but to fight back. This is a call to all working people in Canada to support fellow workers in the struggle for better conditions.

For updates on this important struggle and how you can help, please visit the IBEW 213 website at www.ibew213.org.

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!

PROTEST AND BOYCOTT SEARS!

Sears Service Technicians in Struggle

An Interview with Rav Ghuman

By Aaron Mercredi

Rav Ghuman is an Assistant Business Manager with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 213 and a representative for the service technicians who have been locked out by Sears. Fire This Time had a chance to sit down and talk with him about their fight.

Aaron: How has this lockout affected your members?

Rav: There are 70 members in the bargaining unit who are affected by this. Unfortunately, we've got a dozen or so members that are scabbing. And most of these members who are scabbing were also scabbing last time we were in a labour dispute with Sears. As a matter of fact, some of them even went so far as to try and decertify at the time. But the remaining 50 or so members we have, they're spirits are strong. They're very united. They're willing to stand up to Sears and they're out there leafleting on a daily basis. Except for the Underhill location, which is their work location. We're actually picketing there at the Underhill location in Burnaby. But, all the other retail stores in the lower mainland, some in the Fraser Valley, are being leafleted on a daily basis by

the members. They remain strong.

Aaron: What was Sears trying to make the workers agree to?

Rav: Well, Sears came in with an agenda to basically gut our agreement, completely re-write our whole agreement including things like getting rid of the arbitration process and so on and so forth. In the end, we argued about five or six issues left to be dealt with, which we would not agree to. And after about 10 sessions of bargaining, on the very last session on September 27th, the outstanding issues we had were hours of work, the length of the agreement, wages, split work weeks, BC medical coverage and Boxing Day. With Sears, Boxing Day is something we bargained for in our very first agreement as a paid holiday for our members. Sears wants to take that away. With split work weeks, Sears doesn't want our members having two days off in a row. It will either be a Sunday and whichever other day it might be. That's a split work week. There's the issue of overtime. Right now, our members work a seven and a half hour day, and if they work anything past that, they get paid overtime, which is time and a half up to 11 hours a day. Sears wants



Rav Ghuman

them to work an extra half hour day without overtime rates, and there is no guarantee of an eight-hour day. So, if they end up working on a Saturday, for the first two and half hours, they wouldn't get paid overtime. They'd be working at straight time on a Saturday for the first 2.5 hours. For the length of the agreement - and Sears insists on a 4-year agreement - they will not agree to negotiated wage increases. So, they want us to agree to a 4-year agreement with no guarantee of any wage increases. Right now, the dispute still continues. We've been locked out since October 1st. So, on the very last day we met on, September 27th, we were given until 2:30pm, to either accept Sears' final offer, their imposed offer by the way, which included all those concessions I just mentioned. We weren't given the opportunity to counter-propose that. They wanted us to make a decision. Whether we were going to accept this,

their last offer, or whether we were going to reject it. So, the negotiating committee sat down and decided we were going to reject this agreement. At that point, at roughly 2pm on September 27th, the lawyer for Sears, who was also their lead negotiator, reached across the table and handed us a lockout notice that as of October 1st 2007, our members would be locked out from 8:30am until 10am, and after that they would invite the members back to work under this concessionary-imposed agreement. It also said they would not have to pay any union dues, which is a clear case of union-busting. So, if our members went back to work at 10am, they would be accepting the terms of their imposed agreement, which would mean no Boxing Day, split work weeks, no overtime for 2.5 hours on a Saturday, or a half hour a day, etc.

Aaron: What was the reaction of the workers to all of this, the imposed agreement and the lockout?

Rav: Oh, they were just shocked. Especially when we weren't even given an opportunity to take this back to our members. We had to write right then and there, on the 27th of September, whether we were going to accept this or reject this, with no opportunity to even counter-propose their final offer.

Aaron: Is this the first time that Sears has been union-busting?

Rav: Well, we started to try and organize Sears in 1997. It took 4 years to reach our first agreement, which was in 2001. And in those 4 years, Sears did everything it could to try and not let the IBEW in there. So, even after we did organize, there were a handful of people, our so-called members, who were on a drive to decertify.

continued on page 19

Please help by telling Sears you support the locked-out technicians.

**Go to the LabourStart Link at:
http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/solidarityforever/show_campaign.cgi?c=327**

5 Decades of the CUBAN Revolution

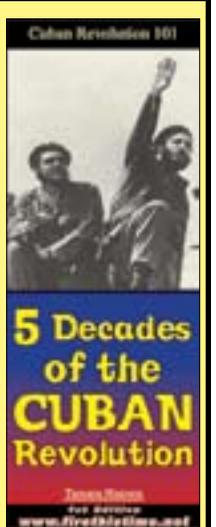
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FOR THE 16TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR International Community Rejects the U.S. Blockade Against Cuba

By Tomás A. Granados

With the news from Granma and added news from Cuba News Agency (ACN)

Cuba has won a resounding victory in its sustained resistance to the economic blockade imposed by the United States by receiving the virtually unanimous support of the world community to its demand to put an end to that measure.

In the vote on a resolution at the end of the debate in the UN General Assembly on the issue of the U.S. blockade imposed on Cuba, 184 of the 192 member states of this international organization asked Washington to halt that practice.

For Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque this is a historic victory that has special value given that it took place just a few days after President George W. Bush

called on the international community to support his blockade policy.

The resolution passed today for the 16th consecutive time highlights the "Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial and Financial Blockade Imposed by the United States on Cuba."

As was the case in last year's debate, the U.S. vote against the resolution was accompanied by Israel, the Marshall Islands and Palau, plus the abstention of Micronesia.

Last year, the resolution against that coercive measure imposed on Cuba by the U.S. government had 183 votes in favor, in itself a record compared to earlier years.

More than 20 countries and representatives of UN groups, including

the Non-Aligned Movement, the G-77, CARICOM and MERCOSUR expressed their positions against the blockade during the debate.

Media outlets throughout the world echoed the overwhelming UN vote in favor of the Cuban resolution against the U.S. economic, financial and commercial blockade of the island.

The event hit Mexico's La Jornada's first page under the headline the United Nations Fully Support of Cuba, accompanied with a photo of foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque, taken while addressing the General Assembly.

Also the Mexican daily Milenio dubbed the results of the vote overwhelming. The article notes that the number of UN member nations supporting Cuba has increased from 59 in 1992 to 184, this year 2007.

In Bolivia, the most important news agencies reported the Cuban victory at the United Nations, including the Bolivian News Agency (ABI), which highlighted that for 16th consecutive year the Cuban resolution has been supported by the General Assembly, with the vote of 184 countries,

out of a total of 192 members.

In related news, Cuban ambassador to Angola, Pedro Ross, said the UN vote is an expression of worldwide rejection against the anti-Cuba policy maintained by Washington.



A board displays the vote results at the UN General Assembly.



Cuba Solidarity T-shirts From Vancouver!

only \$15!

* Free the Cuban 5 Cttee T-shirt (Left)
* 'Lift the Blockade' T-Shirt (Right)
To order contact Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) at:
cubacommunities@yahoo.ca
or 778-882-5223



Who is VCSC?

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) is an organization working to build solidarity and support for Cuba in Vancouver, Canada and internationally. To do this, we organize frequent educational events, cultural events, conferences, mobilizations and actions in support of Cuba's sovereignty against Imperialist attacks and in defence of the gains of the Cuban revolution.

We also support 3 petition campaigns:

- 1- Against the US Blockade on Cuba
- 2- To Free the Cuban 5 held in US Jails
- 3- To Extradite anti-Cuban Terrorist Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela

Through petitioning throughout the lower mainland, at events, festivals, high schools and campuses, we engage with thousands of people about Cuba. Our work aims to bring Cuba, as a country making important social gains, to youth, students, women, Latin American people, people of the third world and other working and oppressed people in Canada, as an example of a building a better world.

We welcome new members and encourage everyone to get involved with VCSC to build a larger, stronger Cuba solidarity movement in Canada!

For more information contact:

cubacommunities@yahoo.ca

778-882-5223

vancubasolidarity.com

¿Quiénes son VCSC?

Comunidades de Vancouver en Solidaridad con Cuba (VCSC por sus siglas en ingles) es una organización que trabaja para crear apoyo y solidaridad para Cuba en Vancouver, Canadá e internacionalmente. Para cumplir con esta labor nosotros organizamos frecuentes eventos educativos y culturales, conferencias, movilizaciones y acciones en defensa de la soberanía de Cuba contra los ataques imperialistas y en defensa de las victorias de la Revolución Cubana.

Además apoyamos 3 campañas de peticiones:

- 1- Contra el Bloqueo de los EE.UU. contra Cuba
- 2- Por Libertad de los Cinco Cubanos Encarcelados en los EE.UU.
- 3- Por la Extradición del Terrorista Anticubano Luis Posada Carriles

A través de las campañas de peticiones en toda la lower mainland, en eventos, festivales, secundarias, y universidades, podemos conversar con miles de personas sobre Cuba. El objetivo de este trabajo es llevar a Cuba, un país haciendo importantes avances sociales, a jóvenes, estudiantes, mujeres, personas de América Latina, personas del tercer mundo y a otras personas trabajadoras y oprimidas en Canadá, como un ejemplo de la construcción de un mundo mejor.

Cualquier miembro nuevo es bienvenido y animamos a todos a que se involucren con VCSC para construir un movimiento de solidaridad con Cuba más fuerte y más grande en Canadá.

Para conseguir mas información contacta:

cubacommunities@yahoo.ca

778-882-5223

www.vancubasolidarity.com

Five Heroes Freedom Fund

Since the imprisonment of the 5 Cuban Heroes in 1998, the biggest roadblock for the case has been a complete media blackout. The National Committee to Free the Cuban Five in the U.S. has launched a \$250,000 fund for a mass national media campaign. They are asking all individuals and organizations to do whatever possible in the raising of this urgently needed money.

To make a donation or to find out more about the "Five Heroes Freedom Fund" please check out www.freethethefive.org or canadiannetworkoncuba.ca



IBEW Lockout

continued from page 18

Needless to say, I don't think Sears has been very union-friendly.

Aaron: How has support been shown from other unions and labour organizations?

Rav: Well, support from other unions and organizations has just been incredible. Not only from our IBEW brothers and sisters, but right across to the Teamsters, CEP, you name it. Through the BC Federation of Labour, we've also asked all our affiliates for a boycott of Sears. So, we're asking everyone not to shop at Sears. Rip up their cards, send a letter to Sears saying, "we will not shop here until this dispute is settled." We've had leafleting going on. The Alberta Federation of Labour has also boycotted Sears and asked their members to boycott Sears. And they're also helping us leaflet in Alberta. There's been leafleting going on in New

Brunswick, and in Toronto at Sears head office. They've been leafleted in October.

Aaron: How can people support the service technicians in this struggle?

Rav: The best way to help support these technicians is not to shop at Sears. If you do have a Sears card, cut it up. Send it to Sears and tell them you won't shop at Sears until this labour dispute is settled. They can do that through a few different means, either by writing or emailing and we've also got a campaign started on a website called labourstart.org, and it talks about the Sears dispute. You can do it through that, and it is very easy to do. And we're basically asking our members to do the same thing.

Aaron: Thanks a lot, Rav. Good luck with this fight.

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Antiwar Rally & Conference

for Organizers, Activists & EVERYONE!

MAWO was there alongside over 400 people for a march through downtown Vancouver that culminated with a rally at the Vancouver Art Gallery. On this day hundreds of thousands of people mobilized across the world as part of the International Day of Action to demand and end to war and occupation from Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond.

the new era of war and occupation and to discuss and celebrate MAWO's four-year anniversary in educating, organizing and mobilizing people against war and occupation.

The conference was opened by Brad McCall, a US War Resister fighting for refugee status in Canada and his right to refuse to go to war against the people of Iraq.

MAWOCO-Chair and spokesperson Alison Bodine then gave the workshop "Antiwar & Social Justice Activists Under Attack: How to Build a Defence Campaign - the Case of Alison Bodine and the Current CBSA crackdown on those speaking out against war & occupation at home and abroad." Alison explained her case of political targeting by the Canada Border Services Agency and the government of Canada that began when she was harassed and arrested in early September 2007 and the campaign that has organized in her defence. Alison spoke about the importance of this campaign in the struggle for basic human and civil rights for immigrants, refugees, non-residents and activists and organizers.

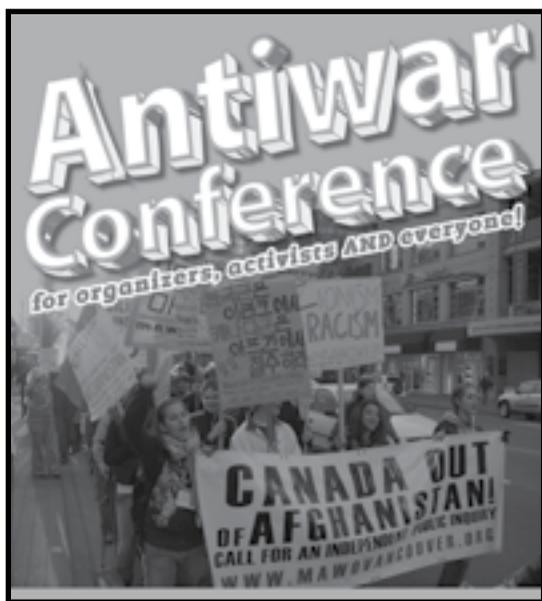
The second half of the conference was opened by Jose Angel, an organizer with the Vancouver-based Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America and a lifelong social justice activist from El Salvador.

In commemoration of MAWO's four

years there was a narrated slideshow presentation by MAWO Executive member, Kira Koshelanyk. "4 years of MAWO in Action: How Far We Have Come - Constant Campaign Against War and Occupation in Defence of Self-Determination" consisted of hundred of photos compiled by MAWO organizers to show the progression of the building of MAWO - with rallies pickets, forums, conferences, film showings and festivals.

After a closing by Kira, the conference did not end, demand for more discussion meant that the conference continued on Friday Nov 2nd with a forum called "What Can We Learn from the History of the Antiwar: From Korea to Vietnam to the Growing Era of War & Occupation." A packed room met at the Britannia Community Centre to hear and presentation by Ali Yerevani, the political editor of Fire This Time Newspaper, a life-long activist and MAWO organizer.

This International Weekend of Action was a success for people united against war and occupation all over the world but only a beginning. We must continue to fight for a broad, effective and united antiwar movement.



By Alison Bodine

This October 27 & 28 marked the third International Weekend of Action Against War & Occupation that Vancouver Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) has participated and organized for in 2007. Over this weekend in Vancouver, BC there were two actions, a march and rally and a conference.

Saturday Oct 27th Rally & March

Saturday October 27th was an International day to demand "Canada Out of Afghanistan!" and "US/UK Out of IRAQ!" The initial call for coordinated actions was made by the Canada Peace Alliance and the US antiwar group International ANSWER. MAWO endorsed this call. In Vancouver, the march and rally was organized by Stopwar.ca, and MAWO supported, participated and helped build this action.

Sunday October 28th MAWO Antiwar Conference

The next day, Sunday October 28th antiwar organizers, social justice activists and new to antiwar organizing gathered at the Britannia Community Centre for MAWO's 8th all-day antiwar conference "Antiwar Conference for Organizers, Activists & EVERYONE!" Over 50 people came out to this conference to discuss the



By Kira Koshelanyk

For the seventh time since September 2003, the Student Week Against War & Occupation (SWAWO) touched down on college and university campuses in the Lower Mainland and Victoria! This intense campaign of events brings the struggles of oppressed people against the new era of war and occupation to hundreds of students every semester, beginning the term with forums, film showings, petition drives and even hip hop concerts, in a rush of antiwar organizing and activity. October 22nd-26th 2007, hundreds of students participated in events as part of SWAWO #7 which led up to the October 27th/28th International Weekend of Action Against War. SWAWO is organized by Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) along with antiwar clubs and groups on campuses.

SWAWO #7 included events on campus in the Lower Mainland at

"The World After 9/11: Afghanistan, Iraq, War, Occupation & Destruction, What Now?" 7th Student Week Against War & Occupation Brings the Antiwar Movement to Campus!

SWAWO
FALL 2007

Simon Fraser University (SFU), University of British Columbia (UBC), Capilano College, Douglas College, Langara College and at the University of Victoria (UVIC) on Vancouver Island.

At each of the campus events this fall, antiwar activist Alison Bodine who was politically targeted by Canada border guards and is fighting against a 2-year ban from Canada, spoke on her case in forums and discussions (for more information please see the article on this case in this issue of Fire This Time). Alison spoke alongside Brad McCall, former US soldier turned 'war resister' when he quit the US Army and fled to Canada in opposition to the US occupation of Iraq, at several of the campus forums including to a packed house of more than 50 students at Capilano College and to dozens of students at Langara College and UVIC. Both Alison and Brad related their cases of being politically targeted because of their actions against the wars and occupations in the Middle East.

Screenings of the film "Blood of my Brother" were also held at Langara, SFU and UBC, students watched this moving story of a regular Iraqi family torn apart by the US/UK invasion of their country and the crisis created for Iraqi people by the ongoing occupation. Questions and discussion followed the film as students debated the roots, causes and alternatives to the US/UK quagmire in Iraq.

For the last day of SWAWO, students at Capilano College went beyond the forums, films and discussions, and organized the "Drop Beats Not Bombs" antiwar hip hop showcase and more than 150 students participated! Dozens signed the petition against Canada's occupation of Afghanistan as well as signing up to get involved in future antiwar organizing on campus!

Since September 11th 2001, the new era of war and occupation opened by imperialist countries has brought untold destruction, death and human suffering

which shows no sign of stopping. In the 'belly of the beast', at home inside the imperialist countries, students and young people have been the first to respond and also to continue organizing against this crisis and attack on humanity. The energy, consciousness and idealism of students and young people to struggle against injustice is a key factor in this and also puts students at the forefront of the fight against the new era of war and occupation. SWAWO #7 was a successful series of actions and events that must continue as an antiwar institution on campuses to reach more students and youth and involve them in organizing on campus and in the broader antiwar movement!

Students: Educate, Organize, Mobilize Against War & Occupation!



THE BLOCKADE HAS NEVER BEEN APPLIED WITH SUCH VICIOUSNESS AS IN THE PAST YEAR

SPEECH BY CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER FELIPE PEREZ ROQUE, ON "THE NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL BLOCKADE IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA."
NEW YORK, OCTOBER 30, 2007

Mr. President:

Distinguished delegates:

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba, and against the rights of the peoples that you all represent in this Assembly, has now lasted almost half a century.

According to conservative estimates, it has caused Cuba losses in excess of \$89 billion. That means, in terms of the dollar's current value, no less than \$222 billion. Anybody can understand the level of economic and social development that Cuba might have reached if it were not subjected to this implacable and obsessive economic war.

The blockade is now the main obstacle to the development and well-being of the Cuban people and a flagrant, massive and systematic violation of our people's rights.

The blockade is attempting to bring the Cuban people to its knees through hunger and disease.

That was how the essence of the blockade on Cuba was explained in a meeting led by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1960:

"...there's no effective political opposition; therefore, the only foreseeable means to alienate internal support [for the Revolution] is through disenchantment based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship. We should immediately use any possible measure to deny Cuba money and supplies, to

known the perennial threat of aggression against our country and the economic hardships caused by the blockade's implacable persecution.

The United States has ignored, with arrogance and political blindness, the 15 resolutions adopted by this General Assembly asking for the lifting of the blockade against Cuba. Even worse, throughout the past year, it has adopted new measures, bordering on insanity and fanaticism, which intensify even more the sanctions and extraterritorial persecution of our relations with the countries that you all represent.

The blockade has never been applied with such viciousness as it has over the past year.

On August 14, 2006, the United States government went to the extreme of fining the Alliance of Baptist Churches, alleging that some of its faithful "did tourism" during a visit to Cuba with religious purposes.

In December 2006, the U.S. government prohibited U.S. companies from providing Internet services to Cuba. Therefore, if there are attempts from within Cuba to access the services of Google Earth, as millions of users do every day throughout the world, the response is received that "This product is not available in your country."

Cuban children have been especially lacerated by the blockade that President Bush has promised to

Oliver Stone and Michael Moore. The first has been fined by the U.S. government, in the name of freedom, for having traveled to Cuba to film the documentaries *Comandante* and *Looking for Fidel*. I really don't know how President Bush imagined that Oliver Stone could find Fidel if not by traveling to Cuba.

The second one, Michael Moore, is being investigated regarding the trip he made to our country this past March to film his documentary *Sicko*. This, distinguished delegates, is 21st century McCarthyism.

With this grotesque persecution of honest words and independent art, the U.S. president has become an emulator of the medieval Inquisition. Except that this modern inquisition is much more barbarian and lethal: it organized the plunder of the fabulous Baghdad Library and the burning of more than one million books.

I would now like to recall the words of the Cuban and international artist Alicia Alonso in her recent letter to U.S. intellectuals and artists:

"We are working together so that Cuban artists and writers can take their talent to the United States, and so that you are not prevented from coming to our island to share



is an issue that concerns all of the states meeting here.

In the period from May 2006 to May 2007 alone, at least 30 countries were affected by the extraterritorial regulations of the blockade policy on Cuba.

Let's look at just a few examples:

- On July 28, 2006, the blockade's regulations were applied to the Netherlands Caribbean Bank, of the Dutch Antilles, including the freezing of accounts in the United States and the prohibition on any transactions by U.S. citizens and entities with that bank.

- On May 4, 2007, the British company PSL Energy Services was fined \$164,000 for exporting equipment and services to Cuba for the oil industry.

- Sabroe-brand compressors cannot be exported to Cuba, either, after the Danish company that makes them

no doubt, the merciless war waged by the U.S. Treasury Department on Cuba's relations with financial and banking institutions in other countries.

That was possible especially after the U.S. government and its special services gained access to confidential information held by the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication

(SWIFT), an institution via which virtually all payments and exchanges of messages are made among the world's financial institutions.

Over the last year, more than 20 banks from different countries have been grossly threatened with the objective of interrupting any type of relationship or transaction with Cuba. For reasons that are understandable, this Assembly cannot be given more information about such a sensitive matter, because that would facilitate

the obsessive persecution of U.S. agencies completely dedicated to this ignoble task.

Mr. President:

Distinguished delegates:

Just a few days ago, the U.S. president stated: "Cuba's regime uses the U.S. embargo as a scapegoat for Cuba's miseries."

However, the Secretary General's Report, contained in document A/62/92, with information contributed by 118 countries and 21 international organizations, shows clearly and thoroughly actions carried out by the administration over the past year to intensify the blockade, as well as its serious consequences for Cuba.

This General Assembly has the opportunity today to express, freely and openly, the opinion of the international community on the policy of blockade and aggression

diminish income so as to cause hunger, desperation and the collapse of the government."

Forty-seven years later, that was repeated by President George W. Bush:

"...I also urge our Congress to show our support and solidarity for fundamental change in Cuba by maintaining our embargo..."

Seven out of every 10 of us Cubans, distinguished delegates, have only

intensify.

Cuban children have not been able to receive the inhalant anesthetic Sevorane from the U.S. company Abbott, which is the best for pediatric general anesthesia. We have to use lesser-quality substitutes. President Bush will surely explain it by saying that those Cuban children are "collateral victims" of his war on Cuba.

Cuban children who suffer from arrhythmia can no longer receive pacemakers that the U.S. company Saint-Jude used to sell to us. The pressure from the Office of Foreign Assets Control was very strong, and Saint-Jude saw itself obliged to break with Cuba.

The U.S. delegation should explain to this Assembly why Cuban children who suffer from cardiac arrhythmia are enemies of the U.S. government.

The Cuban delegation cannot explain—perhaps the U.S. one can—why culture has been one of the principle objectives of the blockade's persecution.

The U.S. government prevents Cuba from participating in the Puerto Rico Book Fair. Blocking the participation of Cuban writers and editors in a book fair is a barbarian act.

From December 2006, hotels belonging to the U.S.-based chains Ritz, Carlton, Hilton and Marriott received instructions from the U.S. government to cancel their contracts with Cuban musicians who were working temporarily in their hotels throughout the world. They would be hired again only if they moved to Miami, declared themselves admirers of President Bush's policies and repented of having lived at some point in Cuba.

I would like to reiterate our solidarity with the U.S. filmmakers

your knowledge and values; so that a song, a book, a scientific study or a piece of choreography are not irrationally considered as a crime."

The blockade persecutes exchange and human relations between the people of Cuba and of the United States. It prevents, moreover, normal relations between Cuban families on both sides of the Florida Straits. Fines of up to \$1 million for businesses and \$250,000 for individuals and prison sentences of up to 10 years for violators is the price that a person from the United States must risk in order to come as a tourist to our country, or a Cuban resident in the United States if he or she wants to visit a sick relative in Cuba.

Distinguished delegates:

On more than one occasion, this Assembly has listened to the representatives of the United States say that the issue that we are discussing today is a bilateral question that should not be discussed in this forum. They will probably repeat this fallacious argument when they later explain their vote.

However, as you all well know, the brutal economic war that is imposed on Cuba does not only affect the Cuban people. If that alone were the case, it would be extremely serious. But it is even worse. It is an affront to international law, to the aims and principles established in the United Nations Charter, and to the right of any country to trade in a free and sovereign manner with whichever nation it chooses to do so.

The extraterritorial application of U.S. laws, in contempt of the legitimate interests of third countries—the countries that you all represent, distinguished delegates, in this Assembly—in investing and developing normal economic and commercial relations with Cuba,

was acquired by a U.S. company.

- The U.S. multinational General Electric acquired the Finnish company Datex-Ohmeda. Until that date, Cuba was able to buy the excellent equipment for anesthesia and multipurpose monitoring made in Finland, as we traditionally did.

- When the Cuban Institute of Nutrition and Hygiene tried to buy an infrared spectrophotometer from the Japanese company Shimadzu, it found that the blockade prohibited it, because more than 10% of that machine's components are U.S.-made.

- The German company Basf AG was unable to sell an herbicide product to Cuba, either from Germany or from its branches in Latin America, because the active ingredient is from the U.S.

- Since the Spanish cruise line Pullmantur was acquired by the U.S. company Royal Caribbean in late 2006, the Holiday Dream cruise ship, owned by the first, had to suspend its operations in Cuba.

- In December 2006, the management of the Hotel Scandic of Norway, purchased in March 2006 by the U.S. Hilton hotel chain, cancelled the reservations made to house a Cuban delegation during an international tourism fair. That caused a big scandal and general opposition in Norwegian public opinion. But the most incredible part was yet to come: the spokeswoman from the Hilton Group in London publicly announced—listen to this, distinguished delegates—that the chain would prohibit the housing of Cubans in all of its hotels around the world, and if not, they would be subject to fines or could go to prison, in line with the blockade legislation.

But the most notorious episode that occurred this year with respect to the U.S. blockade on Cuba was,

that the United States has imposed on the Cuban people for almost 50 years.

Right now, there in Cuba, our people are attentively and hopefully following the decision you all will make. They are doing so while keeping in mind Fidel's words: "Never has a people had such sacred things to defend or such profound convictions to fight for."

Cuba, distinguished delegates, will not surrender. It is fighting and will fight with the conviction that defending our rights today is also to defend the rights of all of the nations represented in this Assembly.

In the name of Cuba, I ask you to vote "yes" on the resolution titled "The Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial and Financial Blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

I ask you, distinguished delegates, to vote "yes" on the resolution presented by Cuba, despite the lies uttered by the U.S. delegation and threats that have been made in all the days leading up to today.

We ask you vote "yes" on Cuba's resolution, which is also to vote "yes" on the rights of all the peoples on this planet.

I would like to end by recalling the words of José Martí, Cuba's national hero of independence: "Whoever stands up now with Cuba stands up for all times."

Freedom for the five Cuban heroes, the anti-terrorist fighters, political prisoners in U.S. prisons!

Freedom for the five Cuban heroes!

I do have a legitimate right, distinguished delegates, to say:

¡Viva Cuba Libre!
¡Viva Cuba Libre!
¡Viva Cuba Libre!



EL BLOQUEO NO SE HABÍA APLICADO NUNCA CON TAL ENSAÑAMIENTO COMO EN EL ÚLTIMO AÑO

Intervención del excmo. Sr. Felipe Pérez Roque, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de la República de Cuba, bajo el tema «Necesidad de poner fin al bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero impuesto por los Estados Unidos de América contra Cuba»

Nueva York, 30 de octubre del 2007

Señor Presidente:

Señores delegados:

El bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero impuesto por los Estados Unidos contra Cuba, y también contra los derechos de los pueblos que ustedes representan en esta Asamblea, dura ya casi medio siglo.

Según cálculos conservadores, ha provocado a Cuba pérdidas por más de 89 mil millones de dólares. Eso significa, al valor actual del dólar, no menos de 222 mil millones de dólares. Cualquiera puede comprender el nivel de desarrollo económico y social que Cuba habría alcanzado si no hubiera estado sometida a esta guerra económica implacable y obsesiva.

El bloqueo es hoy el principal obstáculo al desarrollo y el bienestar de los cubanos y una violación flagrante, masiva y sistemática de los derechos de nuestro pueblo.

«El bloqueo pretende rendir por hambre y enfermedades al pueblo cubano».

Así se explica la esencia del bloqueo a Cuba en una reunión encabezada por el presidente Dwight Eisenhower en 1960:

«No existe una oposición política



Estados Unidos

prohibió a las compañías

norteamericanas proveer

servicios de Internet a Cuba. Por lo tanto, si desde Cuba se intenta acceder a los servicios del Google Earth, como hacen millones de usuarios cada día en todo el mundo, se recibe como respuesta que: «Este producto no se encuentra disponible en su país».

Los niños cubanos han sido especialmente lacerados por el bloqueo que el presidente Bush ha prometido reforzar.

Los niños cubanos no pueden recibir el anestésico inhalatorio Sevorane, de la compañía norteamericana Abbott, que es el mejor para la anestesia general pediátrica. Tenemos que usar sustitutos de menor calidad. El presidente Bush lo explicará seguramente diciendo que esos niños cubanos son «víctimas colaterales» de

documentales

Comandante

y Buscando a Fidel.

Realmente no sé cómo el presidente Bush imagina que Oliver Stone podía encontrar a Fidel si no era viajando a Cuba. El segundo, está siendo investigado por el viaje que hizo a nuestro país, el pasado mes de marzo, para filmar su documental Sicko. Es el macartismo del siglo XXI.

Con esta grotesca persecución de la palabra honesta y el arte independiente, el Presidente de los Estados Unidos se convierte en un «émulo de la Inquisición medieval». Solo que esta moderna Inquisición es mucho más bárbara y letal: organizó el saqueo de la fabulosa Biblioteca de Bagdad y la quema de más de un millón de volúmenes.

Quisiera recordar ahora las palabras de la artista cubana y del mundo, Alicia

su guerra contra Cuba.

Los niños cubanos aquejados de arritmias no pueden ya recibir marcapasos que la empresa norteamericana Saint-Jude nos vendía. Fue muy fuerte la presión de la Oficina de Control de Activos Extranjeros, y Saint-Jude se vio obligada a romper con Cuba.

La delegación de Estados Unidos debería explicar a esta Asamblea por qué los niños cubanos que padecen arritmias cardíacas son enemigos del gobierno norteamericano.

La delegación cubana no puede explicar, quizás la de Estados Unidos sí lo haga, por qué la cultura ha sido uno de los objetivos principales de la persecución del bloqueo.

El Gobierno de Estados Unidos impide a Cuba participar en la Feria del Libro de Puerto Rico. Bloquear la participación de escritores y editores cubanos en una Feria del Libro es un acto bárbaro.

A partir de diciembre del 2006, los hoteles de las cadenas norteamericanas Ritz, Carlton, Hilton y Marriott recibieron instrucciones del Gobierno de Estados Unidos de cancelar los contratos a los músicos cubanos que trabajaban temporalmente en sus hoteles en todo el mundo. Sólo si se mudan a Miami, se declaran admiradores de la política del presidente Bush y se arrepienten de haber vivido alguna vez en Cuba, podrán volver a ser contratados.

Quisiera hoy reiterar nuestra solidaridad con los cineastas norteamericanos Oliver Stone y Michael Moore. El primero, ya fue multado por el Gobierno de Estados Unidos, en nombre de la libertad, por haber viajado a Cuba a filmar los

solamente a los cubanos. Si sólo fuere así, sería sumamente grave. Pero es peor aun. Es una afrenta al Derecho Internacional, a los propósitos y principios establecidos en la Carta de las Naciones Unidas y al derecho de cualquier país a comerciar de manera libre y soberana con quien lo desee.

La aplicación extraterritorial de las leyes norteamericanas, en menosprecio de los legítimos intereses de terceros países de invertir y desarrollar relaciones económicas y comerciales normales con Cuba, es un tema que concierne a todos los Estados aquí reunidos.

Sólo en el periodo comprendido entre mayo del 2006 y mayo del 2007, al menos 30 países se vieron afectados por las disposiciones extraterritoriales de la política de bloqueo contra Cuba.

Veamos sólo algunos ejemplos:

-El 28 de julio del 2006 le fueron aplicadas al Banco Netherlands Caribbean Bank, de Antillas Holandesas, las regulaciones del bloqueo, incluidos el congelamiento de cuentas en Estados Unidos y la prohibición de cualquier transacción de ciudadanos y entidades norteamericanas con dicho Banco.

- El 4 de mayo del 2007, la empresa británica PSL Energy Services fue multada con 164 mil dólares por exportar a Cuba equipos y servicios para la industria del petróleo.

- Tampoco los compresores marca Sabroe pudieron ser exportados a Cuba, después que la compañía danesa que los produce fue adquirida por una empresa norteamericana.

- La multinacional norteamericana General Electric adquirió a la compañía finlandesa Datex-Ohmeda. Sólo hasta ese día Cuba pudo seguir comprando los excelentes equipos de anestesia y monitorización multipropósito, fabricados en Finlandia, que adquiríamos tradicionalmente.

- Cuando el Instituto de Nutrición e Higiene de los Alimentos de Cuba trató de comprar a la compañía japonesa Shimadzu un espectrofotómetro infrarrojo, encontró que ello estaba prohibido por el bloqueo, pues ese equipo tiene más de 10% de componentes norteamericanos.

- La compañía alemana Basf AG no pudo vender un producto herbicida a Cuba, ni desde Alemania ni desde sus sucursales en América Latina, porque el ingrediente activo es de origen norteamericano.

- Desde que, a fines del año 2006, la compañía de cruceros española Pullmantur fue adquirida por la norteamericana Royal Caribbean, el crucero Holiday Dream, propiedad de la primera, tuvo que suspender sus operaciones en Cuba.

- En diciembre del 2006, la gerencia del Hotel Scandic de Noruega, que había sido comprado en marzo del 2006 por la cadena hotelera norteamericana Hilton, canceló las reservaciones que una delegación cubana había hecho para alojarse durante una feria internacional

Alonso, en su carta a los intelectuales y artistas estadounidenses:

«Trabajemos juntos para que los artistas y escritores cubanos puedan llevar su talento a los Estados Unidos, y que a ustedes no les impidan venir a nuestra Isla a compartir sus conocimientos y valores; para que una canción, un libro, un estudio científico o una obra coreográfica no sean considerados, de manera irracional, como un delito».

El bloqueo persigue los intercambios y las relaciones humanas entre los pueblos de Cuba y Estados Unidos. Impide, además, las relaciones normales entre las familias cubanas a uno y otro lado del Estrecho de la Florida. Multas de hasta un millón de dólares para las empresas y 250 mil dólares para los individuos y penas de cárcel de hasta 10 años para los infractores es el precio que tiene que arriesgar un norteamericano por venir de turista a nuestro país o un cubano residente en Estados Unidos si quiere visitar a un familiar enfermo en Cuba.

Señores delegados:

En más de una ocasión esta Asamblea ha escuchado a los representantes de Estados Unidos decir que el tema que hoy discutimos es una cuestión bilateral, que no debe ser tratada en este foro.

Sin embargo, como bien ustedes conocen, la brutal guerra económica que se le impone a Cuba no afecta

de turismo. Ello provocó un gran escándalo y un generalizado rechazo de la opinión pública noruega. Pero lo más increíble estaba por venir: La vocera del Grupo Hilton en Londres anunció públicamente que dicha cadena prohibiría la estancia de cubanos en todos sus hoteles alrededor del mundo, pues de lo contrario estarían sujetos a multas o podrían ir a prisión según las leyes del bloqueo.

Pero el episodio más notorio ocurrido este año respecto al bloqueo de Estados Unidos contra Cuba fue, sin dudas, la guerra sin cuartel librada por el Departamento del Tesoro norteamericano contra las relaciones de Cuba con instituciones financieras y bancarias de otros países.

Ello fue posible especialmente después que el Gobierno de Estados Unidos y sus servicios especiales accedieron a la información confidencial de la Sociedad para las Telecomunicaciones Financieras Interbancarias Mundiales (SWIFT), institución a través de la cual se realiza prácticamente la totalidad de los pagos e intercambios de mensajes que se producen entre las instituciones financieras de todo el mundo.

En el último año, más de una veintena de bancos de diversos países han sido groseramente amenazados a fin de interrumpir cualquier tipo de relación o transacción con Cuba. Por comprensibles razones, no puedo dar a esta Asamblea más información sobre un tema tan sensible, pues facilitará con ello la obsesiva persecución de las agencias norteamericanas dedicadas por entero a esta innoble tarea.

Señores delegados:

Hace apenas unos días, el Presidente de los Estados Unidos declaró:

«El régimen cubano utiliza el embargo de los Estados Unidos como chivo expiatorio de todos los suplicios que padece Cuba».

Sin embargo, el Informe del Secretario General contenido en el documento A/62/92, con la información aportada

por 118 países y 21 Organizaciones Internacionales, prueba de manera clara y exhaustiva las acciones ejecutadas por la Administración en el transcurso del último año para recrudescer el bloqueo y sus graves consecuencias para Cuba.

Esta Asamblea General tiene hoy la oportunidad de expresar de manera libre y abierta el criterio de la comunidad internacional sobre la política de bloqueo y agresiones que durante casi 50 años Estados Unidos ha impuesto a los cubanos.

Ahora mismo, allá en Cuba, nuestro pueblo sigue con atención y esperanza la decisión que ustedes han de tomar. Lo hace recordando las palabras de Fidel: «Jamás un pueblo tuvo cosas tan sagradas que defender ni convicciones tan profundas por las cuales luchar».

Cuba, señores delegados, no se rendirá. Lucha y luchará con la convicción de que defender hoy nuestros derechos es defender también el derecho de todos los pueblos representados en esta Asamblea.

En nombre de Cuba les solicito, señores delegados, votar a favor del proyecto de resolución titulado «Necesidad de poner fin al bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero impuesto por los Estados Unidos de América contra Cuba».

Termino recordando las palabras de José Martí, Apóstol de la Independencia de Cuba: «¡Quien se levanta hoy con Cuba se levanta para todos los tiempos!»

¡Libertad para los Cinco Hérosos cubanos, luchadores contra el terrorismo, presos políticos en cárceles norteamericanas!

Yo sí tengo legítimo derecho a decir:

¡Viva Cuba Libre!
¡Viva Cuba Libre!
¡Viva Cuba Libre!

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EVENTS and ACTIONS

VANCOUVER

Saturday Jan 12
Community Forum in Support of Laibar Singh
6 pm
Vancouver Public Library
350 West Georgia Street
Org'd by Communities for Laibar Singh (Vancouver)

Tuesday Jan 15
Canada Out Of Afghanistan!
Picket Action
4 pm
Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment Centre
1070 W. Georgia
Org'd by: Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)

Thursday Jan 17
Free The Cuban 5 Held In U.S. Jails
Picket Action
4 pm
U.S. Consulate
1075 W. Pender St.
Org'd by: Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver

Saturday Jan 19
Forum Against War On Iran
Lecture by Rostam Pourzal, U.S. chairperson of the Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran
5 pm
SFU Harbour Centre
515 W. Hastings
Org'd by: Canadians Against War

Saturday Jan 19
Latin America On The Move
Celebration of the first year of the Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America
7pm
Chilean Housing Co-op
3390 School Ave
Org'd by: Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America

Sunday Jan 20
After the Bali conference:
Can Global Warming Be Stopped?
3pm
SFU Harbour Center
515 W. Hastings St.
Org'd by: Vancouver Socialist Forum

Saturday Jan 26
Let Them Stay!
Rally
1 pm
Vancouver Public Library
Georgia St @ Hamilton
Org'd by: War Resisters Support Campaign

Saturday Jan 26
NO WAR ON IRAN!
Antiwar Rally
3 pm
Vancouver Art Gallery
750 Hornby
Org'd by: Iranian Community Against War (ICAW) and Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)



Sunday Jan 27
Iran and the U.S.: History, Realities, Conflicts and Challenges
Conference
1 pm-5 pm
Britannia Community Centre
1661 Napier st
(@ Commercial Dr)
Org'd by: Iranian Community Against War (ICAW) and Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)

VICTORIA

Wednesday Jan 16
"Afghanistan: Getting the Forces Out"
Anti-Recruitment Forum
7pm
in the David Strong Building
C112
University of Victoria
Org'd by: The Canada Out of Afghanistan Campaign

TORONTO

Friday Jan 11
Rally for Laibar Singh
10am
25 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, ON
(St. Clair and Yonge St.)
Org'd by: Solidarity in Toronto for Laibar Singh

Sunday Jan 13
Discussion of The Bolivarian Ranks - strengths and weaknesses
2:30 pm
Center for Social Justice
489 College Street
Org'd by: Socialist Project and Socialist Voice

Saturday Jan 26
Rally in Support Of U.S. War Resisters
1 pm
Bloor Street United Church
300 Bloor Street West
Org'd by: War Resisters Support Campaign

Saturday Feb 2
Jose Marti Dinner & Dance
Dinner 7:00 pm
Cultural event 8:45pm
Dance 9:30pm & 10:45pm
Tickets - Dinner & Dance: \$25

prepaid in advance, or \$30 at the door
Bloor St United Church
300 Bloor St West
Org'd by: CCFA Toronto

Feb 4-9
Israel Apartheid Week
Films, Lectures and More!
At Ryerson University and University of Toronto
For details see: <http://www.apartheidweek.org/toronto.html>

Saturday Feb 9
'BREAK THE SILENCE: END THE SIEGE ON GAZA'
Demonstration
2:00 pm
Israeli Consulate
180 Bloor Street West
Org'd by: Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid

Saturday Feb 16
Toronto Protests for SPP Referendum!
1:00 - 4:00 pm
Ontario Court of Justice on University to Parliament/ Queen's Park

WINNIPEG

Saturday Jan 19
PAW Fundraiser: Romi Mayes in concert
7:30 pm
808 Spruce Street (south of St. Matthews)
Org'd by: Peace Alliance Winnipeg

THE U.S. ATTACK ON IRAN:

PROSPECTS & CHALLENGES



Featured Speaker: **Rostam Pourzal**
Writer, researcher, social scientist, long-time social justice
campaigner and US Chairperson of Campaign Against
Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran (CASMII)

SAT. JAN. 19
5PM
SFU HARBOUR
CENTRE
515 W HASTINGS ST.
VANCOUVER BC



Organized by: Canadians Against War
<http://www.CanadiansAgainstWar.org>
Endorsed by Iranian Community Against War (ICAW)
and Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)

NO WAR ON IRAN!



**IRAN &
THE U.S.**
History,
Realities,
Conflicts &
Challenges

CONFERENCE

1pm-5pm
Sunday
Jan. 27
Britannia
Community Centre
(1661 Napier St @
Commercial Dr.)

ANTIWAR RALLY

at 3 PM
Saturday Jan. 26

Vancouver Art Gallery
(Robson Street @ Howe Street)

Canada/NATO Out of Afghanistan!
US/UK Out of Iraq!
Israel Hands Off Palestine!
Self-Determination for Indigenous Nations in Canada!

Co-organized by The Iranian Community Against War (ICAW) &
Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO)
ICAW.BLOGSPOT.COM | MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG
Endorsed by: Canadians Against War (CAW) - <http://CanadiansAgainstWar.org>