

FIRE THIS TIME



We are realists... We dream the impossible - Che

Stop Islamophobia!

Stop Racism!



Feature Article on page 5

CALL FOR AN INDEPENDENT PUBLIC INQUIRY



CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN!

AFGHANISTAN

Canada's War Drive is Launched into Full Force

By Shannon Bundock

"... It's not my way, and it's not the Canadian way. We don't make a commitment and then run away at the first sign of trouble. We don't and we will not, as long as I'm leading this country."

– Prime Minister Stephen Harper
March 12, 2006, Afghanistan

The sound bites are flying like bullets. As the battle unfolds in Afghanistan, Canada's Prime Minister secretly parachuted into the country on Sunday, March 12. Since then he has been outlining the future of the mission and setting the stage for long term Canadian "commitment". His strategy includes arrogant statements of determination to "fight terrorism", calling on a holy alliance of the "free countries" and resolving to "stay the course" in Afghanistan.

Today in Canada, the shroud of "peacekeeper" has all but dissolved in favor of the old-school cowboy motif – the West bringing "law and order" to the "uncivilized" world. Canada is in full 2,200-troop force, and has taken command - the leading hero silhouette cresting the horizon - in Southern Afghanistan.

For Afghan people the rhetoric of "peace" and "democracy" rings hollow. Since 2001 this mission has meant thousands of deaths, massive destruction and no political control over their future.

Bombs to Freedom: How's Life in Afghanistan?

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is a US-based rightwing think tank. It recently released a report ("Voices of a New Afghanistan") that included excerpts from thousands of interviews with Afghan people. Despite CSIS's pro-war inclination,



Canadian Military vehicle damaged in bomb attack. January 2006.

but nothing has changed." - 17 year old male teacher, Wardak – CSIS Report

The reality on the ground is that Afghanistan is a war zone. For example, for the so-called "peacekeeper" Canadian troops, in the last week in Afghanistan two Canadian soldiers died and a dozen were hurt in four attacks and a road accident. These most recent attacks on Canadian forces in Afghanistan

assistance over the past four years. The poor are still poor. The money donated to Afghanistan reaches only those who own cars and houses." - Mohammad Nabi, (earns his living by hawking top-up cards for mobile phones by the side of the road) from "Empty Promises At Afghan Conference?" Feb 4, 2006

"The issue of unemployment is very serious in Afghanistan as many people lack skills due to more than

shortage in Afghanistan is at crisis levels. *"Kabul is in particular need, because of the destruction of 65,000-70,000 houses and the population of Kabul has now almost doubled since September 2001"* Yousuf Pashtum the Afghan Minister of Housing and Urban Development speaking to the UN's IRIN news service. *"The number of houses urgently needed is 180 percent more than currently existing,"*

"Opening of Kabul Serina Hotel and other hotels of this type in a country with the lowest rate of income per capita in the world doesn't mean development but it is indeed providing sensual environment for criminals and mocking about the miserable life condition of majority of our nation."

-Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (March 8 2006, International Women's Day Statement)

While Afghans live in rubble, the Serena will house the foreign investors, to whom the doors of Afghanistan's wealth have been opened. According to the "Law on Domestic and Private Investment" *"Investments can be 100% foreign owned; foreign investors are not required to secure an Afghan partner. Private investors have the right to transfer their capital and profits out of Afghanistan."*

What is Canada doing in Afghanistan?

Since the bombing of Afghanistan began in 2001, we have witnessed an ever-quickenning downward spiral in all areas of life of Afghan people. This begs the question: If Canada is not improving the lives of Afghans, "bringing democracy and peace", then what is Canada doing in Afghanistan?

Public statements from Prime

the crisis for Afghan people and their hostility towards the occupation could not be covered-up.

Violence & Instability

"If you used to be a warlord, you just switch uniforms and now wear the uniform of the army or police,

bring the number of people from Canada killed in recent months to eleven. Added to this are the untold and unknown thousands of innocent Afghans killed since the occupation of their country began in 2001.

Health

"We have a clinic, but no medicine. Patients die on the way to the clinic because the roads are so bad." - 35 year old housewife, Panishir – CSIS Report

According to a United Nations report in February 2005, 142 out of every 1,000 babies born in Afghanistan die before reaching one year of age. A woman dies in pregnancy every 30 minutes. Overall life expectancy is estimated at just under 42.5 years

According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) the situation of health and healthcare in Afghanistan is particularly critical. Women are hit the hardest by poor medical assistance and access.

"The maternal mortality ratio, in particular, at 1,600 deaths per 100,000 live births, remains one of the highest in the world. ... Estimates indicate that only 40 per cent of the population has access to basic health facilities. According to a 2004 Government report, only 23 per cent of the population has access to safe water and only 12 per cent has access to adequate sanitation. Recent figures on tuberculosis indicate that over 60 per cent of new tuberculosis patients are women."

- Feb 27 2004 UNAMA Commission on the Status of Women "The situation of women and girls in Afghanistan"

Poverty & Unemployment

"I have not seen any benefits of

20 years of conflict. For example, widespread illiteracy, at over 70 percent of the population, is a major cause of high unemployment. The demand for work is clear to see at the crowded roundabout at Kot-e-Sangi on the outskirts of Kabul - an informal labour market in the area. Hundreds of daily labourers gather around people who occasionally come to pick up workers they need. 'This is the capital and you can guess [what it is like in] the provinces. All of these people gather here every morning expecting to find daily labour and earn some bread and tea for the family meal'," Mohammad Kabir, a 35-year-old ex-civil servant told IRIN. *He waited until midday before finding half a day's work."* – UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (IRIN)

Reconstruction for Who?

After seeing the crisis that faces the majority of Afghans, the question of improvement and reconstruction looms even larger. Unfortunately, the "reconstruction" that is being carried out is ridiculous at best, and tragic at worst.

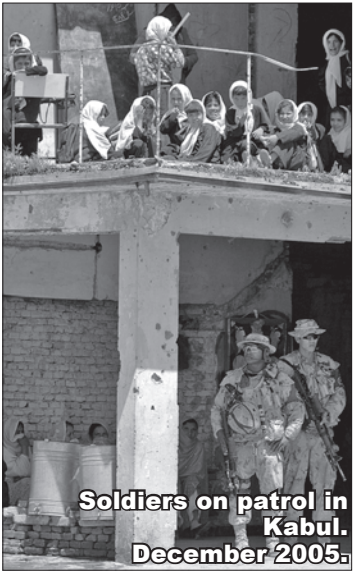
Recently, pledges from the Afghanistan Compact (successor of the Bonn Agreement), have been sold as pledges for reconstruction. Plans have been written up; schedules for the construction of schools, hospitals and new infrastructure. While this looks good on paper, the true test is in the reality on the ground.

What has been completed in Afghanistan? Well, last year Afghanistan got its first 5-star luxury hotel, in Kabul. A room at the "Serena" costs between \$250 and \$1,200 a night - a fortune in a city where even a government salary is about \$50 a month.

To add insult to injury, the housing

Minister Harper this March shown the public rationale coming from the halls of parliament are about Canada's role in the "war against terror".

According to the Ottawa Citizen on March 14 2006, Harper reminded the troops that since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States,



Soldiers on patrol in Kabul. December 2005.

"al-Qaida has singled out Canada as one of the countries it targets for terror."

He continued, *"These are real threats. There aren't going to get any less real. People who are going to use violence against you, their threats don't go away if you cut and run ... I think that by taking a strong stand against terror right in its home base, I think we do all we can to protect our country."* *"You can't lead from the bleachers. I want Canada to be a leader."*

With competitors such as the US,



Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper meets with Afghan President Hamid Karzai. March 14 2006.



Canadian Soldiers on patrol in the Kandahar region. January 2006.

UK, France and Germany, Canada must gear up to forever smash through its “glass ceiling of middle-power status”. It is the Afghan people who are facing the first blows in this battle for global power, hegemony and the right to plunder and control. In this circumstance it is no wonder that the needs of Afghans suffer in favor of the emerging Canadian Imperialism.

Call for an Independent Public Inquiry into the Canadian War Drive in Afghanistan!

“The debate over deployment is over. It’s over for this government. I think it’s over for most of the Canadian people.” – Stephen Harper, March 12 2006

Ironically, for the debate that Harper is referring to be “over”, it first would have needed to begun.

When the federal budget was released in the spring of 2005, including a doubling of the military budget to 25.8 Billion dollars, the numbers were not up for debate.

In July 2005, when General Rick Hillier announced that 2000 more troops would be heading to Afghanistan to “be able to kill people”, he did not open the floor for debate.

On February 28th, Canadian Brigadier-General David Fraser took command of the NATO International Security Assistance Force, in Southern Afghanistan. When he told CTV “We’re going into their yard. We’re going to start kicking them.” he did not open this strategy to debate.

In contrast, the calls coming from people in Canada follow a different path. Over and over again, as the reality of this massive military mission sets in, people in Canada are asking “why?”. In the past few weeks the question of debate is mentioned in nearly every news report that we hear on Afghanistan.

The ruling class in Canada moved quick to cover up the injury of a February 2006 Strategic Council poll noting that 62% of people in Canada opposed the occupation. Without explanation, new and different questions were drawn up, 1000 people were questioned, and a nice number was released to support the occupation. This new poll was contrasted with the February poll and was



Demonstration in Kandahar.
Febraury 13 2006.

billed as a dramatic doubling of support for the mission from 27% to 55% in just three weeks. Even if we cease questioning the methods of this polling, suspicion looms. With all of this “support”, why is an open, accountable debate being so aggressively suppressed?

The evasion of this debate exposes the fact that the ruling class in Canada is well aware that working and poor people in Canada would not support this war drive, which was sneaked through the back doors of Parliament. This undemocratic deceit and cover-up goes behind the backs of all poor and working people in Canada because the government and ruling class have decided unanimously, amongst themselves, that it is in their *interest* that Canada establish its presence in Afghanistan and “kill people” to do it.

The underhanded, backroom dealings that formed this military offensive must be questioned. For people in Canada to have a real and honest role in this debate, we must build the call for an Independent Public Inquiry. Through such an inquiry, people in Canada can ask and answer the hard questions that were swept under the rug. But how about Parliamentary debate, that some opposition politicians like NDP Jack Layton advocate? We working and poor people say: look, you

can debate this issue however fits your interest and agenda, but since you evade this discussion from beginning, we do not trust you. Therefore, we will set up our own public inquiry. And of course, this inquiry is independent from you, that’s why we call it an *Independent* Public Inquiry into Canada war drive in Afghanistan.

Self-Determination Vs Occupation: Gearing up the Antiwar Movement in Canada

The fear of the war-mongering ruling class in Canada is that an independent public debate would bolster awareness and opposition to the war drive from within Canada itself. The government of Canada is battling one staunch pole of resistance in Afghanistan. Through resistance of people within Canada, the Afghan fight to free their country from occupation would be greatly enforced.

The Canadian war drive in Afghanistan is a major issue for people in Canada. It spells out the continued killing of Afghan people and the further destruction of their country while promising nothing but drained tax dollars, British-style race terror against Arabs and Muslims, and escalating attacks on unions, poor people and Indigenous people in Canada. As the matter of fact, the Canadian imperialist class needs a solid military victory outside of

THE NEW CANADIAN WAR DRIVE

A Short Chronological History

By Mike Chimenti

\\Since 2001, in response to the global economic crisis, the Canadian ruling class has been increasing its attacks on poor and working people at home and abroad.

In the past four years we have seen increases in Canadian Forces deployments internationally, a doubling of the military budget, a major restructuring of all the Canadian Forces, increased recruitment targets, and a more aggressive tone from the leaders of the Canadian military. We



have also seen the unwillingness of the Canadian ruling class to submit their imperialist agenda to the input of working and poor people.

The chronology below lays out the major benchmarks in the new Canadian war drive:

Sept 11, 2001: Bombing of the World Trade Center. The US and Canada announce a new “War on Terror”.

Oct 17, 2001: Operation *Apollo* begins. Over 900 Canadian troops invade Afghanistan. 5 Canadian ships, with



Canadian troops in Kabul.
November 2005.

Canada in order to position itself strong and powerful for conducting a massive assault on working and poor people in this country. Canada’s full-scale entry into the era of war and occupation must be heard as a call to action for the anti-war movement, unions, community, progressive, and religious groups, and all working, poor, and oppressed people in Canada. For our interests, and the interests of the Afghan people, we call for an urgent independent public inquiry into the illegal, illegitimate, criminal, and inhuman deployment of troops to Afghanistan. CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN! INDEPENDENT PUBLIC INQUIRY NOW!

BRING ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!
STOP THE CANADIAN WAR DRIVE!



supporting aircraft, are deployed to Persian Gulf to lead a multi-national coalition fleet under Canadian command.

April18, 2002: Four Canadian soldiers are killed, and 8 injured, by US “friendly fire” during a night time training exercise.

Jan/Feb, 2003: Canada hosts the “Ottawa Initiative on Haiti”, a meeting of high level delegates organized to plan the 2004 invasion and coup in Haiti.

Feb 11, 2003: Canada transfers 25 military planners, who are under US command, from Tampa, Florida, to Qatar to help plan the invasion

of Iraq.

July 17, 2003: Canadian Brig.-Gen. Peter J. Devlin begins a 6 month command of the 3,600 NATO soldiers in Afghanistan. Canada’s troop presence increases to 2,150, relieving US troops for the occupation of Iraq.

August 2003: Start of Operation *Athena*. Canadian soldiers are deployed to Kabul as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Oct 2, 2003: Two Canadian soldiers were killed and three others injured when their vehicle drove over a landmine.

Jan 9, 2004: Ottawa announces a \$10 million budget and 20 RCMP police trainers to train Iraqi police in Jordan.

Jan 27, 2004: One Canadian soldier was killed, and three injured when a suicide bomber with explosives strapped to his body jumped on an Iltis jeep carrying six Canadian soldiers on patrol.

Feb 9, 2004: Canadian Lt.-Gen. Rick Hillier takes command of the entire 6,500 member NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Approximately 2,100 Canadian soldiers are in Afghanistan.

The Newspaper Of

FIRE THIS TIME MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

-ISSN 1712 - 1817 -
www.firethistime.net
Volume 3 Issue 1

Editorial Board:

Shannon Bundock, Ali Yerevani,
Ivan Drury, Tamara Hansen,
Brennan Luchsinger, Aaron Mercredi

Editor - Ali Yerevani

Layout & Design - Brennan Luchsinger

Copy Editor - Tamara Hansen

Assistan Copy Editing - Nita Palmer,

Kira Koshelanyk, Shannon Bundock

Spanish Language Editor - Carlos Lopez

Publicity & Distribution Coordinator -
Brennan Luchsinger

Contact

Phone/Fax - (604) 322-1764

Email - info@firethistime.net

Mail - PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC, V5L 5G3

Subscriptions

For a one year subscription outside the lower mainland, make cheques payable to “Brennan Luchsinger” or “Shannon Bundock” (Canada \$15 , USA \$20, International \$30)

Distribution

For Fire This Time in your area across BC, Canada, and Internationally contact Publicity and Distribution Coordinator Brennan Luchsinger
Phone : (604) 338-9006
Email : distro@firethistime.net

Submissions:

We welcome articles, letters, and unsolicited submissions. However we cannot promise publication. Submissions can be made by email, fax, or mail. Submissions will not be returned.

The opinions expressed in the newspaper are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of Fire This Time.

If you find Fire This Time to be an effective tool in the struggle of oppressed people for justice, more than ever, we need your support. On top of our regular costs of production, we have recently sent two members of our editorial board on assignment to Cuba and the Northwest Territories in order to make Fire This Time stronger. These efforts have strained our finances.

If you would like to help with a donation, please make cheques payable to “Shannon Bundock”, or “Brennan Luchsinger.

This Newspaper could not have been possible without the generous contributions from our supporters.

US/UK OUT OF IRAQ! BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME NOW!



Demonstration demanding freedom for Iraqi political prisoners. December 12 2005.

By Nita Palmer

March 20th, 2006 marks the third anniversary of the US/UK invasion of Iraq. For the people of Iraq, this has meant three years of suffering, three years of destruction, and three years of fighting for basic human rights. As the civilian death toll in Iraq rapidly approaches 200,000, those left alive are trying to put together their lives. Hospitals, roads, and water systems have all been destroyed by the occupation. More than 90% of municipalities in Iraq do not have sewage treatment systems, resulting in high levels of contamination of drinking water. Baghdad, which formerly had access to electricity 24 hours a day, has power 18 hours a day at best.

Catch 22

This situation adds up to an increasing crisis the occupying forces are facing in Iraq. With 140,000 American troops, plus 27,000 coalition forces occupying the country, the occupiers have been as yet unable to defeat the Iraqi resistance. While the western media portrays Iraqis as being vastly divided over their support for the occupation, the reality is that the great majority of Iraqis are united against the occupation. In recent article in the New York Times stated: "New data reveal, surprisingly, that the vast majority of the Iraqi insurgents' attacks are still aimed not at Iraqi security forces or civilians, but rather at U.S. and coalition troops. In other words... the Iraqi insurgency is primarily an anti-occupation insurgency" (Feb 9th, 2006). For the U.S. and coalition forces, this has meant an increasing crisis in their

in part by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), has brought nothing to the Iraqi people. While the US government has hailed this constitution as a "step towards democracy" for Iraqis, the reality is that this constitution was not written by and for the people of Iraq. In fact, US Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalizad had a heavy hand in the writing of the constitution. Despite the fact that the questionable results of the recent referendum on the constitution showed that 79% of voters favoured adopting it, nothing has fundamentally changed in the lives of the Iraqi people. People in Iraq are still fighting for their basic rights every day. What concern do the people of Iraq have with a constitution and "building democracy" when they do not have access to basic necessities like clean water and health care? What concern do the people have in a constitution when there are 167,000 foreign troops occupying their country? The smoke and mirrors game of this constitution is simply an attempt by the imperialist forces to legitimize the occupation. For the people of Iraq, the fundamental problem still remains: the problem of the imperialist occupation of their country.

Building Democracy: Ballot Through Bullet

As the current situation in Iraq shows, the claims made by the occupation forces in Iraq of "building democracy" and "reconstructing" are laughably untrue. In addition to the violence the occupation forces wage against the people of Iraq, the destruction of the country leaves many people without basic necessities. Given the contradiction between the claims of



THE NEW CANADIAN WAR DRIVE

Feb 24, 2004: The Canadian government doubles the military budget, adding \$12.8 billion to the existing \$13 billion. Along with the budget increase is the "promise" to increase the army by 5,000 and the Reserves by 3,000.

Feb 29, 2004: Canada, US, and France invade Haiti, overthrowing the democratically elected government. Canada deploys 500 soldiers and 6 helicopters.

May, 2005: The Canadian government releases the new foreign policy document, "A Role of Pride and Influence in the World", outlining the Canadian ruling class strategy in the era of war and occupation.

The document states that "We are in the midst of a major rebalancing of global power" and that Canada's "old middle power identity imposes an unnecessary ceiling on what we can do and be in the world." In order to avoid being "swept aside", the Canadian ruling class "will have to be smart, focused, agile, creative and dogged in the pursuit of our interests."

May, 2004: Canadian corporation SNC-Lavalin secures a 5 year contract to provide 300-500 million bullets/year to the US military for next five years.

July 18, 2004: 100 active



Soldiers patrol the Sunni al-Nidaa mosque in Baghdad. February 28 2006.



Anti-US demonstration in Baghdad. March 12 2006.



Iraqi youths demonstrate against occupation. November 2005.

ability to control the country. Added to the Iraqi resistance, of course, is an increasing sentiment against the occupation on the home front. A recent poll by CNN showed that 56% of Americans support a withdrawal of all troops within a year, and opposition to the occupation grows every day.

The Crisis: Manufactured in the USA

The crisis that the occupation forces face in Iraq is the direct result of the horrifying conditions of life that the occupation has created for the Iraqi people. People in Iraq today are unable to have anything approaching a "normal" life. The bombs and bullets that have killed nearly 200,000 people have also torn families apart and left countless numbers homeless. According to Human Rights Watch (2005) Iraqi children are ever more frequently the sole breadwinners for their families, working long, hard hours to scrape together enough money to feed their parents and siblings. Even for families that have remained together through the occupation, the struggle every day is for survival. Unemployment levels in Iraq hover at around 70%, and many in Iraq cannot afford even the basic necessities.

Civil Society By Way of Yankee Army

The horrible situation of human rights in Iraq and the quagmire the imperialist countries face has resulted in an increasing need to legitimize the occupation in the eyes of people around the world. Today, the occupation forces are claiming that they are "building democracy" in Iraq. Most recently, this has meant the establishment of a so-called "constitution". The writing of the constitution, funded

the occupiers and the reality of life in Iraq, we must ask the question: what interest do the US, coalition, and other supporting forces have in occupying the country? After all, the US alone has invested \$250 billion in the occupation already. The truth comes down to cold hard economics. Iraq is a source of oil revenue – but really, it is much, much more than that. Production and trade are constantly expanding today, and as a result, so is competition between imperialist countries. The governments and the ruling classes of imperialist countries are jockeying for the forefront position on the world stage today through the control of strategic locations in the world. Today, the entire Middle East is a strategic point, and control of the Middle East means access to the trade and resources of all of Europe and Asia. Thus, any foothold that these countries are able to obtain in the Middle East is a step towards control. Iraq was one of those steps.

Get Out!

The fundamental problem that people in Iraq face today is not that they cannot run their own lives and their own country – it is the imperialist occupying forces. The governments of countries like the US, the UK, Canada, and coalition countries do not hold the best interests of the Iraqi people at heart – instead, they are intent on achieving control in the area. The only way the people of Iraq can rebuild their society in their own interests is by being able to determine their own future. Thus, the only solution for Iraq is an immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from the country.

US/UK Out of Iraq!
Self-determination for Iraq!
Bring the Troops Home Now!

RCMP and 25 retired RCMP officers are sent to Haiti to train the new Haitian National Police Force. The HNP are notorious for human rights abuses.

July 15, 2005: Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier announces the deployment of 2,000 Canadian soldiers to Kandahar, Afghanistan, by February 2006. Hillier described Afghan people as "detestable murderers and scumbags" who "detest our freedoms ... our society ... our liberties" and said that "We are the Canadian Forces, and our job is to be able to kill people."

August 2005: Operation *Archer* begins, shifting Canada's role from "peace keeping" to combat. A Canadian Provincial Reconstruction (PRT) team is deployed to Kandahar in southern Afghanistan. The PRT includes soldiers, diplomats from Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC), development experts from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and police officers from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Oct, 2005: Canada spends \$7 million to help fund a sham Iraqi referendum on a Constitution written by the US.

Nov. 24, 2005: One Canadian



RACIST CARTOONS

CONTINUATION OF IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION

By Ivan Drury

“After having overcome fascism, Nazism, and Stalinism, the world now faces a new totalitarian global threat: Islamism.

- From: “MANIFESTO: Together facing the new totalitarianism” a statement from 12 anti-Islam academics from Europe and Canada, Feb 28, 2006

In January 2006 the bomb drawn into the turban of a Danish cartoonist’s depiction of the Prophet Mohammed exploded. Muslims in nations under imperialist occupation, or under threat of war by imperialist armies, reacted first. In Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and throughout the Middle East, thousands of people demonstrated, seized imperialist embassies, burned Danish and US flags, and trashed the shops of imperialist corporations. The protests quickly spread around the world, throughout Africa, East Asia and Oceania, and even in Canada and the US.

These cartoons, the salt rubbed into the wounds of people dying under the blows of a thousand cuts of war and occupation, had ignited the anger, resentment and humiliation of a people who have withstood the bombs, armies, and plunder of imperialism with a renewed intensity since the invasion

ugliness of the problems that face oppressed people today. The racist and Islamophobic cartoons are themselves part of a two-pronged strategy in the imperialist war drive aimed to plunder the wealth of the Middle East. First; the cartoons are meant to further drag down, humiliate and dehumanize Muslims in the Middle East and throughout the world. In this they are a reactionary provocation. But second, and more importantly, the cartoons are fuel for the growth of Islamophobia and racism amongst the leagues of oppressed people outside of the Middle East who happen to not be Muslim.

Islamophobia is a relatively recent development. Islamophobia first surfaced as a concept in the midst of the



French Muslims protest the racist cartoons.

Iranian revolution, when Islam emerged as a potent force against imperialism. It was used then by the imperialists to condemn the actions of the Iranian people in their 1979 revolution against the US controlled Shah Monarchy. It surfaced alongside such wonderful and ‘helpful’ (for imperialism) concepts as “Islamic-Fundamentalism”... and like the latter, Islamophobia rose back into

of Afghanistan in 2001. It is not possible to understand the meaning and consequences of these cartoons without seeing them within the strategic war plans of imperialism against the people of the Middle East. Hidden in the bomb drawn into the racist cartoon turban of the Prophet Mohammed is the pain of 150,000 dead Iraqis, 58 years of Zionist occupation in Palestine, the thorough destruction of Afghanistan... this is the real reason for the protests against the cartoons.

And in the smoke that has risen out of this explosion appears the

common currency in the imperialist world following 9-11.

In this 21st Century era of war and occupation Muslims are the public ‘Enemy #1’ of imperialism. In their back rooms and private meetings, of course, the executives of the US war machine do not care whether the common people they bomb are Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, or Atheist. The religion of the people who live on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan does not determine the significance of these nations for domination by imperialism – the quantity and quality of resources under the ground, and the strategic placement of the ground itself is what counts. Islamophobia is a trick; a racist tool of war. Islamophobia serves the same master today as it did during the revolution of 1979 that expelled the US from Iran – it is a tool of division of working and poor people.

If working people in the US felt that Iraqi working people were their brothers and sisters, then the US occupation of Iraq could not last another day. The same is true of Canada and Afghanistan, and of all the struggles that face working, poor and oppressed people in the world. When asked about these cartoons and the ‘controversial’ protests against them, the first order of business for the anti-war movement, and for all working, poor, oppressed, and progressive people in Canada MUST be to oppose the efforts of imperialism to divide us from our brothers and sisters in the so-called “Muslim World.” It is through this lens that we must view the appearance of these racist cartoons, and the protests against them. These cartoons are part of the filthy racist and Islamophobic campaign that crawls

THE NEW CANADIAN WAR DRIVE

soldier was killed and 4 injured when their vehicle rolled over while transporting supplies from Kabul to Kandahar.

Jan 15, 2006: A Canadian diplomat was killed and three Canadian soldiers injured after a bomber attacked a military convoy near Kandahar.

February 6, 2006: The Canadian Forces launch Operation *Connection*, “an aggressive and comprehensive recruitment strategy”, with “a broad range of co-ordinated, community-based activities.”

Feb. 15, 2006: Two Canadian soldiers are injured when their vehicle rolls over in Kandahar.

Feb. 16, 2006: Two Canadian soldiers are injured in a road accident.

February 24, 2006: CTV/Globe and Mail poll shows 62% of people polled are against Canadian occupation of Afghanistan. 73% of respondents said the decision to send troops to Afghanistan should be voted on in Parliament.

Feb. 25, 2006: A Canadian soldier is injured when his vehicle is hit by a rocket propelled grenade.

Feb. 28, 2006: Canadian Brig.-Gen. David Fraser takes over control of the multinational force in southern Afghanistan from U.S. Gen. Karl Eikenberry.

Hours later, a “roadside bomb exploded roughly 20 metres in front” of a Canadian convoy

March 2, 2006: A Canadian military vehicle “crashes into a taxi” and flips, killing two soldiers and injuring four more.

March 3, 2006: 5 Canadian soldiers are injured, one critically, when a suicide bomber attacks their vehicle.

March 4, 2006: Canadian government announces that the cost of the occupation of Afghanistan has cost \$2 billion, not including the cost of the Kandahar deployment, soldiers pay, and new equipment.

March 4, 2006: A Canadian soldier is attacked with an axe during a meeting between Canadian soldiers and village elders in Gumbad, Afghanistan. Canadian soldiers were then shot at from a riverbank during a co-ordinated ambush.

March 7, 2006: Prime Minister Stephen Harper says there will be no debate on the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, “It’s not the intention of this government to question the particular commitment when our troops are in danger”.

March 10, 2006: Canada’s Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Rick Hillier, is meeting with a village elder when a Canadian supply convoy triggers a roadside bomb.

March 12, 2006: Prime Minister Stephen Harper arrives in Afghanistan on an unannounced visit.

March 13, 2006: Prime Minister Stephen Harper tells about 1,000 troops at the Kandahar airfield, “You can’t lead from the bleachers. I want Canada to be a leader.”

He also dismissed calls for a Parliamentary discussion saying, “We’re not going to have votes on commitments already made ...we’re here for the long term.”

To date, there have been 11 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan and 36 wounded. Canadian forces have suffered the second highest casualty rate of all coalition forces in Afghanistan.



Yemeni women protesting the racist cartoons.



Lebanese women protest the racist cartoons.



CONTINUATION OF IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION

across the newspaper headlines and government speeches, leaving behind a trail of slime to obscure the truth of the horrors of war and occupation against our Muslim and non-Muslim brothers and sisters in the Middle East and around the world.

“Freedom of Speech”

Ever since the protests against theracistcartoonsfirstsurfaced, we have been beaten with the hysterical argument in every corner of the capitalist media for “Freedom of Speech!” You would think that there was such a thing. Does anyone else smell something rotten in the state of Denmark? Of course, “Freedom of Speech” – our hallowed right – exists also within that framework. In practice, this “freedom” is as hollow as any others under bourgeois “democracy.” History has already measured the shockingly low melting point of the right of “Freedom of Speech” and “Freedom of Expression”. Perhaps our liberal journalists think that something has qualitatively

execution of citizenship and deportation? That was only a couple months back, wasn’t it?

Where is the outrage of these ‘freedom loving’ journalists against the assaults on the democratic rights of common people? Why do they reserve their tirades for use as lashes against the backs of tortured peoples?

“But if we must write the truth!” the journalist replies. “We must not discriminate!”

The truth? There is no space in the capitalist media for the truth. The voices of the majority of the people of the world are expelled from the newspapers and television and radio stations of the world because our voices reflect our interests, and the “Truth” is created by the great lie-factories owned and operated by those with interests that irreconcilably contradict the interests of us regular working folk. That is the truth. The truth is that the world is being ravaged by the dying forces of imperialism.

When the house sets the rules, the house always wins.

and actions. In turn, they attack us for our crude methods; and in turn we must escalate our effective use of our crude methods.

We do not plead with these vultures to censor themselves, as though the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. We actually oppose placing any censorship powers in the hands of the capitalist ruling class, even to “censor” their own ideas that they use to attack working people. But we defend the freedom of expression of oppressed people in the places and crude ways that we are able to speak: in demonstrations, strikes, actions, and all forms of struggle against our oppression.

United against war, occupation, racism and Islamophobia!

The potentials for mobilizing the Muslim community as part of the working and oppressed class in Canada against imperialism will be seen through a strong unity in action between Muslims and the anti-war movement. Islamophobia cuts an unbridgeable chasm between the progressive or the anti-war movement and this important community which is under attack. If the anti-war movement is so paralyzed with Islamophobia that it is not able to outreach and work together with the Muslim community locally, then how can it expect to work in an international context with the strongest anti-



Muslim women protest in toronto.

To the contrary, we need to follow the examples set by Cuban President Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and turn towards the Muslim community with renewed and active solidarity. We must support

have to do this through struggle. History will not choose between a billion coffee shops full of dreamy-eyed, sleepy, progressive people and the Muslims of Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine who are fighting

changed since “leftists” in the US were tossed in jail for speaking out against the first or second “great” Imperialist War, or since McCarthyism, or since the murders of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King for saying the “wrong” things. Well then, how about the media blackout of the RCMP military siege on the defenders of Gustaffson Lake? What about the laws before the house in the UK forbidding Muslims from speaking “in support” of “terrorism” – under penalty of

Capitalist control of the media means that we have made and must make our own. It also means that freedom of expression for working and poor people comes in different forms than imperialist freedom of expression. They distribute racist cartoons by the hundreds of millions and defend their wars and occupations over billions of dollars of airwaves. We are left with the hard work of hand distributing fliers and newspapers and organizing street demonstrations, strikes

war/anti-occupation forces in the world?

On the specific question of the Islamophobic cartoons, the anti-war movement, and all progressive, working class forces has a special obligation to help to turn the shame and fear that many Muslims are undoubtedly feeling into an experience that they can gain confidence from. We should not be in the business of refusing support to sections of the working and oppressed classes against imperialism.



Demonstration against the racist cartoons, Tehran, Iran.



Muslim women protest in Istanbul, Turkey.

their righteous rage against the Islamophobic cartoons and racist attack, and we must defend them – as oppressed people – against imperialism and capitalism, the shared enemy of all working and poor people. If we refuse this duty, then we will be abandoning our historical post as the champions of the oppressed and, repeating the gravest sectarian and opportunist mistakes of the working class struggle in history, we will abandon any place of influence in the serious struggles for justice and dignity that *must* come. We will be destroyed by irrelevance - and we will deserve it.

We have to re-build a shattered and lousy legacy earned by the sectarian, reformist and reactionary forces within the working class movement in Canada and around the world. We

on the front lines against imperialism. The future is built by those who struggle.

Islamophobia is a tool of division between working and poor people in imperialist countries like Canada and working and poor people in the “Muslim-world” and it has no place in the working class movement. The anti-war movement, and all working and progressive people and their organizations must stand for the unity of the oppressed people of the world against the oppressor. In Canada it is especially important that working, poor and all progressive organizations take a clear stand against Islamophobia. We need to take a clear and strong stand in defense of all people under imperialist assault, Muslim or non-Muslim.

BLUE HELMETS & THE MAPLE LEAF!

ELECTIONS & OCCUPATION MADE IN CANADA/US/France

By Brennan Luchsinger

The past ten years in Haiti have been an example of what “democracy”, “security”, and “aid” mean to “advanced” countries. Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere and its people have faced constant attack, plunder, and occupation by the most technologically advanced countries of the world. All of this occurs under the banner of “humanitarian assistance” and the United Nations.

February 29th, 2006 marked the two-year anniversary of the Canada, US, France invasion of Haiti. In 2004 Haiti’s president Jean Bertrand Aristide was forced into exile by a coalition of imperialists, and replaced with the US appointed puppet regime of Gerard Latortue and the Interim Government of Haiti (IGH). The United Nations, alongside Latortue began a new phase of occupation in Haiti.

What has the “Aid” of the Rich Brought to the Poor of Haiti?

The “aid” of the rich “advanced” countries has been administered to Haiti through the barrel of a gun. Statistics since the occupation began show that the billions of dollars of aid have not reached their destination, but disappeared into the military operations in Haiti. The unemployment rate in Haiti is over two-thirds of the entire population of eight million, and

a Cite Soleil elementary school riddled with bullet holes with a sign outside that read: “this school is not a bandit”. School children explained the frequent routine of throwing themselves to the floor as UN forces opened fire on the school during classes.

These abuses have only increased since the UN reinforced the military presence of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) during the months preceding the February 7th, 2006 elections. The reinforcements approved by the Security Council added 750 soldiers, 50 military personnel, and 275 police forces, bringing the occupying forces in the months leading up to the election

Prominent leaders were jailed, organizers and supporters of all levels for the majority from the poor slums of Haiti faced police repression and killings. Due these conditions Aristide’s Lavalas party was effectively banned from participating, and boycotted the elections under occupation.

During the 2000 elections that brought Aristide to power over 10,000 voter registration centres were set up, but the elections run by the Interim Government of Haitian the 2006 elections could only manage the disgustingly inadequate amount of 500. Also, polling stations were few and far between, with very

the media were that Preval led with 60% of the vote, but later dropped to 48.7%, a mere 1.3% below the 50% plus one vote required to win. Immediately protests erupted across Haiti. Amid reports of fraud and scandal including bags full of burned ballots turning up in a dump, Haitians stormed the elections headquarters in Petionville demanding Preval be declared president. In the following days after a vote of seven to two in the electoral council, Preval was granted the presidency.

Preval: Pro-Haitian, or Pro-Occupation?

“The presence of the forces



UN soldiers stand guard as Haitians wait to vote. February 7 2006.



Inadequate voting facilities during Haitian elections. February 7 2006.

literacy has dropped to 52% since the IGH has taken power and abolished the ministry of literacy.

According to a human rights fact-finding mission from February 1st, 2006, the UN has been using armour piercing bullets and cannons in the highly populated Haitian slum, Cite Soleil. The mission also noted the case of

to 11,000 strong. This is the climate of fear and repression created by the UN to “stabilize” Haiti for democratic elections.

Elections & Occupation

The February 7th election is now over, and a winner declared, but the electoral process remains as full of holes as the schools of Cite Soleil. Rene Preval has been declared president of Haiti. Initially called for November 20th elections have been postponed for four months, giving the occupying forces ample time to prepare their favoured environment for the elections.

In the run up to the elections, over 35 candidates were slated to run for president, with Rene Preval polling as the favourite. Preval, a former colleague of disposed president Aristide, and running with the new party “L’espewa” (Hope), gained support from the majority of poor Haitians through his history with Aristide’s Lavalas party. Many have looked on Rene Preval as Haiti’s new Aristide, and that the masses of Haitians have voted for an end to the occupation, but is Preval a leader of the poor, or just a friendly face for the occupation?

In the months leading up to the election the UN occupation and the Haitian National Police carried out a crusade of repression against the poor majority of Haiti and the popular Lavalas party.

little effort put into the poorest neighbourhoods and cities in Haiti. For a country of 8 million, with 4 million registered voters, only 800 polling stations were set up, leaving on average 5000 voters to each polling station.



These statistics don’t tell the truth, and with numbers that bad it’s hard to believe that they can get worse. Polling stations strategically allocated (or mis-allocated) outside poor ghettos of Port au Prince, where three polling stations were left to serve 300,000 voters, and yet none were set-up inside the slum. Before the first ballot was cast the IGH, the HNP, and the UN occupation had made sure that the results would not shake the foundations of the occupation.

The initial results reported to

should continue and be renewed” said Preval, speaking to Brazilian UN troops during a news conference in Brazil on March 10th, 2006. The fundamental block for Haiti to develop is that it rid itself of the UN occupation that is maintaining the prime

conditions for exploitation in Haiti, and Preval has opened Haiti for business and plunder.

So why would the IGH and the occupying forces not want Preval to be president? While the occupation runs Haiti through military might, there are 6.4 million Haitians living below the poverty line, and when this body moves in a united action it has the potential and capacity to disrupt and entirely change the balance of forces in Haiti. A portion of this body acting to a degree as a united mass was the



force that thrust Preval into power out of a desire for change to occur.

The struggle against occupation and for improvement of the lives of Haitians has taken many forms, and during this election, the majority of Haitians voted for Preval due to a lack of options and his past relationship with the Lavalas party. In 1994, Preval was elected as president with the Lavalas party, serving alongside Aristide, who was then current Prime Minister.

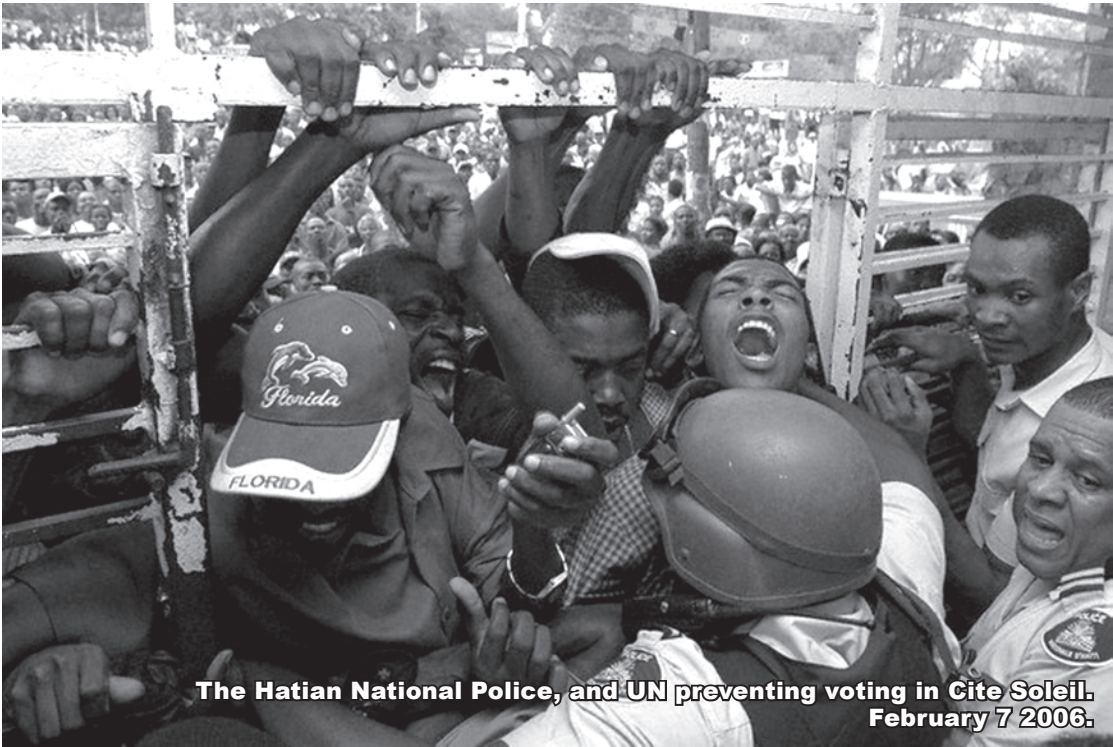
The political difference between the Lavalas party and Preval are now apparent, through their opposing views on occupation. The occupation is the axis of the crisis in Haiti. The question is not whether Preval or Aristide are good or bad, progressive or not. The question is when and how the occupation will end.

Historically Haitians have witnessed first hand the power of the force of oppressed masses. In the late 17th century, when Haiti was a French colony, Toussaint L'Overture led an anti-colonial revolution that overthrew French rule, and in 1804 succeeded in establishing the first Black

leave Haiti to Haitians.

The only political process for Haitians is that of self-determination - the struggle for the basic right to govern the affairs of Haiti how Haitians see fit, free from the intervention of other countries.

The Blue Helmets Wage War



The Hatian National Police, and UN preventing voting in Cite Soleil. February 7 2006.

on the Poor: What Imperialists Gain

From a hospital bed in Cite Soleil, 35 year old mechanic Wilner Pierre speaks about the UN occupation “Every day MINUSTAH is

moving shop to Haiti where 80% of the population lives off less than \$2 US a day, and 50% of the population 4 million people live off a sickening amount of \$1 US a day. The truth is, the ruling class is hard pressed to find a better deal than labour laws enforced by guns and tanks.

Since the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, it is evident that

Agency’s continued support for Canadian big business interest in Haiti. Canada would seek to lose not only its investments in Haiti, but its position on the world stage that is so often referred to. For the Canadian ruling class it was not a question of whether to invade Haiti or not, but of how to invade Haiti and sustain the interest of the Canadian ruling class.

is showing its face in the Bolivarian revolution that is occurring in Venezuela, and now the process that is unfolding with the election of Evo Morales in Bolivia. This challenges the imperialist domination of Latin America, and the imperialists are scratching their heads in their war rooms, in fear of losing Latin America to the will of oppressed people.

War, Destruction, Occupation: Made in Canada

The greatest trick the devil ever played was convincing the world that he didn’t exist. The greatest trick that Canada ever played was convincing the world that it kept peace. While Canadian soldiers deployed in Afghanistan are responsible for securing Canadian ruling class interests in the Middle East through bombs, tanks, rape, pillage, and war, Canada has secured its interests in Haiti through the same use of the RCMP and Canadian Forces.

Since 1994, Canada has sent over 550 RCMP officers to Haiti to build the Haitian National Police force (HNP), a body that has become notorious internationally for it’s massacres of Haiti’s poor. Canada has sent 500 soldiers to occupy Haiti in Operation Halo. Now Canada is playing its role with 125 RCMP officers responsible for the HNP, and five Canadian Forces Officers that are leading MINUSTAH. This includes Colonel Jacques J.



Haitians protest corrupt elections. February 13 2006.

Republic in the world. This is the threat that imperialists have seen in Haiti, that the will of the masses is strong enough to overcome the occupiers. This force exists today in a form that rears its head and screams for the end to the suppression at the hands of the UN and HNP. If the ruling class of Haiti and foreign occupiers do not deal with it they will add fuel to the great furnace burning beneath the UN occupation, and now Preval.

This is why the occupiers allow elections, to pull down the veil of democracy and hold up the idea that there is a political process in Haiti that all Haitians are a part of. Without creating the illusion that all Haitians control the “democratic” political process in Haiti, and that elections and Preval will solve Haiti’s problems, the imperialists would not be able to save themselves the agony of being forced to

shooting people...They shoot in any direction and at any person, even babies, it doesn’t matter. They shouldn’t do their job like that.”

Testimony like Wilner’s is not uncommon in Haiti and gives an idea about the resentment felt for the blue helmets that are occupying Haiti and terrorizing the slums. This destabilization that the occupation has brought to Haiti has created the ideal labour conditions for imperialists. Canadian International Corporation Gildan Activewear jumped early at the possibility Canada had created and in March of 2004 began moving it’s sweatshops from Honduras to Haiti.

The creation of a cheaper labour market in Latin America has devastating results for labour rights globally as big companies are free to close operations in Latin America in favour of

imperialists for economic and military hegemony, the absolute control over resources, economy, and military around the world. Canada is no stranger to this new era and crises. Since 2002, it has been a leader of the occupation of Afghanistan, and was not a “junior partner” in the coup against Aristide, but a main force pushing for increased intervention in Haiti.

Canada has weighty interests in Haiti that are clear when looking from the RCMP involvement in training the Haitian National Police death squads, which began as early as 1994, to the Canadian International Development

most heavily exploited people of the world.

But for imperialists, Haiti is not just another poor country to steal from. It also offers an important strategic military position into Latin America, for imperialist plundering is not the only process under way in Latin America. For over 50 years, Cuba has provided an example to the oppressed people of the world, showing that there are ways to run the affairs of a country based on justice and dignity. In direct confrontation with the cruel example provided by imperialists, Cuba represents a strong current that is sweeping Latin America. This current

Morneau, who is the current chief of staff for the UN mission in Haiti. In January of 2004, the Canadian government hosted The Ottawa Initiative on Haiti, a conference intended to plan regime change in Haiti.

UN OUT OF HAITI!
CANADA: HANDS OFF HAITI!
NO TO SHAM ELECTIONS UNDER OCCUPATION!
SELF DETERMINATION FOR HAITI NOW!



Cite Soleil. January 2006

“The Venezuelan Revolution is the Continuity of the Cuban Revolution”

A Speech by Jesús Arnaldo Pérez

Venezuelan Ambassador to Canada

This speech was given by the new Venezuelan Ambassador to Canada, Jesus Arnaldo Perez, at the closing of a Cuba Solidarity conference organized by the Cuban Embassy on the weekend of November 12 and 13 2005.

After two full days of discussing strategy and politics for the Cuba solidarity movement in Canada, Ernesto Senti, the Cuban ambassador to Canada, announced a special visitor.

The defense of the Bolivarian revolutionary process is inseparable today from the defense of the Cuban revolution. Fire This Time decided to print this short speech is because in it, Jesus Perez reflects the political impact of the Cuban revolution on the Bolivarian revolutionary process in Venezuela, and the revolutionary solidarity between Cuba and Venezuela today. It is important for working people in Canada to learn how this dynamic process is unfolding in Latin America as an alternative to imperialist and capitalist destruction and to defend the Cuban revolution and the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

Hello I want to thank Ambassador Ernesto Senti for inviting me and

seem very important regarding the relationship between Cuba and Venezuela. For example we say that the friends of our brothers are also our friends. We are working in a very brotherly way between Cuba and Venezuela. This is not a recent history. It's an old relationship. Bolivar thought about how to work to get the Spaniards out of Cuba. Jose Marti visited Venezuela looking for the places that Bolivar went to during his revolution.

Something that I think is very important is information, opposed to what we might call 'intoxication'. We are going to struggle through the use of information, and that is what we are trying to do today. We are coming with tools that are fundamental in this issue; and we have these tools in our hands. So if we have the tools and we have the truth then we don't have to fear anything. But the Empire tries to intoxicate us to infuse lies – this is also a very powerful tool. So anyway you see it, it's a very powerful tool – 'informing' or 'intoxicating'.

In 2002 we fought against the coup d'état. Many innocent people, uninformed people thought that Chavez had resigned and many people believed that.

We are very grateful for the Cuban interference in our affairs. Thanks to them the whole world knew it was a coup d'état. Cuba was the first government that denounced



That was a big help – I was an ambassador to Algeria, and I was very sad when I heard that Chavez had 'resigned'. I was informed through Filipe Perez Roque of the Cuban foreign affairs ministry that it was a coup d'état and that Chavez had not resigned; and for me it was like breathing again. It was a very emotional moment for me.

I felt very emotional when Chavez's daughter and was able to address the whole world through the help of commander in chief Fidel Castro and denounce the coup d'état in Venezuela. I believe that information was able to finish off the coup d'état on an informational level. Globally; we were able to pressure the empire by informing people around the world. Nationally speaking, what

public opinion. And with the truth in your hands, you are part of this public opinion. I don't want to interfere in Canadian internal affairs but I was reading in the National Post newspaper, and it said that 73% of Canadians are against US President George Bush. This seems to me to be very interesting.

The Venezuelan revolution is the continuity of the Cuban revolution and of the failure of the People's Unity revolution Chile. Starting from these two examples, the Cuban revolution and the failure of the People's Unity revolution in Chile, the Venezuelan people took their lessons.

These are the ideas that have come from our parents and grandparents and these are ideas that we are

For example, Ernesto recently acknowledged the victory of Venezuela against illiteracy with the help of Cuba. Another figure that is very important is that we have completed \$2 Billion in exchange agreements between Cuba and Venezuela.

These agreements come with a feature of complimenting our economies. For example, Cuba may not have lands to grow rice, but we have them in Venezuela. Cuba does have technology, and highly trained people, so we can develop production and unite and cooperate with our economies to complement our individual economies. For example, we are working on giving Cuba oil and they are helping us with technology and scientific knowledge... and they

for giving me a chance to express our friendship

I'd like to go over certain points that

the coup d'état in Venezuela. So how come the empire is trying to say that we should not love Cuba?

was also helpful was that with the release of the information that Chavez had not resigned, the Venezuelan people could react to the coup d'état.

We are now living in a uni-polar world and the powerful military and the intoxicating media of the US means that we now have to create a new power. The power of the truth, the power of the public information, the power in your hands, as has been quoted by Chavez several times... globalization has to be worth something somehow.

The only thing that can weaken the power of the US is international

starting to learn these days. Che Guevara died for this cause and he is now one of the most popular people in Venezuela.

I'm going to finish on this because I know your time is valuable. These kinds of meetings are going to be held on many different topics, for example on ALBA, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas. We could speak about ALBA, and for example, what is happening through ALBA between Cuba and Venezuela. And we could compare ALBA with what is happening, for example, between Mexico and the US in NAFTA, their free trade agreement.

have human resources... because after forty years of revolution, they are very well educated and trained.

Instead of *competing*, that would *complement* our economies! This is completely different than NAFTA. The trans-nationals want us to compete with each other so salaries can be lowered, but all that brings is misery and poverty to the people. We are at your service and would like to organize meetings like this... and look forward to working together with you.

Thank you very much.



“La Revolución Venezolana es la Continuación de la Revolución Cubana.”

Traducción por: Ernesto Díaz

Discurso de Jesús Arnaldo Pérez, Embajador de Venezuela en Canadá.

Este discurso fue pronunciado por el embajador de Venezuela en Canadá, Jesús Arnaldo Pérez, en la clausura de la conferencia “Cuba solidarity” organizada por la Embajada Cubana el 12 y 13 de Noviembre de 2005.

Después de dos días completos de discutir estrategia y políticas del movimiento “Solidaridad con Cuba” en Canadá, Ernesto Senti, el embajador de Cuba en Canadá anunció un visitante especial.

La defensa del proceso revolucionario bolivariano es inseparable hoy día de la defensa

de la Revolución cubana. “Fire This Time” decidió imprimir este pequeño discurso porque en el, Jesús Pérez refleja el impacto político de la Revolución cubana en el proceso revolucionario bolivariano en Venezuela, y la solidaridad revolucionaria entre Cuba y Venezuela hoy.

Es importante para los trabajadores en Canadá cómo este proceso dinámico se está desarrollando en Latinoamérica como una alternativa a la destrucción imperialista y capitalista y a defender la Revolución cubana y el proceso revolucionario bolivariano.

Fire This Time

Bueno antes que nada quiero agradecer al embajador Ernesto por haberme invitado y darme esta excelente oportunidad de dirigirme a nuestros amigos.

Yo quisiera hablar de algunos puntos que me parecen muy importantes sobre la relación entre Cuba y Venezuela, por ejemplo, nosotros decimos que los amigos de nuestros hermanos son nuestros amigos. Nosotros nos estamos comportando de una manera muy hermanada entre Cuba y Venezuela, esto no data de poco tiempo, es una historia antigua, “Histórica”. Simón Bolívar pensaba inclusive, que podía hacer para echar a los españoles de Cuba. José Martí fue un gran admirador de Simón Bolívar, estuvo en nuestro país buscando los caminos y la ruta de Bolívar. La juventud, que nacimos en los años 50, ahí está el presidente Chávez justamente, soñamos también con los que comenzó en Cuba. En Venezuela había un proceso casi similar pero lo perdimos, eso le

ha costado mucho a Cuba porque Cuba justamente sale de la OEA



después de haber sido acusada de inmiscuirse de los asuntos internos de Venezuela.

Como vamos a hacer si nosotros somos hermanos, nosotros tenemos que interferir.

Hay algo que me parece que es muy importante es : La información o La intoxicación, nosotros tomamos la vía de la información y eso es lo que justamente estamos haciendo hoy en día: informando y contamos con algo que es fundamental que es detener la verdad en las manos y con esa verdad en las manos no tenemos porque temer, pero lo que hace el imperio es intoxicar; utilizar la mentira es un arma muy poderosa de cualquiera de las dos

formas informando o intoxicando. Nosotros sufrimos en el 2002 de un golpe de Estado, mucha gente inocente pensó que el presidente Chávez había renunciado y todo el mundo creía eso, pero gracias a la intervención cubana y le agradezco mucho por inmiscuirse en nuestros asuntos, el mundo entero supo la verdad, que había sido un golpe de Estado, fue el primer gobierno del mundo que denunció un golpe de Estado, y como va a pensar el imperio que no vamos a querer a los cubanos, que eso fue un gran apoyo, yo era embajador en Argelia y yo estaba muy triste y cuando salió por la prensa Felipe y la información de que no había sido un golpe de Estado y que el presidente había renunciado y que estaban en peligro, eso fue para mi algo muy emotivo, cuando la hija de Chávez se dirige al mundo entero para denunciar, gracias al apoyo del comandante Fidel Castro. Y yo creo que esa información fue la que hizo fracasar el golpe de Estado, por lo menos a nivel Internacional, globalmente le dimos el golpe al Imperio informando y eso ayudo mucho interiormente a que el



BRITISH COLUMBIA LIBERAL GOVERNMENT TARGETS BCGEU!

BCGEU Workers Respond with 80% Strike Vote!

By Mike Chimenti

“In the last two years of wage freezes, BCGEU members who work in government have seen their wages decline by over four percent due to inflation, that’s equivalent to ... [working] ... two weeks for free.”

-BCGEU President George Heyman.

The April 2004 HEU strike began a new era in labour struggles in BC. Thousands of working and poor people around the province realized that in the wake of increasing ruling class attacks against all the gains of working people in Canada, they would have to fight in order to protect their jobs and all other working people in Canada.

The lockouts of CBC and Telus workers this past summer clearly showed the sharpening divisions between the bosses and workers in Canada. Both companies viciously attacked

pueblo reaccionara, entonces como estamos viviendo ahora un mundo unipolar, en la potencia militar e intoxicativa de los Estados Unidos, tenemos que crear otra potencia, el poder es de ustedes, la información publica y eso lo ha citado mucho Chávez, para algo tiene que servir la globalización, el único poder que puede atenuar las acciones del Imperio es la opinión publica Internacional y ustedes son los que están haciendo la opinión publica Internacional con la verdad en las manos. Yo no quiero inmiscuirme en los asuntos internos canadienses, simplemente ayer estuve leyendo que el National Post que el 73% de los canadienses tienen una opinión desfavorable de Bush, me parece interesante, la Revolución Bolivariana es la continuación de la revolución cubana y del fracaso de la unidad popular en Chile. Es decir a partir de esas dos grandes tentativas una revolucionaria que esta triunfando y otra que fracaso,



Venezuela ha sacado mucha enseñanza, esas son ideas que ustedes tienen, seguramente sus padres, sus abuelos que vienen y se están recogiendo ahora en la Revolución bolivariana. Muchos latinoamericanos han trabajado en esto, el Che Guevara pago con su vida y ahora es una de las personas más populares de Venezuela.

Para finalizar porque yo se que ustedes están ya cansados que este tipo de reunión pudiéramos hacerlos tomando un tema que nos interesa que es el ALBA, la alternativa bolivariana para la América, pudiéramos presentarle a los canadienses que esta pasando con el Alba entre Cuba y Venezuela.. Y nosotros podemos comparar el ALBA con lo que esta pasando, por ejemplo, entre México y Estados Unidos con el TLCAN, su Tratado de Libre

Comercio.

Por ejemplo, Ernesto, recientemente reconoció la victoria de Venezuela contra el analfabetismo con la ayuda de Cuba. Otra figura que es muy importante es que nosotros hemos completado \$2 billones en acuerdos de cambio entre Cuba y Venezuela.

Estos acuerdos tienen la característica de que apoyan nuestras economías. Por ejemplo, Cuba puede no tener tierras para sembrar arroz, pero las tenemos en Venezuela. Cuba tiene tecnología y gente muy preparada, entonces nosotros podemos desarrollar la producción, unirnos y cooperar con nuestras economías para complementar nuestras economías individuales.

Por ejemplo, nosotros le estamos

dando petróleo a Cuba y ellos nos están ayudando con tecnología y conocimiento científico... y ellos tienen recursos humanos ... porque después de cuarenta años de Revolución, ellos están muy bien educados y entrenados.

¡En lugar de competir, eso complementa nuestras economías! Esto es completamente diferente al TLCAN.

Las transnacionales quieren que compitamos entre nosotros y que los salarios puedan ser más bajos, pero eso trae miseria y pobreza a la gente.

Estamos a tu servicio y quisiera organizar pláticas como esta y mirar hacia adelante para trabajar junto con ustedes.

Muchas gracias.



government’s demands for more privatization and contracting out of their work.”

-BCGEU President George Heyman

On March 3, the results of the BCGEU strike vote were in: 80% in favour of a strike. This staggering majority of the 25,000 union members involved in this round of negotiations sends a loud and clear message to the BC Liberal government, the BCGEU leadership, and working and poor people across the country: we refuse to be pushed back any further! We will fight for what is ours!

The BCGEU walked away from the bargaining table on March 14, after almost three full months of negotiations - negotiations in which the Health Employers Association of BC

has been unwilling to meet the demands of the BCGEU, despite a Provincial surplus of over \$1 billion.

The government employees have not had a pay raise in over 4 years and are demanding a 10% wage increase over 3 years. In response to the results of the strike vote, the government raised their original offer of 6% over 4 years to 8.5% over 4 years. Finance Minister Carole Taylor is dangling a \$1 billion carrot in front of workers, as a bonus for signing a new contract before the current one expires on March 31. The government is also using the promise of an additional \$4.7 billion in raises over the next 4 years to pressure workers into ending their struggle quickly, to avoid public support from mounting

behind this fight.

But with more than 90% of public sector contracts expiring in 2006, and the possibility of another strike mandate for the BCTF in June, the BC Liberals want to nip any potential rekindling of widespread struggle in the bud.

All working, poor, and oppressed people in Canada must stand united behind the BCGEU and their demands. This struggle is an extension of all the working class struggles in BC since 2001, and can strike a major victory for working and poor people all over the world.

OPPOSE NEW-LEBERAL POLICIES OF GORDON CAMPBELL GOVERNMENT!

DEFEND AND SUPPORT THE BCGEU DEMANDS!

STOP ATTACKS ON BCGEU WORKERS!

TRINKETS AND BEADS, SMOKE AND MIRRORS:

The First Ministers and Their ‘Quality of Life’ Agenda For Indigenous People In Canada

By Aaron Mercredi

“The First Ministers Meeting could represent the dawn of a new era for all the people of this land.”
- Assembly of First Nations Press Release

“Keep your programs! We want our land!”
– From a protest sign in Kelowna

From November 24th to 25th 2005, Paul Martin and the first ministers of all 13 provinces and territories met with the major leadership of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit and other mainstream Indigenous organizations for the First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Affairs in Kelowna. On the table was a discussion of \$5.1Billion for services and programs that were supposed to address the social, economic and health problems of Indigenous people in Canada.

While the leaders in the Grand Okanagan Hotel smudged and talked about the future of Indigenous people who live on and off reserves in Canada, over 200 Indigenous people and supporters from all over the country gathered outside in the snow, drumming, singing and protesting against these talks.

What’s wrong with \$5.1Billion?

The federal government was offering \$5.1 Billion for programs and services in what it called the “Quality of Life Agenda,” which is a 10-year deal to improve health, housing, education and economic development with programs and services for Indigenous people in Canada.

What they’re keeping quiet about is that this agreement is trying to put a cap on the amount of federal funding that is provided for services for Aboriginal people. For over four decades, Canada has been offloading its constitutional responsibility to fund Native programs and services on to the provinces. By now, the funds going to on-reserve services by the federal government are at the bare minimum, and the federal government is trying to offload more of the burden of dealing with Indigenous people on to the backs of the provinces and territories.

More importantly, the talks are only meant to offer a cheap band-aid solution to the poverty Indigenous people in Canada live under every day instead of dealing with its root cause. Recognition of Treaty rights or Aboriginal Title, the ownership

of lands and resources by Indigenous nations, and self-determination for the Indigenous nations within Canada was not part of this agreement.

TV and radio signals across the country claimed Native people in Canada were finally going to be brought out of their poverty and misery. Behind the media hype was a strategy by Canada and its provinces to cover the real issues of why Indigenous people in this country live in 3rd world conditions, suffer from more health problems than other Canadians, and have higher dropout and suicide rates. This was a ‘smoke and mirrors’ campaign to fool people in this country in to believing that the problems Native people face can be solved by throwing a few billion dollars their way, and it created deep divisions among Indigenous people on how to deal with it. What better way to show how the colonial government of Canada has divided Indigenous people than by watching on TV as the leadership sits in warm hotel lobbies, cracking jokes with representatives of Canada while Indigenous people stand out in the wet and snow to protest. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN), which represents the First Nations band councils in Canada, was one of the biggest pushers of this agreement. But, what was not getting reported is that the Council of the Crees, the Assembly of First Nations of Labrador and Quebec, and altogether over 200 bands, which is one third of the AFN, boycotted this meeting.

A Historic Meeting?

The Kelowna agreement was part of a larger push by the government of Canada to shed itself of its responsibility to the people whose land and resources it has made itself rich with, and whose livelihoods it is destroying. It comes on the heels of the \$2Billion payout that the Liberal government was trying to push for compensation to the survivors Canada’s residential schools. These payouts were being pushed because the government of Canada is incapable of dealing with the real issues of Indigenous people. This is because Canada’s survival as a colonial capitalist country depends on the continued theft of Indigenous land and resources. It can throw billions of dollars into programs, into compensation, but it will not change the fact that Indigenous people still have no control over their own affairs and will remain poor at the hands of Canada.

Dead in the water? What next?

“We’re not going to honour that. We will have our own plan that



Protest against First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Affairs in Kelowna, BC November 24-25 2005.



Protest against First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Affairs in Kelowna, BC November 24-25 2005.



By Aaron Mercredi

The Grassroots Peoples Coalition (GPC) put out the call among the Indigenous community across Canada for meetings and protests to counter the First Ministers Meeting in Kelowna on November 24th and 25th. The purpose of the GPC is to raise awareness about Aboriginal and Treaty rights, develop strategies for implementing these rights on the ground, and to keep First Nations leadership accountable to the people. Arthur Manuel, a long-time Secwepemc activist and leader, is the spokesperson for the GPC. After the day’s events in Kelowna on November 25th, I had

Neskonlith Indian Reserve in the Secwepemc Nation near Chase, BC, Canada. I’m also spokesperson for the Indigenous Network on Economy and Trade, but here I was involved in being the spokesman for the Grassroots People’s Coalition. We were organizing in response to the First Minister’s conference here in Kelowna during the 24th and 25th of November 2005.

FTT: What do you think is the significance of the meeting that was held between the First Ministers, Paul Martin, and some of the major Aboriginal organizations in Canada?

AM: I think the main significance of it was

will help natives a lot more than the Liberals.”

- Monte Solberg, Conservative Finance Critic in reference to the Kelowna agreement

On January 23rd Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party won a minority government in Ottawa. What does this mean for the Kelowna agreement, or the Residential School deal, or the future of Indigenous people in this country? To start off, the Conservative Party opposed the First Minister’s meeting. Not out of solidarity with Indigenous people, but because a more right-wing government will take a more direct approach to the theft of land and resources from Indigenous people. Instead of waving jewellery in front of our eyes, we can expect the cannons of gunships. The conservative government strongly supports the First Nations Governance Act, or Bill C-7, which was introduced

in 2003 and would have reduced Indigenous communities to municipalities and entrenched federal domination over Indigenous people. This was dropped because of the massive opposition to the Act but could be introduced again by the Conservative government. Either way, we can expect a hard-line approach and many more battles ahead.

Whether the Kelowna agreement is adopted by the new Conservative government or not, the resistance by Indigenous people who came out to the streets of Kelowna against the theft that was being signed behind closed doors remains as something that we can learn from. For further analysis on this issue, please read an interview on this page with Arthur Manuel, who helped found the Grassroots People’s Coalition in response to the First Minister’s meeting, and which put a call-out for the protests.

“This Address of Poverty is Just Really a Scam” An Interview with Arthur Manuel

the opportunity to discuss the First Ministers Meeting with him.

Fire This Time: To start off, could you tell me who you are and where you’re from?

Art Manuel: I’m Arthur Manuel, and I’m from the Neskonlith Indian Reserve in the Secwepemc Nation near Chase, BC, Canada. I’m also spokesperson for the Indigenous Network on Economy and Trade, but here I was involved in being the spokesman for the Grassroots People’s Coalition. We were organizing in response to the First Minister’s conference here in Kelowna during the 24th and 25th of November 2005.

FTT: What do you think is the significance of the meeting that was held between the First Ministers, Paul Martin, and some of the major Aboriginal organizations in Canada?

AM: I think the main significance of it was

that the Canadian government has been able to basically co-opt our national Aboriginal organizations into a strategy to deal with the symptoms of poverty as opposed to trying to deal with the cause of our poverty. Indigenous people at the grassroots level, especially the ones who have gathered here in Kelowna, have always been struggling with the federal and provincial governments with regards to Aboriginal title and Aboriginal fishery rights. And we’ve always been demanding the government recognize Aboriginal treaty rights, but that is not being done.

And with this agenda that they’ve sort of adopted across the street, what they’ve done is they’ve basically gotten the Indian/Aboriginal organizations to abandon Aboriginal treaty rights too and instead focus on social programs like education, health, and housing, and economic development. And they’re going to use that signed-on agenda against the people who are struggling to have rights recognized and dealt with, because what they’re going to do is they’re going to do how Sun Peaks

does by charging people with trespassing, or they are going to charge people for fishing without a permit, or fishing during a closed period or something, what they call ‘closed.’ The things which in those cases, they are asserting their authority over us and they are trying to say that we are breaking their rules, whether they use the Land Act or the Fishing Act, and when we go to court the government prosecutors use agreements like this ten-year agreement and other agreements, any kind of sweetheart deal that they’ve got with Indian people.

They use them to say “Ok, the good Indians, the responsible Indians. They signed this real good agreement about housing, education, health and economic development. That’s what the good Indians want to do.” And they look at the youth, especially a lot of the youth and elders, and they’re going to say, “Oh you’re bad Indians so we’re going to send you to jail for 45 days to smarten you up.” And so that’s how those agreements actually bite back on people. You sort of somehow

Interview with Arthur Manuel

think that they are going to help, but they are actually really dangerous, especially the way they use these agreements. And it shows they are basically managing Indian people. But, I have no confidence in them because in the end, 10 years from now, they're probably going to spend another \$5 billion, and its not going to make a hell of a difference to us, simply because poverty is still going to be there because you're not getting to the root.

The root cause is non-recognition of Aboriginal treaty rights. The minute they recognize Aboriginal rights here, that means that the Okanogan own the property underneath this building and are entitled to revenue because it's raised as a consequence, the use of this building for their commercial purposes. So that is not there now. It's just not there. They are not going to provide that kind of dialogue to address poverty from that perspective. You know, the real thing that needs to be fixed isn't Indian people vis a vis health, education and housing. The real thing that needs to be fixed in this country is the Canadian economic system, because the Canadian economic system isn't based on recognizing Aboriginal treaty rights. It means that the entrepreneurs and government can just basically steal the land from us, from underneath our feet. That isn't possible in other countries. The Chinese have been buying and selling land for centuries, the Europeans have been doing it for centuries too, buying and selling land. They have to deal with the real cost of a ski resort. Sun Peaks didn't even steal it from the Shuswap. Get a couple of Shuswap chiefs to agree with it and it's actually a real fraudulent form of capitalism because it is based upon

we're not to blame. Really, it's the economic system that's to blame.

The one that doesn't recognize fundamental rights recognized under the constitution and recognized under the courts. That's the problem and that's the thing that needs fixing. Not us. So, we're going to assume the blame for that. And we're going to run around and try to have

“That conference over there happened because the province and the federal government are scared”

programs and that kind of thing, but the problem with that process is that they look at the federal and provincial government as having mutually exclusive jurisdiction on all money and all programs. So, we're outside still, looking at those two governments and that's the dialogue that the meeting is going to be like because the money is going to come from those guys. And through that money, they are going to be manipulated in the direction of an agenda.

They are going to be co-opted, and they're [the government] still going to wind up with the exclusive jurisdiction at the end of the day. In terms of Indian education, take a look at it.



Arthur Manuel.

non-recognition of the primary land interests that the industry and government are using.

FTT: We read about how good this deal is going to be for Native people in this country in the major media. How do you think Indigenous people are really going to be affected by this new 10-year agreement?

AM: Well, the average Native person isn't going to be affected at all by it. What's going to happen is that you're going to wind up with having the band council and the tribal organizations and the provincial and territorial organizations being engaged in a constant set of meetings involving these issues, trying to talk about some common form of dialogue. And there's no illusion on my part that those dialogues will be guided by the federal and provincial governments, and that there's really not going to be any substantial change. What they're basically going to do is get Indian people to agree in to devolution of authorities.

The real problem with Indian programs and services in this country is that Indigenous people ourselves don't have true recognition of Aboriginal title. We have a revenue base for programs and services. Do you know what I mean? If they recognize that we have Aboriginal title and rights then we will get remunerations for them using our property, and the remunerations that we'd use for programs and services. Right now, that's not happening. Right now, that doesn't happen because all remuneration for use of our property either accrues to the provincial government under section 92 or accrues to the federal government under Section 91. That's why we need to make a big public spectacle like here, bumming for \$5 billion from the federal government and \$100 million from the provincial government. And then the tax payers think, "Oh, look at that. We're saving those Indians." You know what I mean. We assume the blame because we say that "we don't have adequate health care, good housing. That's how come we're economically poor, and we need to bum this money from you tax payers so that we can improve it." So we assume the blame. And

They're not really talking about Indian control of Indian education with a separate resource base. They're looking at recognizing the

“The real problem with Indian programs and services in this country is that Indigenous people ourselves don't have true recognition of Aboriginal title”

provincial government as having the primary constitutional responsibility. And what the feds want to do is suck the province into it so there is some shared responsibility there, you know, because if you study the background of social programs in this country, the federal government takes the position that they have no obligation to provide any of these services like healthcare, education, and housing. They feel that they don't have any obligation to do that on an Indian reserve. They feel that it is the provincial government's responsibility. They feel that the post secondary education, they are providing that as a humanitarian and moral obligation and not as a legal responsibility.

The provinces on the other hand, say "no, we don't have any legal responsibility for providing those services because they're services provided for Indians and under the constitution they are responsible for Indians, and so you guys will be handling it. So the thing is that both of them deny any responsibility. That's why we're as poor as we are. That's the consequence. When two governments deny any liability or responsibility for something, obviously you're going to suffer the consequences. And that's what's happening right now. And that's how come its stupid for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to sign documents and to involve themselves in dialogue where the responsibility with regard to those programs and services are going to continue to be born by the federal and provincial government. It was no clear dialogue with regards to responsibility in the papers

that they've got written over there. There's nothing about that. So, it's silent. In fact, I feel that because of the sort of very uncertain area of who has authority with regards to programs, we need to claim that jurisdiction because it is ours. Reading under Section 35 (1), where we talk about self-government. We have a right; therefore the right is to do the things that we need to do to get money through the use of the land through the federal and provincial governments. When they use any of our land, they owe us. No 'ands,' 'ifs' or 'buts' about it are a part of that. So the thing is that that is what we need to get on our side. That's a direction that I see that we have to take. What's going on over there is a real travesty.

FTT: It has been inspiring seeing grassroots people come together. Just the fact that there have been meetings over the past couple days countering what's going on over there and people coming from around to discuss these issues. What do you think is the next step?

AM: Well the next step, like I told these people, is to maintain solidarity amongst ourselves, and build the coalition between our different groups. Because our different groups are really are actually active. You know, we



Road block in Skwelkwew'welt. August 29 2004.

Interview with Arthur Manuel

have to pull together here. In these other areas, there are activists who I know from our ongoing work under INET and other things. When I hear action happening out there, I'm always out there trying to meet the people and to talk to them. But after making that contact what we need to do is to get together and start consolidating our own coalition, ongoing coalition that will support what our rights are as Indigenous people, as grassroots people. We can't depend on those guys. I hate to say this, but they're kind of addicted to federal funding. Like, we've had problems in our communities with drugs and alcoholism. We've attended healing societies, and there are different views. On my reserve, alcoholism is really there, and we've really changed our position, but things like dependency, anyone with a dependency, whether it is on drugs or on federal funding for political purposes, I think we need to seriously question it.

I think the Indian community has to really look at funding that comes in to our community and do a review. Because a lot of people think they're getting that money and its right, but it ain't. And it doesn't necessarily have the consequences that you really think it does have. And we need to review these policies of funding, because, you know, if we don't review it, we really make ourselves vulnerable to the policies and criteria under which such funding is given. For instance, under the Canadian funding for political purposes in this country, only \$5.4 million nationally is given as grants, as core grants. And core grants means that they don't put any line item in the budget. It is just "here's 5.4 million. Do with it what you want." And that's what the Indians hope the government would do, but it's only \$5.4 million for all the other organizations, from coast to coast. And they give out, in addition to that, \$225 million in project funding. Project funding has line items, which means,

like financial line items, like you know with a name on it and an amount, which means that it isn't free money. It isn't a grant. It means that you have to spend it according to the bureaucrat who makes those line items, you know? And that's how they direct people. And that's how they manipulate and manoeuvre politics in this country through the difference between the \$225 Million political money and the \$5.4 Million that they call grant funding.

So the thing is that we need to study that and all our ordinary people have to study that. Because I've heard people here say once they start getting into cars and that, you know you got a payment and your payment is \$600/

month and you've got a 36-month payment plan. And then you know the grassroots people start demonstrating outside the meeting. You make people over there sweat. You make them sweat because they're thinking about their car payments, their thinking about their mortgage payments, they're thinking about their own personal needs over and above what they are really responsible for which is the collective rights of all the Indigenous people. And all that happens. You know, I've been there. I was the chief for eight years, and I was chairman for six. I know the dynamics of the mentality of being locked in to those kinds of funding arrangements and what it means to your staff and to your office. So let's not kid ourselves. But with the grassroots, you know, there might be something else suggested. We need to do a full analysis of the funding arrangements of organizations, whether it is from the band all the way to the national, and start laying that out for people so people start realizing. We need to get smart.

The issues that are so critical now, are the

land issues. That conference over there happened because the province and the federal government are scared. That's why it's happening. It's because the legal rights that we have been acquiring and accumulating over the centuries are being heard reporters and media in New York, and people who validate Canada's credit rating. They know that Indian people are a substantially high hidden cost that Canada has been hiding. The other doctrine you need to put in this perspective, and this gets really complicated, is the financial statements of Canada with reference of Aboriginal liabilities with regard to Indian land and treaty rights. And also the province, the same thing, the financial statements. We're actually in page 60 of the BC financial statements under what they call 'contingency modes and liabilities' and they sort of highlight the whole thing about Canada's BC treaty process in there in about four or five paragraphs. They highlight it. They have to highlight it because they need to let the people who lend BC money, the international investment banks, they need to let them know what all their liabilities are, and we are one of them as Indigenous people, and we have to tell them.

In this agreement, we'll end up in their next financial statement saying we got this thing, because what they need to show to the financial investment banks out there is that 'we've got the Indians under control. We're managing them.' I know that in their present statements, they say that 'we're lending them money to negotiate, and two-thirds of them are negotiating, but we don't expect an agreement in the foreseeable future.' They say that right in their financial statements, you know what I mean? The reason they do that is because they are using our land as collateral to borrow the money that they turn around and give us the \$100 million, which is real chump change when you talk about the deficit of some of these companies. General Motorws runs a \$4 billion deficit on its GM plant in Canada. It's nickel and dime when you really nail it down to corporate interests, and here is our leadership thinking it will mean big change. It ain't going to help nobody.

FTT: Thanks a lot for the interview.



A MESSAGE ABOUT PEACE



Leonard Peltier Statement on March 15th, 2003

Leonard Peltier #89637-132
US Penitentiary – Leavenworth
PO Box 1000
Leavenworth, Kansas 66048-1000

Thank you for giving me a chance to share a part of myself on this day of peace.

It is important that you have taken this time out of your day and your busy lives to share with the world your commitment to peace and a vision for change. This may be the most important thing that you will ever do.

This day is no different than that day in 1975, when I stood up to FBI-assisted violence on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. What is at stake

now is not very different from then. The American government strong-armed the people of Pine Ridge, too. Their interest wasn't to protect the Indigenous People living in strife and poverty, who even to this day can't make ends meet, but to support multinational corporations that even now are only after the natural resources from a land rich in uranium. This mentality that "Might Makes Right"... It's nothing new. This administration is turning back the clock and is doing nothing but playing "cowboys and Indians."

Let's be honest. There is much to be gained by taking Iraq by force - for the U.S., for the multinational corporations - and very little, if anything, of the administration's actions is about liberating Iraq's people from a tyrannical regime. Iraqi oil is the key. It means everything in this so-called "War on Terror". But the greed doesn't end there. Reports in the last few weeks show private American corporations - profiteers like Vice

President Dick Chaney's former employer - are already in place, ready to take government contracts to rebuild a war-ravaged country blown apart by American bombs and to service military personnel that this administration plans to house there. An occupation force, then. War is good for business. And all of this will be paid for by you, the American taxpayer.

The world is crying out for unity and greater understanding of our Arab brothers and sisters. Without dialogue, how else will we come to understand the conflicts in the Middle East?

The French, who have plenty of experience in the Middle East, avow the Iraqi's will not to succumb to American democracy in

our lifetime. In this, the Iraqi people are no different than Indigenous Peoples everywhere. And like with the Indigenous People of this country, an understanding of tribal factions within the Arab world is needed. Respect for their culture and spiritual beliefs is required. Acknowledgement of their sovereignty is fundamental. America may choose to ignore our efforts today, but we - the People - will carry the wounds of killing innocent people in the name of American might.

My own case ended in violent action by the U.S. government and the FBI. In whose interest was this done? For the people of the Pine Ridge Reservation? For Native People throughout this land? For Indigenous Peoples throughout the world? In the interest of the American public? This sort of aggression nearly destroyed my People. Let my life serve

as a reference point to all of you today. I urge you to consider the knowledge Indian people gained in the face of terrorism. If we had unified early on, worked together rather than as separate nations, we may have prevailed. We must encourage our allies, the world's nations that are opposed to military action, to come together in unity.

These are our brothers and sisters, Aunties and Uncles, we go to bomb. They are us and we are them, together in this great circle of life. I encourage you all to continue together, united. Speak with one voice. Say NO to war!

I leave you with the words of an Iroquois leader, Leon Shenandoah, "I'm working for the Creation. I refuse to take part in destruction."

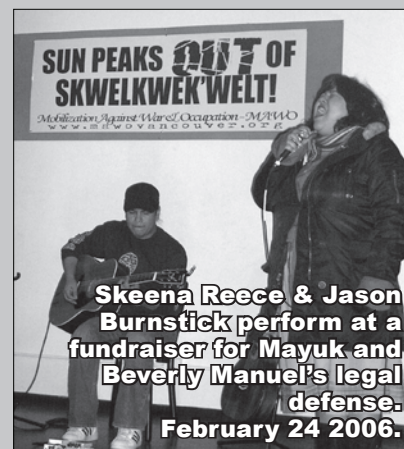
Aho. Megwetch.

Leonard Peltier

SKWELKWEK'WELT FUNDRAISER A BIG SUCCESS

By Kira Koshelanyk

On Friday, February 24, over 100 people packed into Video In Studios to support two Indigenous activists, Mayuk and Beverly Manuel in their struggle. For five years the Secwepemc people have been fighting against the colonial expansion of the Sun Peaks ski resort. Throughout these five years of struggle against the expansion, there have been over 57 arrests of community members resisting the development and defending Secwepemc land. Next month, Mayuk and Beverly Manuel will be appearing before the BC Supreme Court to challenge the charges that were brought against



Free Leonard Peltier!

March and Rally in Solidarity with Leonard Peltier in Tacoma, WA

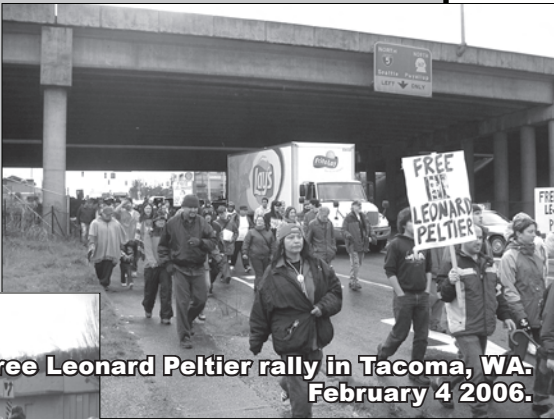
By Aaron Mercredi

On February 4th, 2006, over 250 people gathered on the streets of Tacoma, Washington, in solidarity with Leonard Peltier, who was about to begin his 30th year behind bars in a US prison. The Tacoma Leonard Peltier Support Group brought out protesters from Canada and all parts of the US to its 13th Annual Northwest Regional march for the International Day of Solidarity with Leonard Peltier.

The energetic march began at Portland Ave Park and weaved its way through Tacoma to the rally site at the US Federal Court House in downtown Tacoma. After a traditional dance and drumming by Aztec dancers, Lakota Elder Dorothy Ackerman opened the rally. Long-time Native activists and solidarity groups brought voices of support for Leonard as he sits in a Pennsylvania prison.

Arthur J. Miller, coordinator of the Tacoma Leonard Peltier Support Group, connected Leonard's case with the ongoing struggle of Indigenous people and its direct link to all social struggles. Miller noted that the US government that is waging wars and occupations in the Middle East

the two FBI agents. While the US government considered Joe Stuntz's case closed, it launched the biggest 'man hunt' in US history for the AIM members who had escaped after the firefight.



Free Leonard Peltier rally in Tacoma, WA- February 4 2006.

Leonard Peltier escaped into hiding in Canada, while Bob Robideau and Dino Butler were arrested and stood trial for the murder of the two agents in South Dakota. Even in the racist atmosphere of South Dakota, where the governor at the time, Bill Janklow, said "the only way to deal with AIM leaders is with a bullet to the head," they were both found not guilty because of lack of evidence and because the jury found that they were acting in self-defense.

Facing a growing movement of Indigenous people in the US who were fighting for their self-determination,

FUNDRAISER A BIG SUCCESS

them for defending and asserting sovereignty over their territory. (More info: <http://www.skwelkwekwelt.net/>)

To begin this legal battle will cost thousands of dollars, and so, in a gesture of solidarity, Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) organized a fundraiser to help raise money for their legal costs in this battle against Sun Peaks and the colonial governments of BC and Canada. The fundraiser was endorsed and supported by the Skwelkwek'welt Protection Centre Defenders and Redwire Native Youth Media.

Aaron Mercredi, Metis youth, MAWO organizer, and Board Member of Redwire Native Youth Media hosted the evening, welcoming the supporters and introducing the incredible talent gracing the stage that night.

The evening was opened by Lady Sincere of the Squamish and Nisga'a Nations, who shared traditional welcomee and prayer songs and spoken word of resistance. She was followed by Tamara Nile, a local Metis acoustic musician and songstress.

Iffer & Eliza of the Women's Empowerment Team, a project for Aboriginal Women musicians, took over next and energized the crowd with their inventive electronic composition and songs.

Manik Iderful, East Vancouver's #1 hip hopper, followed next with his freestyle skills, rhyming words against war and occupation at home and abroad. MAWO Co-chair Kira Koshelanyk spoke in a break from the musical acts about why MAWO organized the fundraiser. She explained that we support Beverly and Mayuk as leaders in the struggle against colonialism today. Also, we recognize that Canada's colonial beginnings are rooted in this stolen land, but are now extending abroad in the occupations of Afghanistan and Haiti. Canada is leading in an occupying role there, and we all need to support our brothers and sisters in struggle against imperialism and colonialism at home and abroad.

The music resumed with special guest Sista Hailstorm up from Los Angeles, who rapped and gave shout outs to Indigenous people in struggle



Indigenous activist Aaron Mercredi

Internationally reknowned guitarist, Jason Burnstick.

impressing us with her voice and jokes and bringing us to tears with her touching stories. Skeena was joined by Jason Burnstick, professional musician and slide guitarist, who also followed with his own set.

The evening was wrapped up with the stylings of DJ Contradiction, who played reggaeton and Latin American hip-hop while people filled the dance floor.

Not only was the evening a success in surpassing the fundraising goal for the evening and gathering over \$1300 for Beverly and Mayuk's legal defense, but also in strengthening the bonds of solidarity and support in the community. Antiwar organizers, Indigenous activists, co-fighters and supporters all joined together against the occupation of Skwelkwek'welt, of Indigenous nations in Canada, and of oppressed nations abroad, making

and Latin America is the same US government whose very existence is founded on the genocide of Indigenous people, and the theft and occupation of their land in North America.

February 6th, 2006, two days after the rally in Tacoma, was the 30th anniversary of the beginning of Leonard Peltier's incarceration. In 1975, based on manufactured evidence by the FBI, he was extradited to the US for the murder of two FBI agents in a shoot-out on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota that summer. He stood trial in South Dakota on this manufactured evidence, was convicted of their murder and has been in prison ever since.

Why Leonard Peltier?

The shoot-out with two FBI agents took place during the "Reign of Terror" against Lakota people on the Pine Ridge Indian Reserve. In the 1970s, the US government worked with the corrupt tribal government and its FBI-backed GOON squads to maintain corrupt rule over traditional Lakota people who opposed the plundering of their land and wanted to see an end to the poverty that they were living under. Between 1973 and 1976, there were over 60 unsolved or unresolved murders of Oglala Lakota men and women and members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) who were asked for protection by the Lakota traditionals.

It was the FBI agents who sped on to the Jumping Bull compound on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in an unmarked car with guns drawn on June 26th, 1975. In the shoot-out that ensued, one young Indigenous man, Joe Stuntz, was killed, along with

the FBI needed to kill the momentum. At the same time as they were instituting their Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) to try and destroy AIM from within, they also put all their focus on Leonard Peltier for the murder of the two agents.

Justice For All

Leonard Peltier—an Anishinabe and Dakota/Lakota warrior, a great-grandfather, and a symbol of Indigenous struggle against the US government for justice. Even inside his prison walls, he remains an activist, linking local struggles with international ones, and putting to the forefront the justice that is being denied to the Indigenous nations who continue to live in third-world conditions while the US government and multinational corporations line their pockets with their resources and blood.

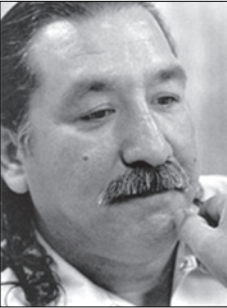
Leonard Peltier's fate is tied in with the fate of all Indigenous people who suffer from the colonial governments of Canada and the USA and all oppressed people in the world. Just as both of those governments collaborated to put him behind bars, they both continue to attack the lives and livelihoods of Indigenous people within their own borders and spread their bloody hands to kill and occupy oppressed people around the world. His freedom will be ours, and ours will be his.

"I thank you for your patience, your time, your support, and your loyalty and for allowing me to share this existence with you. As someone once said, we are all climbing the same mountain, just from different sides."

-Leonard Peltier, March 6th, 2006

across the continent and around the world.

Obese Chief, the notorious East Van rapper, took the stage next and got everyone up dancing. The multi-talented Skeena Reece followed. A Tsimshian woman musician, singer, comedian and performance artist, Skeena stirred things up next



Leonard Peltier
#89637-132 U.S. Penitentiary
P.O. Box 1000 Leavenworth, KS 66048-1000
August 2003

My honorable brothers and sisters of Cuba:

During the many years of serving an unjust imprisonment his Excellency President Fidel Castro, the Revolution and the great Cuban people have offered me almost three decades of solidarity, supporting my struggle as I seek justice and my freedom. Freedom that I lost as I was sentenced to two life sentences in a US prison for simply opposing the exploitation and the oppression of my people.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the attacks on Fort Moncada in Santiago de Cuba and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes; attacks carried out by the great revolutionary forces led by His Excellency President Fidel Castro. These attacks carried out on July 26, 1953 signaled one of the most significant acts against imperialism; as well as, being the first step in the overthrow of US backed dictator Batista. My people, the indigenous people of North America, know your struggle, as we have for more than 500 years fought against imperialism. This imperialist aggression has been responsible for the deaths of our

Solidarity Message of Native American and Political Prisoner Leonard Peltier to Fidel, the People and the Revolution

our voices louder and stronger on that night and in the future!

SUN PEAKS OUT OF SKWELKWEK'WELT!

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE SECWEPENC AND ALL INDIGENOUS NATIONS IN CANADA!

ancestors, the rape of our women, and the ransacking of our lands. Now more than ever, we are obliged to fight for our freedom and our autonomy.

I would like this opportunity to once again express my solidarity with His Excellency Fidel Castro, with the Cuban Revolution and with my brothers and sisters in Cuba. I call for an end to all campaigns of foreign subversion and aggression towards the government of Cuba and it's people. The war on terrorism conducted by the US is nothing more than a smoke screen to carry out illegal acts of aggression that break International Law. In light of the acts of aggression and terrorism carried out by the imperialistw, the Republic of Cuba has the right to defend and protects it's national sovereignty.

Lastly, I call on the government of the United States to immediately free my five heroic brothers who remain unjustly imprisoned for trying to prevent acts of terrorism from Miami, against their nation and their people. I promise that I will maintain my solidarity with my brothers and sisters in Cuba and ask humbly that you support my struggle for my freedom.

Till victory! In the spirit of Crazy Horse,

Leonard Peltier



THE WAR ON POOR AND WORKING PEOPLE AT HOME

Interview with John Clarke from OCAP on the Special Diet Campaign

By Shannon Bundock

As Canada steps up its war drive in Afghanistan, 28.5 Billion has been allotted for the mission to kill innocent people overseas. At the same time there are people in Canada who suffer as this



Founding member of OCAP, John Clarke.

money is directed away from social programs. In the past decade in Ontario, the lack of social assistance, lack of social housing, rising unemployment, and cuts to health and education have hit poor and working people extremely hard.

In the past year The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), has been organizing an arm of their “Raise the Rates” campaign for the Special Diet Supplement, an allotment of money being denied to people on welfare assistance. Fire This Time had the opportunity to sit down with OCAP founding member John Clarke to discuss the campaign, and what role it is playing in the fight for justice for poor and working people in Ontario and beyond.

attributed to the OCAP campaign. So in that climate what has happened is that you have had the Welfare bureaucracy trying to restrict access to the diet, you’ve had the government make it clear that they intend to come down. That has led to a situation where the communities that have actually been accessing it have had to organize to defend their individual entitlements and to defend the supplement as a whole.

FTT: What support has the campaign received from other organizations?

JC: The Ontario Medical Association has played an entirely reactionary role in this and most doctors certainly, are not exactly friends of the poor or friends of the supplement being provided to people. However, there are a core of medical providers, doctors, nurse practitioners, midwives, that have been involved in community clinics. We have organized dozens of community clinics to give people access to this supplement. At the same time they have even acted as advocates and spokespeople for the whole cause. They have formed an ad-hoc grouping - Health Care Providers Against Poverty. Most people have made an incredible contribution, not only because we couldn’t have done it without their medical qualifications and experience, but also because they have become a fairly organized and highly outspoken group of people.

the supplement, it is defending people’s right to access the supplement after they have been diagnosed.

FTT: What has the government response been in general?

JC: The minister, Sandra Pupatello has in effect described this as a scam. While we don’t care a great deal about Sandra Pupatello’s views or what they deem to be scams, people who access benefits that they aren’t technically supposed to get are surviving and we are not going to denounce anyone. The fact is that what we have been doing has been entirely consistent with the actual rules of the system. Medical providers are providing legitimate opinion and people are subsequently entitled to benefit. Pupatello has from the start tried to say that there is some sort of irregularity going on here, and we have long known that there was going to be an attack made and it has now come down. The province wasn’t able to do much until they bit the bullet and decided to cut the supplement. They led a sort of covert operation at the welfare offices to try to restrict access as much as possible.

FTT: What future you foresee for this campaign?

JC: Well, I think there are going to be very large numbers of allies speaking out. At the forefront of this will of course be the Medical providers themselves, who have all sorts of plans – complaints to the privacy commissioner open letters to the Minister, delegations to the Minister – they’ll be very, very active. We hope that other organizations speak out. On Saturday there will be a meeting especially for trade union activists to get some participation from the labor movement. Even if we can’t get the official bodies to play a major role, we can get individual locals and trade union activists as involved as possible. More

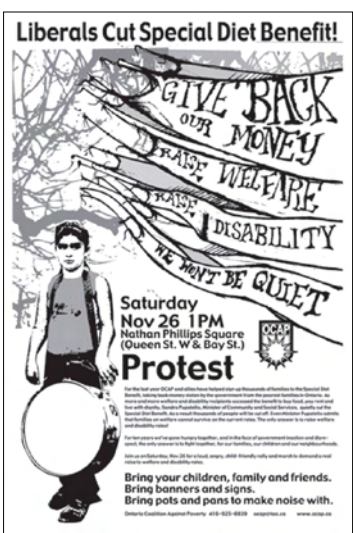
Since this interview was conducted, the Special Diet money has been cut. Continuing with their fight, OCAP held a “Hunger March” on March 15, 2006 demanding the reinstatement of funding and increases in welfare rates.

Fire This Time: How did the campaign begin and what was it in response to?

John Clarke: Well, it was in response to, first of all, a decade-long erosion of spending power of social assistance payments in Ontario for welfare recipients and people on disability support. But it was also in response to the fact that the Liberal government that came to power in 2003 made sort of a nebulous promise to change things. They certainly haven’t done that. About 40% of the spending power of social assistance has been lost through cuts and through inflationary pressure. So we had an ongoing campaign to “Raise the Rates” [of welfare]. As part of that we were exploring the notion of what we call a full entitlement drive – trying to get every benefit available to people, which they are not usually told about or get denied even if they try. So we came up with the notion of going down the road of Special Diet. This is a policy that provides up to \$250 per person per month, if they are on social assistance and their medical provider is of the opinion that their health requires items listed under the Special Diet. Now that is the campaign, basically that fight.

FTT: What have the impacts and successes been in regards to community organizing?

JC: The community organizing success has been linked to the physical success of the campaign. We are sure that at least 5000 people have passed through our clinics within Toronto. We know that beyond that, where we have been able to secure millions of dollars for people, what has been most dramatic is that people from all across Ontario through word of mouth, have actually found out about the supplement through the campaign. So this year the budget for the Special Diet was increased by 40 million dollars, which I think is largely



FTT: What gains has the campaign made in favor of poor people in Toronto?

JC: Well, of course the major thing is the actual money that has gone into people’s hands as a result of the campaign. But, as I was saying, we have had to actually back that up because any Welfare bureaucracy, even when it is supposed to be providing money is profoundly reluctant to do it. The kind of things that have happened is that the city bureaucracy tried to change the local policy to say that only doctors could provide the supplement, to insist that people must get individualized application forms from the welfare office, before they could go to a doctor. They were looking to review and cut everyone off and require everybody to re-apply. They had an open policy of saying that families with children would be cut off first. All these things were fought, and they were fought by people in the local communities. People were going to local offices with mass delegations, going to the head office on a number of occasions, taking over the mayor’s office, bringing a delegation to the politician in charge of the Community Services Committee. All of these things were happening again, and again and again – it’s been an ongoing war. Not only getting people the diagnosis for

than anything I think that the response is going to come from the communities that are directly affected. So far the community has been at the forefront of this campaign, and it is not going to be any different now.

The indications from that are enormously encouraging. Just before the cut was announced we found out that McGuinty was going to be addressing a Liberal fundraising dinner at the Metro Convention centre. We were able to get 85 people in the room and shut down his speech. There was something almost prophetic about the way he stood there looking like a deer in headlights, blowing his nose and shuffling his hands in and out of his pockets. They didn’t even have the wit to turn off the big screen display of him behaving in this pathetic way. This was the consummate Liberal Party faker, stuck in a political crisis.

The only final point I’d like to make is that the past months has been the most incredible experience, almost a unique experience. The diet provision was somewhat of a fluke, that we were able to access it and utilize it. I understand that something similar exists in Nova Scotia legislation and people there are starting to organize. It was a unique opportunity, because over the last number of years the big organize labor movement has been led by a bureaucracy that has not been willing to carry on a decisive fight. The experience has been by and large we are demanding things not happen that were going to happen anyway. Demanding things that we are not going to get has been the reality of so much of the organizing that we have done. For the first time we were actually able to take pieces of what we wanted to. We were actually able to put money in people’s pockets. We always say “Raise the Rates”, but while we were doing it, we were actually able to be giving people money. It has been a great experience and we don’t want to lose it. It’s been so important so, we are going to fight for it.

FTT: Great, Thanks John, I wish you a great and successful struggle .

Visiting Cuba Through the Eyes of a Young Canadian Activist

Memoir of a trip with Adventure, Education and Politics!



Cuba solidarity activist Sophie Ziner with Cuban Vice-President, Ricardo Alarcon.

OR How I Learned to Love Cuba!

By Sophie Ziner

Last summer, I had the opportunity to travel to Cuba. It came about while we were up to our necks in organizing the rally that Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba held against anti-Cuban terrorist Luis Posada Carrilles.

I was supposed to travel back east for a family gathering, but, being preoccupied with the rally, I missed my plane, and most of my family was very angry with me. But a few days later, I got a call from my great Uncle Irv, who said, “I’ve just heard that you’re interested in Cuba. I go on a trip to Cuba every year, and I was wondering if this year you’d like to join me?” Of course, I said, “YES! I’d love to!”

I first learned about Cuba through the Free the Cuban Five Committee - Courtenay in my hometown on Vancouver Island, and since moving to Vancouver last spring,

doctors per capita than any other country in the world, and has free universal health care and post secondary education. Looking at the example Cuba shows us, resource rich countries like Canada really have no excuse for the constantly diminishing access to social services that are basic human rights, like education and healthcare.

It was with these thoughts in my head that I took a bus down to McAllen, Texas, to meet my Uncle and the group of people we would be traveling with. We were going to Cuba with a group called Pastors for Peace, an organization based in the US, which has worked for many years in solidarity with Cuba to break the US blockade. Pastors for Peace had organized Caravans of busses, which traveled North

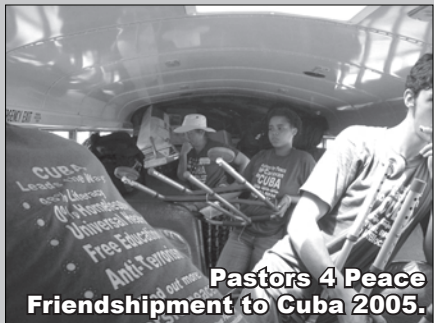
have been organizing with the Free the Cuban Five Committee - Vancouver and Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba. For a young person, and someone who cares about social justice, Cuba is a very inspiring place, with its legendary free universal education program, its universal health care program, the advances in agriculture and the thousands of other gains that we hear about.

Cuba, after throwing off Spanish colonial rule, found itself still crushed by US imperialism in the first part of the 20th century. Through a series of US backed dictators, Cuba was turned into a gangster’s paradise, full of casinos and prostitution. Most of the people of Cuba lived in dire poverty, and with disease and illiteracy.

In 1959 however, a popular revolution in Cuba chased US imperialism out to sea. The revolutionary government immediately nationalized the land and instituted health and education programs, and ever since has continued to fight to build a dignified and humane society in the face of the ruthless aggression of imperialism.

Under the grips of a US imposed blockade for 44 years, the people of Cuba have had to face great restrictions to medicine, food and technology. They have also suffered from terrorist attacks committed by groups funded and backed by the FBI and the CIA.

Yet in spite of this Cuba has more



Pastors 4 Peace Friendship to Cuba 2005.

America collecting humanitarian aid (medical supplies, computer equipment, sports equipment etc) in a symbolic gesture of solidarity to bring to Cuba. One hundred twenty people met in Texas, the aid was sorted, and we embarked on the trip across the border.

Five of the busses were named for each of the Cuban Five, Gerardo Hernandez, Antonio Guerrero, Ramon Labanino, Rene Gonzalez and Fernando Gonzalez, the five Cuban heroes who have been held in US prisons since 1998 for collecting information about terrorist organizations who work out of Miami to routinely attack the Cuban people. The Five had collected the information and turned it in to the FBI. They were immediately arrested and charged with a range of charges, from espionage to conspiracy to commit murder. The Cuban campaign to free the Cuban Five is huge, and because of it, committees for the release of the five have been organized around the world. It was in the spirit of the unrelenting determination of Cuba and of the Five to expose the hypocrisy of US imperialism that we faced US customs. This was the 16th Caravan to Cuba that Pastors for Peace had

REVOLUTIONARY THEN, REVOLUTIONARY NOW!

Interview with Veteran from Revolutionary Army, Pedro Pablo Díaz Rodríguez

By Tamara Hansen

While in Cuba this past summer, I stayed for thirteen wonderful days in Trinidad, a city in the province of Sancti Spiritus. I was on the trip with the Che Guevara Work Brigade and we were staying at a hostel called “La Casa de la Amistad”.

On the day we were going to see the “Museum of the Battle Against Bandits” I became sick. However, I was so excited to meet with veterans from the revolutionary army of Cuba that I went anyways. Afterwards I had to go back to the hostel to rest and didn’t really



Concert in memory of the victims of US terrorism. February 19 2006.

got involved in the revolutionary army in Cuba.

Pedro: My name is Pedro Pablo Díaz Rodríguez. When we were kids, due to the poverty that existed in Cuba, we used to work in the streets just cleaning shoes or taking bags for housewives up to the bus station. After the triumph of the revolution, we joined the youth police, which was created in 1960. Afterwards, we became members of the organization of young rebels. They organized to us in a series of activities where, at the age of 16, we were on duty, we walked around with the arms and looked after different areas in

help the revolution in different points and struggles according to the political situation in the country... So according to the work and their trajectory as soldiers we were promoted to different positions, for example to lieutenant-colonel.

FTT: How did the problem with Bandits arise after the revolution here in Trinidad and nearby in the Escambray Mountains?

Pedro: Here in Trinidad when... we continued the battle against them... We were not involved in the army when this battle began. We joined this struggle when we were asked to do it, because there was already other groups fighting to defend the revolution in the Escambray.

FTT: Please explain for us a bit more about what the battle against bandits was, for those in Canada who might not know.

Pedro: Okay, so the battle against bandits started when a group of counter-revolutionaries went to the Escambray Mountains. They called themselves ‘Freedom Fighters’ or something like that. The battle against bandits was made in order to stop these counter-revolutionaries who wished to keep people in ignorance. But there were many noble people in this area and with the triumph of the Revolution they knew their



Cuban revolutionary, Pedro Pablo Diaz Rodriguez with Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba Co-ordinator, Tamara Hansen.

factors and gains made by the revolution, everyone realized the necessity to defend all of the accomplishments made since the revolution in 1959. That is why it was very important.

Before the revolution there were poor people and poor farmers who had to work the land for a living. They didn’t own the land, because the land was the property of enterprises or of very rich people who lived in the city and had some workers out on their farms in order to maintain their way of life.

So even the guards at that time, they exploited the farmers taking away their foods, and

Another thing is the health system. Before if you didn’t have money you couldn’t go to a clinic. In other times they only had four or five doctors and only two private clinics, so if you money to go to those places you would be left to die, and people did die. Today healthcare is totally free, and we have one family doctor for every 500 people. Which means we have a chance to maintain the health of our population.

Also, we now have the possibility to help other countries, to make internationalism like Che Guevara taught us. We can help many people in the world that don’t have the same access to a proper

have a chance to talk with any of the veterans.

However, despite my disappointment at not getting to talk more with the veterans, a few days later a friend named Hollis and myself discovered that the veterans had a hall where they played dominoes just half a block away from where we were staying. After getting over our nervousness we went inside to chat and say hello. They remembered us from the days before and I took the opportunity to introduce some of the veterans to the Fire This Time Newspaper and explained in very broken Spanish that I wanted to do an interview with them. They thought that was a great idea and so we decided to come back the next day with someone who could translate for us.

Hollis and I returned with our compañero Raul the next day. When we asked who the best person to do an interview would be, everyone pointed to Pedro Pablo Díaz Rodríguez. So that is how this interesting interview on a little known part of the Cuban people’s battle after 1959 to establish their revolution came about.

Pedro Pablo Díaz Rodríguez and the rest of the veterans were very warm and welcoming to us throughout the rest of our stay. They honored us by coming over to chat, to celebrate and to wish us farewell before we left Trinidad. A good representation of truly living, loving and caring revolutionaries.

Fire This Time: First off, please tell me your name and how you

the city.

On April 13th, 1961, during the Bay of Pigs invasion, we were called to participate, but we didn’t go because we had not received enough training. We were preparing to go, but because the battle ended quickly we did not go.

So we were teenagers and we organized a battalion. They designated to us to take care of bridges and according to the capacity they prepared to us there. In my case I trained to become a gunman, and he became a pilot. We continued in the Armed Forces because we agreed with the cause.

So we continued studying in the army, and then we went to the Escambray Mountains to join the battle against bandits. After the battle against bandits we were sent to military school. Good, so we continued to struggle and

rights and their duties and that she [the revolution] was what they had to defend. So we had the chance to join the fight, in order help the farmers and also to help defend the revolution.

All of this happened within the literacy campaign here in Cuba. We also had the responsibility to take care of the young teachers working here in the mountains because the counter-revolutionary bandits wanted to cut off the path of the revolution.

FTT: How did the battle against bandits help consolidate or solidify the revolution both here in Trinidad and in all over Cuba?

Pedro: This happened from a few different points of view. For the farmers and workers, everybody realized the importance of defending and maintaining the revolution. Because of the agrarian reforms and some other

animals. A blatant example was the horses, the horses for the soldiers were brought from Canada.

So I just wanted to give you an example of the necessity to make a revolution, and the reason why it was important to defend that revolution.

FTT: What are some of the gains you have seen in Trinidad and in Cuba, I know it has been a long time, since the defeat of the Bandits and the continuation of the revolution.

Pedro: For example, education. Education is totally free in Cuba. But also before the triumph of the revolution those children and young people that didn’t have the money, they didn’t have the possibility to study. Nowadays, we all have the same possibilities to go to university, according to capacity to study.

health system like we do. So we send doctors over there to help them, and we are able to do that because of the revolution.

Another thing is food and alimentation. Today everyone is able to eat. People can have lunch, breakfast, dinner, like normal and everyone receives food baskets “canastas” the food they need. Before the triumph of the revolution, people didn’t have this, and many people, children, older people died because they didn’t have enough to eat. They didn’t even have one meal a day.

Something else is life. Before 1959 there were many neighborhoods that were not livable. They were built with wood and carton, there was no clean water. The revolution brought houses for all of those people that didn’t have anywhere to live, and not only houses, they were given beds, pillows, clothes, everything needed to have a normal life. Not to be rich, but just to have a normal way of life. Another things is the development of culture and sports today they are for everyone.

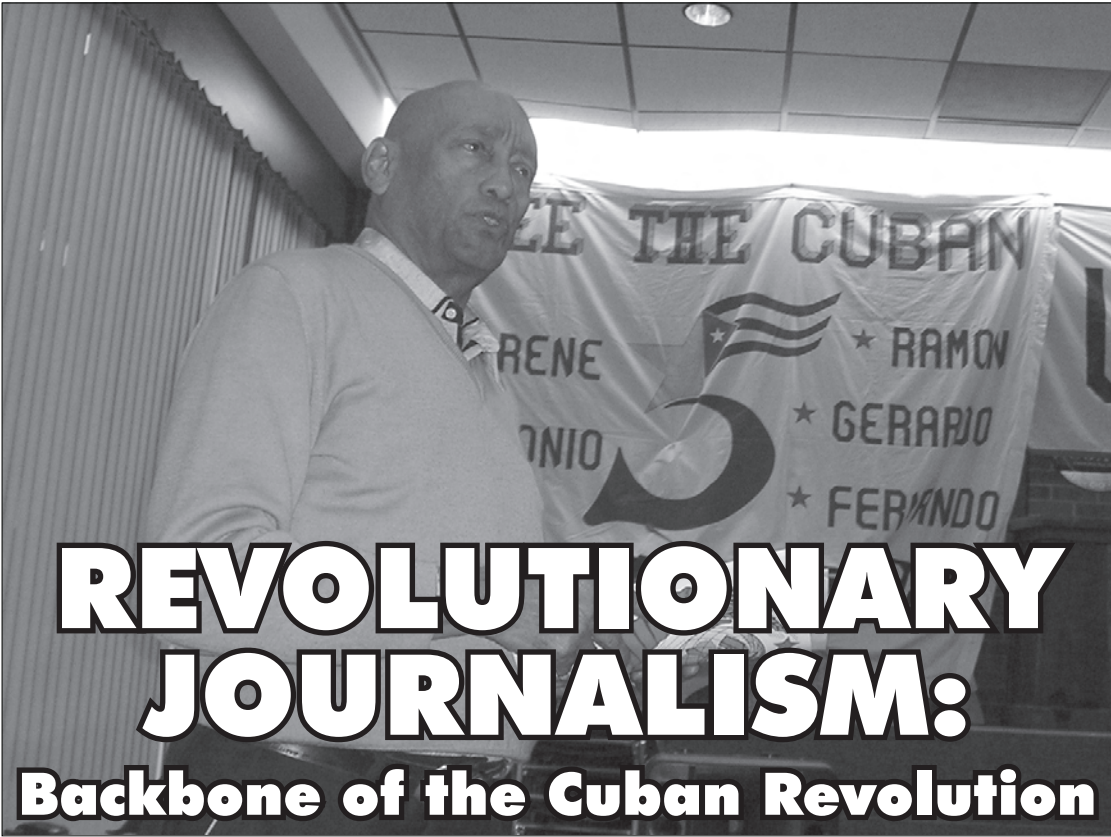
FTT: Thank you very much. I am very happy to be here in Cuba and be able to hear your important stories.

Pedro: We are also very happy to have you here. All people who are helping us abroad we are like sisters and brothers and we must help each other. Today we are also fighting for the return of our five heroes from the United States.

FTT: Yes, that is a very important fight. We must fight for their return together.



Pedro Pablo Diaz Rodriguez (second from left), with other veterans from the Battle against Bandits.



REVOLUTIONARY JOURNALISM: Backbone of the Cuban Revolution

A Short Interview with Gabriel Molina, Editor of Granma International

By Ivan Drury

Gabriel Molina Franchossi is the editor of Granma International, the weekly edition of the daily newspaper of the Cuban revolution. In this interview, Molina explains the important, central role of revolutionary journalism in the Cuban

To subscribe to the print edition in English, Spanish, French or Portuguese, send your name and address with the equivalent of \$40.00 USD (for 52 weeks) by postal or electronic bank transfer to:

Ediciones Cubanas, Apartado 6260, C.P. 10699, Ciudad de La Habana, Cuba

were fighting. And what our program was, what we were trying to do.

So with the victory of the revolution on the first January of 1959, my role was much bigger, in the sense that we were a core of two groups and it was more and more and more that it was becoming the role and the goals of the whole people. So I have always worked on the newspaper, trying to tell our story.

Since the beginning we

revolution. Molina's life has been dedicated to his role as a journalist in the Cuban revolution, as he puts it here, explaining "what we were trying to do" and "what socialism is" while under constant attack by hostile "neighbours".

We encourage our readers to regularly check the Granma International website at www.granma.cu and subscribe to the print edition. Granma has consistently provided clear news and analysis for

It was a pleasure and an honour for Fire This Time to have the opportunity to meet, talk with and interview Gabriel Molina. We hope that this interview is helpful in giving a picture of the early days of the Cuban revolution, and the role of revolutionary journalism in Cuba – and today in Canada. ~ Fire This Time

Fire This Time: How do you see your role in the Cuban revolution?

had the hostility of our neighbours in their nerves. So my role, and the role of the journalists and the people who work in the media – on the one hand was to explain to the people, what socialism is. We were taking a message, nationalizing education to make it more expressive of our culture, our history and our goals in society.

There was at that first moment, a great class struggle, when the revolution did the first reforms, the agrarian reforms, the

must be strangled, and the revolutionary government must be overthrown. So we had to explain what socialism is and why we were taking those measures and doing those reforms and answer the lies and the aggressions that came from outside and inside had some adherents.

In all these years these things have not changed. We have not been allowed to make our revolution in an easy way. They have always made all kinds of aggression, military, terrorism, economic, diplomatic, subversion, and financial aggressions. And all this time my role and the role of the people in the media is to explain to the people why they have this kind of hostility against us and what we are doing to improve our goals and trying to win friends in the world. That's why, for more than 20 years, I have worked with Granma International, because in the international field, we need the support of our friends. We need to explain to our friends how things are going, how we are working. And we try to explain what our fears are, to our friends who we must depend on every day.

FTT: When did you begin working as a revolutionary journalist?

GM: I even worked as a journalist before. I was a journalism student before.

July 26 Movement?

GM: Yes, we created the University student federation that was very strongly designed against the dictatorship of General Batista. We were making rallies, statements, and as the fight increased, our organization of students formed the "Directorate Revolutionary". That was an historic name that came from other chapters of the revolution in the 1930s when there was another Revolutionary Directorate born from the University.

So we created that. And we were working for the leftists, especially in Havana. And then we made an alliance with Fidel and the July 26 Movement. Our president, Jose Antonio Silvania, went to Mexico where Fidel was and they signed an agreement to work together in the armed struggle and to work in everything together.

So when Fidel came to Cuba in the Granma there was a commitment to make things happen in Havana. We had been making demonstrations in Havana up until then. And then the Directorate made the attack on the Presidential Palace to hunt the killer in his own palace.

But our warriors arrived inside on the third floor and Batista went to the fourth floor. So, and later,

“We were taking a message, nationalizing education to make it more expressive of our culture, our history and our goals in society.”



Cubans rally in front of the US interests section in Havana. January 24 2006.

people in Cuba throughout the revolutionary process, and it is no less valuable for working, poor and oppressed people around the world.

Gabriel Molina: My role in the Cuban revolution, since the beginning, and even before the beginning, even when we were fighting against Batista, my role was to inform the people why we

enemies reacted – the main enemy was our neighbour. In March of 1959 there was the agrarian reform and in Washington they decided that the revolution

I am a revolutionary journalist and a professional journalist. I finished my studies in 1955. I was working in the most rightist newspaper. But I was not working full time. I was working when someone was sick or on vacation. When someone had other things to do, I worked for them in the daily and they paid me half the salary.

I was working with a revolutionary newspaper at the same time in the university studying law also and making newspaper, underground, and programs and leaflets and so on.

FTT: Did you have a relationship with the

the Secretary General of the Directorate, Jose Antonia Silvania, was killed in the streets of Havana. A month later, the Vice President who became president was also killed in the streets of Havana.

And we continued the struggle.

At the end we created another Guerilla Foco in the centre of the country, and when Che Guevara came we started to fight together. He became the first general and everything for us.

FTT: Thank you very much Gabriel.





An important Step Forward for Vancouver Cuba Solidarity Work

By Tamara Hansen

Early in the new year, after celebrating the 47th anniversary of the victorious Cuban revolution with our friends, supporters, co-fighters and companeros Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) was sent an invitation from Victoria Goods for Cuba (G4C) and Pastors for Peace (P4P) to organize some speaking events in Vancouver.

This invitation was a great honor for us as Pastors for Peace is the largest and most well-known group traveling from the United States and Canada to deliver humanitarian aid to the Cuban people. P4P has been organizing caravans to Cuba since 1992 despite the U.S. governments opposition, calling international attention to the cruel and immoral U.S. Blockade of Cuba.

After meeting with Pastors for Peace and

JOHN WALLER SPEAKING TOUR

leg of the tour went from Langara College, to Capilano College and then onto University of British Columbia. The second part of the tour was a successful city-wide forum at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver on Saturday February 18th.

All of the events were co-organized by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with



Blockade against Cuba. The 3 different speakers at the three different campuses all explained how the blockade has impacted the Cuban people’s ability to get medicine, school supplies and even ping-pong balls.

The student speakers also discussed how the United States uses the false accusation that Cuba is a violator of human rights as a reason to continue the blockade against Cuba, when the fact is that despite the blockade Cuba has made enormous strides forward for its people since the Cuba revolution.

John Waller would then follow their talks with more about the work of Pastors for Peace in defying the U.S. blockade against Cuba. John gave important updates about the United States increasing the blockade against Cuba in the last few years. He also explained more about the gains that have been made in Cuba since the revolution in 1959, such as access for

all Cubans to free healthcare and education. He also let everyone know that P4P is looking for more participants from Canada to go on the Caravan this summer and encouraged everyone to get onto the caravan, or to at least come out for the boarder crossing between Canada and the United States on June 18th.

The tour brought out over 250 young people, students, people from Latin America and other third world countries, women and workers to learn more about Cuba. It also got over 50 signed-up to get more information on how to get involved in the Caravan and Cuba solidarity work in Vancouver.

The tour brought up many questions about how popular democracy works in Cuba, the case of the five Cuban heroes being held in U.S. jails, the battle of ideas presented

The tour was a great chance to bring Cuba solidarity to campuses. Both by discussing the United States attacks and aggression against Cuba and discussing the gains of the Cuban revolution, we opened a larger discussion and dialogue about politics and issues facing the world today. This gave us a chance to further discuss politics as students, workers and oppressed people and to take a side on an important human issue.

Why should students and oppressed people take a side and support Cuba?

Today students, workers and other oppressed people across Canada are fighting for access to post-secondary education, access to better jobs, and to stop the privatization of healthcare. These are campaign the people of Cuba and the Cuban government are fighting as well. Today, post-secondary education in Cuba is free to all people, what is more is that Cuba is opening

spaces for poor people from other countries, including the United States, to come and study for free at their Latin American School of Medicine. Today, Cuba’s unemployment rate is only 2%. Today, healthcare in Cuba is absolutely free, as is medication, however because of the blockade it is a continuing struggle to provide quality care and services for the people of Cuba.

John Waller’s speaking tour gave people in Vancouver a chance to get involved, either by participating in this summer’s caravan to Cuba or by coming out to support Pastors for Peace, Victoria Goods for Cuba, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) and the Caravanistas this year at the boarder crossing on June 18th. In supporting the gains made by the Cuban



Victoria Goods for Cuba; contacting the Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver; and talking to some hard-working campus social justice groups, “*The U.S. Blockade on Cuba: Violation of Cuba’s Human Rights*” speaking tour was born.

Featuring John Waller, the coordinator of the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba who is also a Cuba Solidarity activist from Britain, the tour began on Wednesday February 15th. The campus

Cuba (VCSC), Pastors for Peace (P4P), and the Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, along with various other Students’ Unions and campus groups.

With the broad title, “*The U.S. Blockade on Cuba: Violation of Cuba’s Human Rights*” the speaking tour was able to tackle many different important issues around Cuba.

The student speakers at each of the campuses opened their talks with an outline of the U.S.

by Fidel Castro in 2000, and how Cuba’s doctors are treating patients for free in third-world countries including over one thousand right now in Pakistan.

These questions and comments laid a base for continued Cuba solidarity organizing on campuses and across Vancouver, as people’s interest was peaked and there wasn’t enough time to discuss all of the important issues at hand.

revolution we educate ourselves about the alternative Cuba represents as a country that is truly fighting for the rights of its people.

For further information on Pastors for Peace please visit: www.pastorsforpeace.org

For further information on Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) please visit: www.vancubasolidarity.com

A JOURNAL OF JOHN WALLER TOUR

Monday Feb 13

1) At Noon the Free the Cuban Five Committee – Vancouver held a picket at the U.S. consulate to protest on the first day back in court for the Five Cuban Heroes. The event had over 50 people in attendance as well as media. John W. was a guest speaker and his photo and a short article were featured in the 24Hours daily news paper on Tuesday Feb 14th.

Tuesday Feb 14

1) A day of preparation. Talks were written, press releases were sent out about the tour and e-mail reminders were sent out to get everyone who was interested out for a weeks worth of events.

Wednesday Feb 15

1) The first campus stop was at Langara College. John spoke with Kira Koshelanyk an executive member of the Langara Students’ Union and an organizer with Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC).

2) After the successful event at Langara John did an interview with a local Spanish language newspaper, La Vanguardia.

Thursday Feb 16

1) Early morning interview with Ramon Flores on his radio show ‘El Bus de las Siete’ in Spanish and in English.

2) Interview with a reporter from the Capilano College Courier student newspaper.

3) At 12:30 the Capilano College event began. Over 60 students showed up for the event. John spoke along with Lindsay Clarke the Social Justice Committee Coordinator for the Capilano Students Union and organizer with Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC).

Saturday Feb 18

1) On Saturday morning John had his second bi-lingual interview with Ronaldo Chavez for the English Spanish radio show “America Latina el Dia”

2) On Saturday evening the event at the Unitarian church was a great success, with over 150 coming to the event, we showed the film bloqueo and had three short solidarity speakers : Tamara Hansen from Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, Sophie Ziner an organizer with the Free the Cuban Five Committee – Vancouver who went on the P4P caravan last summer and Nelson Munoz the coordinator of the Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Church and John Waller.

Sunday Feb 19

1) John attends the World Community Film Festival in Nanimo to introduce the film “Bloqueo” about the 2001 P4P Caravan to Cuba.

2) A dinner with John and Cuban solidarity activists in Vancouver who has stated their interest in getting involved in coming on the caravan this summer. John answers questions about the caravan and

John Waller speaking at Capilano College.

hands out application forms to those who are interested.

Tuesday Feb 21

1) Over 30 students come out for John’s speaking event at the University of British Columbia. John spoke along with Nita Palmer an organizer with the Free the Cuban Five Committee- Vancouver and the Free the Cuban Five Committee at UBC.

Subscribe to Fire This Time!

NAME

ADDRESS

EMAIL

PHONE

For a one year subscription, make cheques payable to “Brennan Luchsinger” or “Shannon Bundock”

Canada	\$15
USA	\$20
International	\$30

Cut form and mail to:

Fire This Time
PO Box 21607
Vancouver, BC
V5L 5G3
Canada

Free the 5 Cuban Heroes Held in U.S. Jails!

By Noah Fine

On August 9th 2005, after 5 appeals from the lawyers of the 5 Cuban Heroes, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta released their decision to grant, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González, a re-trial with a change of venue. This was an incredible victory for the 5 Heroes and was a day celebrated internationally with a great future outlook for their case.

Unfortunately this celebration did not last long. Shortly after 3 judges unanimously came to their conclusion for a re-trial and change of venue for the 5, the government of the United States intervened overturning the victorious decision of the court. Only to be pushed back again to the appeals court by the U.S. demanding that all 12 judges of the 11th Circuit Court review the decision.

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio

Guerrero, Fernando González and René González, are 5 Cuban men who were sent to Florida to investigate and infiltrate right-wing terrorist groups in Miami. Groups like “Brothers to the Rescue” and “Comandos F4” that have been organizers of a half-century of anti-Cuba terrorism based in Miami. Terrorism that includes hotel bombings, live stock contamination, poisoning of water reserves, numerous assassination attempts against Cuban President Fidel Castro, and the 1976 bombing of an Air Cubana tourist flight



that killed all 73 people on board. The 5 Cuban Heroes were risking their lives in Miami to bring an end to this terrorism. They were put in jail after submitting evidence they had collected condemning these right-wing terrorist groups. This however, is not where the hypocrisy of the United States relationship with Cuba begins and is certainly not where it ends.

Luis Posada Carriles former CIA operative and the man well known to the people of Cuba for his participation in the 1976 Cuban airline bombing is being protected by the Bush administration. Hundreds of other anti-Cuban terrorists walk freely in Miami with support and funding from the CIA, while the 5 Cuban Heroes who actually prevented numerous acts of terror against Cuba have been in jail for almost 8 years.

Convicted in June 2001 by a Miami district court, including charges of conspiracy to commit espionage and conspiracy to commit murder, the U.S. has not released any proof

or documentation proving the 5 guilty of any crime. The U.S. has held the 5 Heroes unjustly since 1998 only on the hunch of ‘conspiracy’.

On February 13th 2006, the new battle for the 5 Heroes and their attorneys began in arguments defending the earlier decision by the 11th Circuit Court that stated a “community prejudice” against Cuba that hangs over Miami is enough to grant the Cuban 5 a re-trial and change of venue.

This also means a new battle for more than 150 Free the Cuban 5 Committees around the world who have stepped up campaigning and action united with the people of Cuba to demand: End the Criminal Attacks on Cuba! Free the Cuban 5 Now!

For more Information:

www.freethethefive.org

<http://www.ca11.uscourts.gov/enbanc/eb01-17176order.pdf>



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 www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca

VANCOUVER CONTINUES THE STRUGGLE TO FREE THE CUBAN 5 HELD IN U.S. JAILS

By Noah Fine

The faces of Cuba’s five compatriots and fighters against terrorism are noticeable everywhere you can look in Cuba. Billboards, radio, news, T.V., and even taxi cabs display their faces. The five Heroes are no strangers to anyone in Cuba. Unfortunately, this case is different in Canada, and most importantly in the U.S., due to the near blackout by the media. In Vancouver education and action of the progressive community around the case of the Cuban five is our main responsibility to advance in order to break the media silence. The Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver has taken up this call along side this growing international movement.

January 9th Action

On January 9th 2006, the Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver called and organized its first protest picket action of the year, demonstrating at the U.S. Consulate downtown Vancouver. With over 25 people gathered in front of

the U.S. Consulate, they started chanting “Free, Free, Free - Free the Cuban 5!” and “George Bush you will see, the Cuban Five will be free!” The demonstration of solidarity with Cuba and the Cuban 5 was filled with energy as we heard from many different speakers who spoke about the struggle of the five Heroes and U.S. attacks against Cuba. The protest action attracted many different communities of people from Latin America to Indigenous people in Canada. The Free the

Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver announced on that day that they would return to the U.S. Consulate every month with greater numbers of support until the five Cuban prisoners of U.S. empire are free.

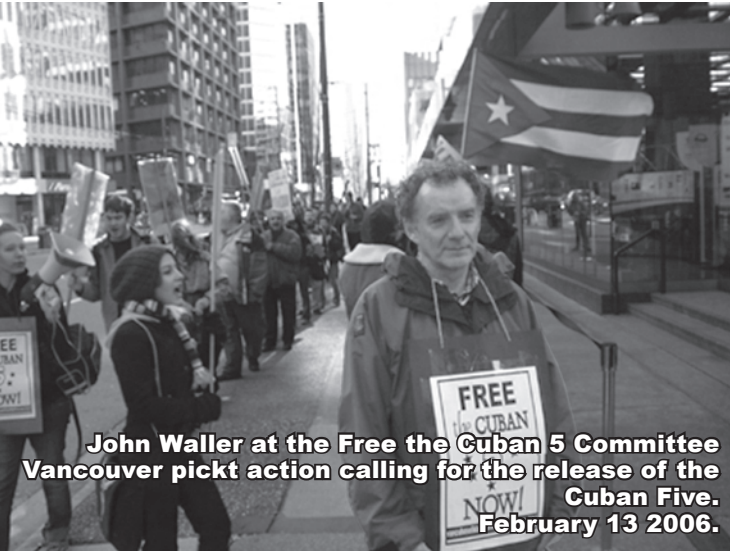
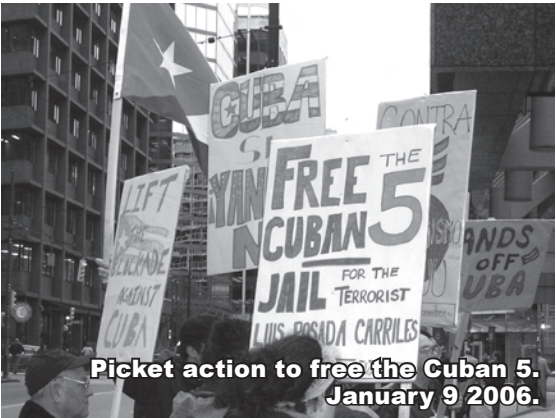
February 13th Action

February 13th, 2006 was the first day the Cuban 5 were back in court to argue for their right to a re-trial and change of venue. A decision was made in August 2005 by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta. That was

overturned by an undemocratic U.S. block of this victory. This day internationally became a day of protests to call for release of the five Heroes, and to give them support on their first day back in court. It was also a call for action in Vancouver to once again protest for the Five’s freedom at the U.S. Consulate.

The number of participants doubled for this picket, with over 50 people gathering outside the consulate to be greeted by John Waller, coordinator of the Pastors for Peace Friendship Caravan to Cuba. The size of the event was enough to attract numerous media, most notably from the Metro Daily newspaper that distributes over 40,000 copies a day. The Metro featured an article on the picket including an interview with John Waller. The Free the Cuban 5

Committee came prepared that day to deliver a letter to the U.S. government outlining the bias and criminality of the case, and demanding freedom for Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González, known internationally as the



FINAL VICTORY IN THE CASE OF THE LANGARA 2:

A VICTORY FOR THE DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS OF ALL ANTI-WAR ACTIVISTS!

By Kira Koshelanyk

The Case of the Langara 2

The September 2004 Student Week Against War & Occupation organized by Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO), student groups, and student unions on each campus in the Lower Mainland drew out thousands of students during the consecutive days of coordinated antiwar activities. During this period, the Peace & Social Issues (PSI) Committee of the Langara Students' Union (LSU) was especially effective in mobilizing students to participate in the debates and activities. This radicalization and political energy on campus was not welcomed by some political tendencies reflected in the LSU executive at the time, resulting in an increasing campaign of harassment and intimidation, culminating in a PSI meeting held where student activists Kira Daley and Nicole Burton and the Peace & Social Issues Committee were harassed and verbally assaulted by an LSU staff member [for more information on the case of the Langara 2 see FTT # 20/21 December 2004/January 2005].

The Assault Begins

On October 25 2004, the Langara Students' Union Executive took measures to attempt to shut down



arranged by members of the LSU executive at that time. Finally, the executive, under pressure of the staff member, passed a motion to ban Daley and Burton from student union property, to

money from the students' union to MAWO", a baseless lie. What followed was a four months long intense defense campaign, organized by Daley, Burton and the Langara 2 Defense Committee.

the passing of a motion lifting the ban on MAWO, especially with the student union's financial audit report for 2004/2005 showing no proof of any misappropriation of funds.

What Does This Mean? Organize, Educate, Mobilize!

The LSU's December 5 decision marked vanquishing of the final front of the previous LSU's attack. The right of Langara students to organize on issues of social justice, against war and occupation – the greatest threat to humanity today – was fought for and won back. And on a larger scale, the entire struggle represented a fight to re-establish and maintain basic rights of students to organize freely and effectively.

The whole case and struggle of the Langara 2 was really not isolated to the LSU or Langara College but rather symbolizes a larger struggle in society today within the perspective of changing the world for the better.

Historically, oppressed people have used successful struggles for democratic and human rights as a platform from which to fight for the next stage and win greater gains. Women in Canada were put in a better position to fight for liberation after winning the right to vote, just as the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision as a victory for women's right to abortion in

organized, and because of the ever tightening restrictions the US administration has been placing on Cuba, we knew to expect resistance at the border from US customs officials.

When the first of six busses attempted to cross the border, it was stopped and towed, and Customs agents began unloading everything and confiscating everything that was computer related. The rest of the busses pulled back, and we began carrying the aid from the first bus by hand, with the hot midday sun on our necks, over the border to Reynosa, Mexico.

Once we returned over the border, it was decided that we would pull the rest of the aid off of the remaining busses, remove out the computer equipment, put it all on one bus, which would stay behind, and reload the rest of the busses back up and attempt to cross again.

We worked in the dusty field behind the "Whattabuger", lifting boxes of medical equipment, school supplies, bikes, all sorts of things that people had donated as the caravan made its way through Canada and the US



for the several weeks before. It took us until 3a.m. to unload and reload all 180 tons of goods onto the busses, but when we were finished, we got back on them and were able to cross the

this growing politicization on campus. Instead of addressing the young women's complaint of harassment, the LSU attacked them at the LSU Executive Committee meeting that night. Six presenters representing political tendencies hostile to Daley, Burton, and the antiwar, anti-occupation coalition they work with, MAWO, gave false testimonies and presentations against them in a kangaroo court

dissolve the Peace & Social Issues Committee and to ban MAWO and any groups that work with MAWO, a clear attempt to quash the mounting antiwar energy on campus.

The LSU then stepped up their slander by releasing public statements to media and other student unions accusing Daley, Burton and MAWO of "misappropriation of funds" stating that they'd "funneled

The campaign took the form of public forums and discussions on the case and students rights as well as a petition and letter writing campaign demanding the ban be lifted and that the harassment complaint be investigated. The campaign collected more than 500 signatures from Langara students and over 130 letters of support from the individuals and groups in Vancouver and across Canada. In February 2005, Daley and Burton ran, as they were still members of the students' union, in the LSU executive committee elections.

Fight-Back Was Vital to Reverse the Course

The Langara 2 Campaign won several gains and partial victories along the way. The first and initial crack in the attack by the LSU was when the Langara Students' Union Executive, under mounting pressure of the defense campaign and the fury and tension of the elections, riddled with fraud and irregularities, passed a motion on the evening of February 21, 2005 to lift the ban on Burton and Daley. The second round of elections campaigning proceeded, and after the second round of polling Kira Daley was elected as a University Transfer Representative to the same executive committee that had banned and attacked both students for the previous four months. The next victory came in the April 2005 chartering of a new antiwar club by a presentation brought by Daley to the executive committee to establish a new student antiwar group for students on campus. And on December 5, 2005 the entire battle, over one year long, was finally won with the last aspect of the LSU's attack reversed with

US was a blow against women's oppression based on women gaining ultimate control over their bodies and lives, free from outside interference.

The attack on progressive antiwar, anti occupation movement building had the motivation and potential to put down and suppress student organizing on campus. However, this attack was put in a positive framework by the Langara 2 defense campaign, which was based on expanding awareness of students about their basic democratic and human rights, like the right of free speech, the right to organize. Also this case was made positive by showing that by mounting a fight-back campaign and mobilizing support for this fight, we, as oppressed people are able to win! In this way, the experience of the Langara 2 campaign was very positive as a measure of building confidence among students about what we can achieve when we organize.

The case of the Langara 2 is not the final battle in this fight for democratic and human rights, and certainly not in the overall fight for a more just world. However, it is an important example from which we need to take inspiration and lessons. The Langara 2 showed that rights we have now came by fighting, and we will only maintain and preserve them by fighting to keep them. The fight to maintain these rights for all youth, students, women, working, poor and oppressed people is vital to being able to advance our position collectively and ultimately change the world in our favour, in the favour of the majority.

border. The bus filled with the computer equipment was left behind with a small group of organizers who would remain with it, campaigning to have the computers that were confiscated released, and to be allowed to take all the computers across the border.

After meeting up with the 30 people from Mexico who would join us in Cuba, we set off the next morning and traveled from Reynosa to Tampico, in the south east, the busses were loaded onto a barge, and we boarded our Air Cubana flight and took off into a bright blue sky, to Cuba.

I sat in my seat on that airplane and could hardly sit still I was so excited. Cuba to me was a place where, in the face of ever growing attacks on humanity all over the world from the forces of imperialism, a struggle for justice, for genuine gains for regular people was still being fought fiercely. To me Cuba was a place where you could "Imagine all the people, living life in peace..." just like John Lennon sang.

The clouds broke beneath us, and all of a sudden, we could see the island, edges crisp in a blue gray sea, perfect and green. As we began our decent into Havana, my heart beat faster-would Cuba live up to my expectations, to the hopes and dreams it represented to me and to so many people around the world?

To be continued...



PROTESTING CANADA'S NEW WAR DRIVE:



MAWO Emergency picket action.
March 6 2006.

MAWO Picket Actions Against Canadian Occupation of Afghanistan!

Canadian forces in Afghanistan, Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) issued a call to action. Within 48 hours of the January 15 attack, and within 8 hours of the March 3 attack, MAWO organized a press conference and rapid response protest outside the Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment Center in downtown Vancouver. These and the picket on Monday March 6 were within the series of on-going picket actions MAWO has organized whenever there have been major attacks and casualties of Canadian forces in Afghanistan. In the days of crisis for the Canadian occupation that followed, the March 3rd attack, coverage of MAWO's emergency picket played constantly on CKNW news radio in Vancouver, and on CBC AM radio across Canada. Coverage of the pickets was also seen on City TV evening news on two separate occasions and in the Metro-Vancouver and 24hrs newspapers.

This on-going presence outside the recruitment center and MAWO's consistent presence on the streets has been established as a major and reliable force of opposition for people in Vancouver and for Vancouver media, whose coverage broadcasts the antiwar message further and more effectively.

2nd Anniversary of the US/France/Canada invasion of Haiti: MAWO Hits the Streets Again!

By Alison Bodine

In a rally held in the rain on Sunday, February 26th, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) took to it to downtown Vancouver to demand "US Out of Iraq!", "Canada Out of Afghanistan!", and "Independent Public Inquiry into the Canadian War Drive in Afghanistan!". The voices of hundreds of people watching, participating in, and passing by the rally filled the frozen air with anger, frustration and hope for an end to the death, destruction and plunder delivered by war

people of Canada, especially students and young people, Shaun Evans of Langara Students United Against War and Occupation spoke strongly against war and occupation.

The next two speakers reminded the crowd of the growing war against people in Latin and South America. Jane Juanova of Free the Cuban Five Committee-Vancouver spoke passionately about the case of the Cuban Five, five Cubans unjustifiably held in US jails for defending their country against imperialist attack. Raul Gatica of Consejo Indigena Popular de Oaxaca-

this year.

Ali Yerevani, editor of Fire This Time Newspaper, reminded everyone of the lies told before the invasion of Iraq in 2003, adding a stern warning that the people of the world cannot continue believing the words of imperialists, but must fight for unity against the expanding war drive. Yerevani also opened up the important question of increased attacks on Iran and the devastating effects such attacks would have on people throughout the world.

By Kira Koschelanyk

On January 15, 2006, a suicide bombing attack on a Canadian military convoy in Afghanistan killed Government of Canada diplomat Glynn Berry, the head of Canada's political mission in occupied Afghanistan. This was one of the most significant attacks against Canadian occupying forces in a series of escalating attacks since the July 2005 announcement of Canada's increasing war drive in Afghanistan.

February 28th marked both the completion of the 2,300 Canadian troop deployment to combat in Kandahar and the handing over of command of the NATO occupation forces in southern Afghanistan to Canadian Brigadier-General David Fraser. Within 48 hours, the depth of the crisis of the occupation in Afghanistan was revealed in an explosive series of events.

On the morning of Thursday March 2nd, Canadian Cpl. Paul James Davis of Bridgewater Nova Scotia was killed when his military vehicle flipped over during a "routine patrol" in Kandahar

Afghanistan. Seven others were injured in the crash. Twenty-four hours after Paul Davis' vehicle "flipped over" in Kandahar, five Canadian soldiers were injured when, according to an Afghan general, "a car full of explosives blew up near a Canadian armored vehicle", just 15 km outside of the city of Kandahar.

The next 24 hours brought another attack. On Saturday March 4th, in a village 70 km north of Kandahar, an attack by axe critically wounded Canadian Lieutenant Trevor Greene of Vancouver.

The next day, Sunday March 6th, Canadian Master Corporal Timothy Wilson succumbed to injuries from the same March 2nd "vehicle flipped over" incident that killed Paul Davis. Wilson died in a US military hospital in Germany.

In response to these attacks on

These rapid response protest pickets have been an important part of maintaining a consistent response and presence of the antiwar movement against Canada's war drive in Afghanistan. Together with other consistent educational and protest actions, these pickets have been building the base for a strong and effective political antiwar movement in Canada against war and occupation by the US, Canada and all imperialist countries.

MAWO will continue to organize protest pickets and demonstrations against Canada's war drive in Afghanistan, and will continue to press the call for an Independent Public Inquiry into the Canadian occupation. For further information please visit our website: www.mawovancouver.org.

CANADA OUT OF
AFGHANISTAN!

BRING THE TROOPS HOME
NOW!

INDEPENDENT PUBLIC INQUIRY
NOW!



MAWO demonstration on the anniversary of
the US/Canada/France invasion of Haiti.
February 26 2006.

and occupation to people throughout the world.

February was an important month for Canada in the Era of War and Occupation. Two thousand Canadian troops set foot in the southern region of Afghanistan, bringing the total number of Canadian troops there to 2300. At the same time, Canadian Brigadier-General David Fraser took lead of the ISAF and NATO forces for the entire region of Kandahar. On top of this, February 29th also marked the second anniversary of the US/France/Canada invasion of Haiti, the first light of Canadian Imperialism's expansion into Latin America. MAWO responded with a powerful rally and public action demanding self-determination of all oppressed nations and an end to war and occupation.

The rally was opened by Aaron Mercredi, a Metis youth activist with Mobilization Against War and Occupation and Redwire Native Youth Media. Mercredi acknowledged the Coast Salish territory on which the demonstration was held, and spoke about Canada's history of genocide and colonialism against Indigenous people that continues through increased attacks today.

Emphasizing that Canada's imperialism at home and abroad does nothing for the

Ricardo Flores Magon (CIPO-RFM) spoke about the ties between the 2004 invasion and coup in Haiti, Cuba, Venezuela and Mexico.

The last half of the rally was a strong and clear message against imperialist attack in the Middle East. Starting with Mohammad Shafiq of the Zawiya Foundation, who shared his perspective as a Muslim living in Vancouver. Next was Asif Ali Shah, an organizer with MAWO and United Muslim Alliance. Shah spoke against the path of death and destruction caused by imperialism in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine, and against the Islamophobic and racist cartoons published earlier

Michael Van Fleet, the Aboriginal Liaison for the Kwantlen Students' Association, closed off the day by reading the resolution. Scarcely a curious person walking by could avoid the cheering for the resolution, which declared continued unity and action against war and occupation. Nor could they ignore the background colorfully quilted with banners demanding "Stop the Canadian War Drive!", "Canada Out of Afghanistan!", "Independent Public Inquiry into the Canadian War Drive in Afghanistan", and "Canada Out of Haiti!".



MAWO Emergency picket action.
March 6 2006.

Vancouver Holds United Rally Against Racist Cartoons and Islamophobia

By Nicole Burton

In January and February 2006, many Western newspapers from across Europe and North America published a series of hateful and racist cartoons against Muslim people, depicting Muslims as terrorists and insulting the Muslim prophet Mohammed. This controversy triggered hundreds of protest around the globe against this blatant racist, insulting, humiliating and vicious act.

On February 18th at the Vancouver Art Gallery, a rally was held to protest these cartoons, and was attended by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, including students, youth, families, immigrants and refugees, women, indigenous people, members of different religious communities, and by supporters of the anti-war movement. Organized by a number of Muslim community organizations and the Vancouver anti-war coalition Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), a diverse group of more than 400 people rallied to unite in their opposition to this attack on Muslims around the world.

Included in the program of speakers for the day was a long line of important leaders from BC's Muslim Community, including Brother Osama Al-Atar, a Muslim student from Simon Fraser University;

throughout the Muslim and non-Muslim world

Speaking from the stage, Ivan Drury asked, "So, why are we protesting a couple of cartoons? Why are there

“
For the world's 1.6 billion Muslims, life is already characterized by increasing attacks upon their lives by the U.S., Canada, Britain, France, Denmark and other world powers.
”

protests all over the world right now, over a bunch of comics?" "For the world's 1.6 billion Muslims, life is already characterized by increasing attacks upon their lives

Dr. Aziz Khakhi, chairperson of the Committee for Racial Justice; Imam Hijazi from the Shia Mosque in Richmond, Ivan Drury of Mobilization Against War and Occupation and Imam Fohd of the Zawiya Foundation. The event was co-MC'd by Mohammed Shafiq and also Shannon Bundock of Mobilization Against War and Occupation.

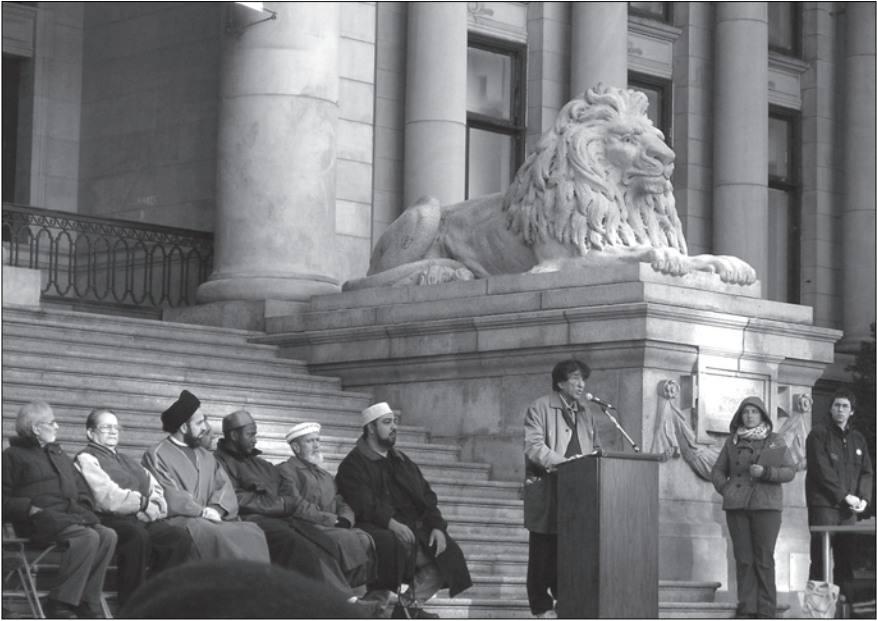
"We are protesting because we are hurt," said Dr. Aziz Khakhi. "We have been insulted. Our dignity has been lowered down. Freedom of the press does not include the right to insult religious sentiments."

The rally was just one in hundreds that occurred around the world in the beginning of 2006, including widespread rallies in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and

by the U.S., Canada, Britain, France, Denmark and other world powers. Imperialist countries now occupy Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine in the Middle East. Threat of invasion against Iran and Syria escalates every day. Whether the attacks are tanks, bombs, and soldiers, or racist anti-immigrant legislation, they are attempts by imperialist countries to crush and divide Muslim people, amongst themselves and amongst the rest of the world's population. The racist cartoons are only one element in the larger campaign to step on and humiliate Muslim people—including their beliefs and culture—in order to control them."

"I am not Muslim. So why am I here?" continued Ivan Drury, of Mobilization Against War and Occupation. "Well, I am here because in this era of war and occupation, this racist attack is attempting to drive a wedge between oppressed people. We must unite with our Muslim brothers and sisters and stand against these cartoons and the forces behind them, as forces of division, forces of humiliation, degradation of dignity, and racist, hateful propaganda."

The rally on February 18th, organized, supported and attended by Muslims and non-Muslims together, marked an important step in beginning to break down those divisions amongst oppressed people. For building a strong movement against war and occupation around the world, that is now needed more united and therefore stronger, and more effective in the struggle to defeat war, occupation, and all attacks on oppressed Muslim or non-Muslim people.



FREE THE CUBAN FIVE
HELD IN US JAILS!

¡Libertad Los Cinco Cubanos Presos en Los E.U.!

PICKET ACTION!
¡Acción de Protesta!

Monday
March 27
12pm - 1pm
U.S Consulate

(1075 West Pender @ Thurlow St.)



Organized By:
Free the Cuban Five Committee - Vancouver
<http://www.vancubasolidarity.com/freethefivevan.html>
cuban5_van@yahoo.com | 604-719-6947



Women Say No to War and Occupation

By Nita Palmer

Commercial Drive was filled with the sound of chanting and singing on Saturday, March 4th, as about 350 people participated in a march and rally in celebration of International Women's Day. Men and women alike marched down the street, chanting "Women say no to war!" and "Women united will never be defeated!"

The theme of this year's International Women's Day in Vancouver was "Women Stand in Solidarity Against War at Home and Abroad". The theme was an important one at a time where women all across the world are facing increasing attacks on their lives, their dignity, and their basic human rights. The rally reflected the struggle that women face every day, whether because of cuts to women's centres here in BC, or because of a military occupation of their country.

The rally was opened with Coast Salish elders welcoming rally participants to the traditional Coast Salish territory. Two keynote speakers spoke about attacks on women in Canada and around the world. Terri Brown, an Indigenous activist and past president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, spoke about the increasing attacks women in Canada have faced over recent years. She outlined the terrible effect of the BC government's cuts to women's centres and to social service sectors, such as health care, that are crucial to women. Brown also discussed the tragedy of BC's "Highway of Tears", the highway that runs between Prince George and Prince Rupert, where nine women, mostly Indigenous, have

gone missing since 1990.

The next speaker, Dalal Assad, brought an international connection to the attacks women face. Assad, an organizer with Mobilization Against War and Occupation, as well as the Mesopotamian Women's and Orphan's Education and Welfare Society, spoke from the perspective of an Iraqi woman who has seen firsthand the staggering effects of war and occupation on women.

"As men are targeted and killed by the hundreds, women are becoming the sole providers in families, becoming sole healthcare providers, as well as dealing with woman-specific violence and rape," explained Assad.

Assad condemned the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, citing the unnumbered cases of rape and abuse of women. Assad pointed particularly to Afghanistan where the suicide rate by self-immolation has increased since the occupation began. "An average of three girls arrive at the Herat Public Hospital hospital each week, most with life-threatening burns covering more than 40% of their bodies," explained Assad.

Assad concluded her speech with a powerful message to all women, saying, "As women suffer at the hands of imperialist occupiers, women around the world must take the lead in the antiwar movement to defend their sisters and stand in solidarity against war."

The rally closed with a sense of solidarity and continued struggle, as people joined together in singing the Women's Warrior Song and "Bread and Roses".

Distribute Revolutionary Change in Your Area!

For distribution of Fire This Time in your area, across BC, and internationally, please contact:

Brennan Luchsinger
Publicity and Distribution
Coordinator
Phone: (604) 338-9006
Email: distro@firethistime.net



Liu Institute
for Global Issues

6476 NW Marine Drive
Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada V6T 1Z2
Phone (604) 822-1402 Fax (604) 822-6966
www.ligi.ubc.ca

The Liu Institute is pleased to present

The Honourable Ernesto Antonio Sentí

Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to Canada

who will speak on

Canada-Cuba Relations: More than 60 Years in the Making

The Honourable Ernesto Sentí has been the First Deputy Minister of the Ministry for Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation of the Republic of Cuba from December 1999 – present. Prior to his current office, he also held several other ministry positions, including First Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Justice.

WHERE: Fri March 31st, 12:00pm – 1:30pm
WHEN: 3rd Floor Boardroom, Liu Institute
RSVP to patricia.chu@ubc.ca or
604.822.1402

Ché Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade *Cuba Summer 2006*



14th Annual Ché Guevara
Volunteer Work Brigade
July 30—August 20

Holguin & Granma Provinces, Cuba
Learn about the history of the Revolution. Visit historic revolutionary sites like the Sierra Maestra Mountains. Participate in valuable volunteer work alongside Cubans

JOIN US!

Financial Support will be provided.
Contact Manitoba-Cuba Solidarity,
manitoba_cuba@hotmail.com

Fundraiser Social Saturday March 18 8:00 p.m.

Club 'The Local' 110 Market Ave.
Tickets \$10 Cuban Meal \$5

Presentation on the Brigade, Cuban Dancers, Live Music,
Rainbow Auction and more!
All proceeds will go to support youth going on the brigade. Apply now!

Organized by the Manitoba-Cuba Solidarity Committee
For tickets or more information, e-mail: manitoba_cuba@hotmail.com or
phone Diane at 783-9380 or Esperanza at 947-1745.



EVENTS and ACTIONS

VANCOUVER

Friday, March 17

Haiti at the Crossroads
Political rights leader Patrick Elie from Haiti speaks on the coup that overthrew the elected President 7:00p.m.
Vancouver Community College, 1155 E. Broadway
Organized by the Canada Haiti Action Network (www.canadahaitiaction.ca)
778-858-5179 or 604-338-7450
haitisolidaritybc@yahoo.ca.

Monday, March 20

Marking the third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq An evening with Hadani Ditmars Acclaimed International Journalist and Author of “Dancing in the No Fly Zone: a Woman’s Journey Through Iraq”
Reading and Video clips from Hadani’s Journey 7:30 pm
Vancouver Public Library
Main Branch 350 Georgia St,
Alma Vandusen and Peter Kaye Rooms
Organized by the Vancouver Public Library in collaboration with the Muslim Canadian Congress

Tuesday, March 21st

Luis Primo Caracas-Miranda Regional Coordinator of the UNT Speaking in Vancouver!
6:00pm
Vancouver & District Labour Council Educational Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St (@ Victoria)
7:30pm
Public Event Room 1700,
SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings (@ Richards)
Brought to you by: The Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Hands Off Venezuela, the Internationalist Bolivarian Circle of Vancouver (Bob Everton), and the Industrial Workers of the World Vancouver.
vancouver@handsoffvenezuela.org

Tuesday, March 21

national (in)securities
6:30 – 9:30pm
BONSOR COMMUNITY HALL
Suggested Donation \$5-10 (includes dinner).
Email noii-van@resist.ca or call 778-885-0040 to reserve.

Monday March 27

Picket Action!
FREE THE CUBAN 5
HELD IN U.S. JAILS!
12-1pm
U.S. Consulate (1095 West Pender and Thurlow)
Organized by the Free the Cuban 5 Committee
Vancouver Contact: cuban5_van@yahoo.ca
www.vancubasolidarity.com/freethefivevan.html

VICTORIA

Saturday March 18

Rally and March
12 noon in Centennial Square
Featuring War Resister Michael Hanson and others
Organized by the Victoria Peace Coalition

Tuesday, March 21st,

Justice & Democracy for Haiti
Speaking events featuring Haitian political activist Patrick Elie
7:30 PM Public meeting University of Victoria, Elliot Bldg, Room 168
Wednesday, March 22nd
12 Noon
Camosun College (Landsdowne campus), Fisher Bldg , Room 334
Wednesday, 22 March (7:00 p.m.)
University of Victoria
Harry Hickman Bldg, Room 110
Co-sponsor: Victoria Peace Coalition, Local sponsor: Haiti Solidarity BC, Canada Haiti Action Network tel: 778-858-5179 dolcla@islandnet.com

TORONTO

Monday, 20 March

Islamophobia, the War and Freedom of Speech
7:00 p.m.
Eastminster United Church 310 Danforth Toronto
ON
Organized by the International Socialists
marxism@sympatico.ca

Thursday, March 16th

Canadian Imperialism in Haiti
3:30 PM

In the Graduate Student Association offices, Student Centre Room 430
Sponsored by the New Socialist Group (NSG) and Grass Roots Anti-imperialist Network (GRAIN).

Saturday, March 18

Stop the War
Troops Out of Iraq and Afghanistan
War Resisters Welcome here
1 PM at the US Consulate 360 University Avenue
Organized by the Toronto Coalition to Stop the War
For more info see www.nowar.ca

Saturday, March 18

Student Feeder Rally
ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION OF IRAQ:
Confront Canada’s Role in War and Occupation!
Student Rally and March
12pm @ Dundas Square
(Dundas and Yonge) Marching to join the rally at the US Consulate at 1pm
Organized by the Student Anti-Imperialist Network

Saturday, 25 March

Islam & Imperialism in the Middle East
A Public Talk by Gilbert Achcar
(7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.) Tranzac Club (292 Brunswick Ave)
Sponsored by: The Middle East Socialist Network, The Socialist Project: socialistproject.ca, and New Socialist Group: newsocialist.org

WINNIPEG

Saturday, March 18

WINNIPEG SAYS NO TO WAR!
International Day of Action!
End the occupation of Iraq!
Canada out of Afghanistan!
Canada out of Haiti!
No urban warfare training in Winnipeg!
1:00 P.M.
Meet at City Hall for a march to the Legislature
Organized by the No War Coalition (Manitoba).

MONTREAL

Saturday March 18

Global Day of Action Against Wars of Occupation
12:30 pm : Gathering in Dorchester Square Intersection of Peel/René-Lévesque (Métro Peel)
13:00 pm : March Departure
Organized by: Montreal Collectif Echec a la Guerre
<http://www.echecalaguerre.org/>

Sunday, March 19

Hands Off Kanehsata:ke!!!
2-5pm
Native Friendship Center
2001 St-Laurent
Food and childcare provided
Public Assembly: Hands Off Kanehsata:ke!!!
Support Indigenous Sovereignty.
ipsm@resist.ca

Tuesday March 21

Mobilising for Social Justice: The History of OCAP”
6pm
Local Leacock 232 (855 Sherbrooke west) McGill University
Organised by Campus Coalition of Progressive McGill Students
For more information: Quebec Public Interest Research Group at McGill University Tel. 514-398-7432
<http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/qpirg>



GLOBAL WEEK OF ACTION

Against War and Occupation and for Self-Determination of Oppressed Nations!

City -Wide Events

MARCH 18

On the 3rd Anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq...
WAR NO MORE! US/UK Out of Iraq! Canada Out of Afghanistan!
Canada/France/US Out of Haiti! Let War Resisters Stay in Canada!
International Day of Action Against the War in Iraq
SATURDAY | 11:30 AM: Assemble at Seaforth Park (South end of Burrard Bridge)
1 PM: Rally at the Vancouver Art Gallery (Georgia and Howe St)
Organized by: Stopwar.ca | Endorsed by: MAWO

MARCH 19

Against the Imperialist War Drive!
For the Self-Determination of Oppressed Nations!
Free All-Day Anti-War Conference
SUNDAY | 10AM - 6PM | Britannia Community Centre (1661 Napier at Commercial Dr)
Fight the Powers That Be!
MAWO Fundraiser & Cultural Night
SUNDAY | 7:30 PM | El Cocal Restaurant (1037 Commercial Dr)

MARCH 20

SELF DETERMINATION FOR PALESTINE!
Understanding the Palestinian Struggle and Peace in the Middle East
Featured Speakers:
HAZEM JAMJOUR, MOSTAFA HENAWAY
MONDAY | 6:30pm | SFU Harbour Centre (Rm 1800)

MARCH 25

SLINGSHOT HIP-HOP CONCERT
Featuring world-renowned hip-hop artists and local talent including: Ragtop of the PHILISTINES and OMAR OFFENDUM of N.O.M.A.D.S. with Manik 1derful & Sichuan of the Sunday Skool Dropoutz, and Beatz Devine
SATURDAY | 7:30PM Doors | 8:30 Show | \$5 by donation at the door
St. James Square Hall 3214 W. 10th Ave (10th Ave and Trutch St) For more information please contact palestinesolidarity_ubc@yahoo.ca
Organized by the UBC Palestine Solidarity Committee as part of the Student Week in Solidarity with Palestine
Endorsed by Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO)

Campus Events

MARCH 17

Colonialism, War, Occupation and the Struggle for the Self-Determination of Oppressed Nations:
From Nations in Canada, to Palestine, to Afghanistan
Featured Speaker: Hazem Jamjoum
FRIDAY | 12:00pm | Langara College Student Union Building
Organized by Langara Students United Against War and Occupation (LSUAWO) Sponsored by the Langara Students Union Native Centre

MARCH 20

Colonialism and the Fight for Self-Determination:
Exploring the Links Between the Occupations of Palestine & Indigenous Nationsin Canada
Featured Speaker: Hazem Jamjoum
12:30PM | Capilano College - Maple 101 (CSU Lounge)
Organized by Capilano Students Against War (CSAW)
Self Determination for Palestine! Understanding the Palestinian Struggle and Peace in the Middle East
Featured Speaker: MOSTAFA HENAWAY
MONDAY | 1:30pm | Simon Fraser University (SFU)
Forum Chambers, Maggie Benston Center (underneath “Higher Grounds” Café) | Organized by MAWO-SFU Club

MARCH 21

Is Israel an Apartheid State?
Featured Speakers: Hazem Jamjoum, Reem Alnuweiri and Aaron Mercredi TUESDAY | 12:00pm | University of British Columbia (UBC) Co-Organized by CAWOPI, the Arab Students Association, and UBC Palestine Solidarity Committee

Canada Out of Afghanistan! Stop the Canadian War Drive! TUESDAY | 12:00pm | Douglas College | SUB Upper Lounge Featured Speaker: MOSTAFA HENAWAY Organized by the Anti-war Club at Douglas College (ACDC)

MORE EVENTS

More events organized as part of the STUDENT WEEK IN SOLIDARITY with PALESTINE at UBC
Is Criticism of Israeli Policies Anti-Semetic?
Film & Discussion at UBC | SUB Room 211
Wednesday March 22nd – 11AM
“Jenin Jenin” Film & Discussion at UBC | SUB Room 205 Thursday March 23rd – 12PM
Organized by the UBC Palestine Solidarity Committee
Endorsed by Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO)

All events organized or endorsed by
Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) www.mawovancouver.org | (604) 322-1764

FIRE THIS TIME

ENDORSED BY MAWO: MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG
ORGANIZED BY: STOPWAR.CA COALITION

GLOBAL
DAY OF
ACTION

On the 3rd Anniversary of the illegal
attack on Iraq, join the biggest
day of global solidarity with the People
of Iraq since the invasion began

* Original March 18th Event Poster by Stopwar.ca



Saturday, March 18

11:30am Assemble at Seaforth Park
(South end of Burrard Street Bridge)

1:00pm Rally at Vancouver Art Gallery
(Georgia and Howe)

music, speakers and special guests

(Check the website for frequent updates and new info)

www.stopwar.ca

GLOBAL WEEKEND OF ACTION

A weekend of anti-war events to
mark the 3rd anniversary of the
bombing and invasion of Iraq

**ANTI-WAR ANTI-OCCUPATION
FREE ALL DAY CONFERENCE**

AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST WAR DRIVE!



**FOR THE SELF-DETERMINATION
OF OPPRESSED NATIONS!**

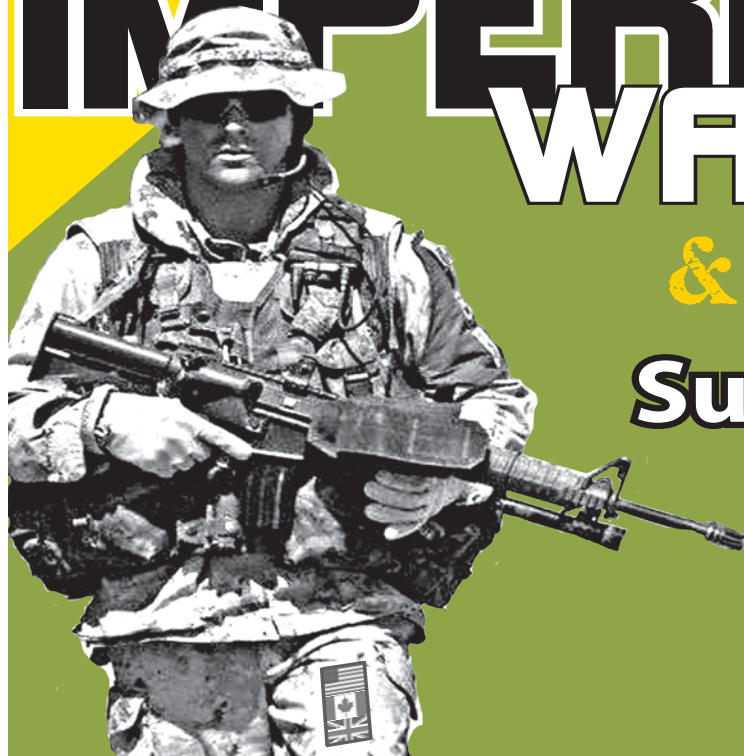
Sunday March 19

WORKSHOPS:

- HAITI - AFGHANISTAN - IRAQ - IRAN - PALESTINE
- CUBA - RWANDA - INDIGENOUS NATIONS IN CANADA
- BUILDING THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT IN CANADA

10am - 6pm

Britannia Community Centre
(1661 Napier St @ Commercial Dr.)



ORGANIZED BY MAWO

MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR & OCCUPATION

WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG