

FIRE THIS TIME



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

Free the 5 Cuban Heroes Held in US Jails



10,000 PEOPLE CALL FOR CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN!



Canadian soldier in Kandahar . May 8 2006.



Roadside bomb in Kandahar. May 8 2006.



One Million March in Los Angeles for Immigrant Rights!

Stop Racist Immigration Laws!

CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN! BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

Canada Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Foreign Affairs Minister Peter Mackay Canada is currently increasing the size and scope of its role in the occupation of Afghanistan, and as the killing, destruction and oppression of the people of Afghanistan also increases, the Afghan people are still fighting for self-determination and against foreign control of their country.

In response, we, the undersigned, demand that Canada immediately remove all troops from Afghanistan and cease any military operations in Afghanistan. We insist that the demands of the Afghan people for sovereignty be met and that all occupying forces withdraw from Afghanistan.

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Mobilization Against War and Occupation
PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC V5L 5G6
For more info or more petitions: info@mawovanvancouver.org - 604-322-1764 www.mawovanvancouver.org

10,000 signatures

Afghanistan has now been occupied by Canada, the US, and other NATO countries for more than four long years. In Canada, we have watched as a new era of war and occupation unfolds before our eyes, with the government of Canada playing a leading role in the era through the occupation of Afghanistan. As parliament confirms “Canada’s commitment” to the occupation through a two-year extension of the current troop deployment there, we must ask what this mission means for the people of Afghanistan. Has quality of life improved for people in Afghanistan? Do people in Afghanistan now live in a free and democratic society?

Corruption as bad as occupation

The answer to the above questions is a resounding ‘no’. Directly, the occupation has caused the deaths and suffering of countless Afghans through its bombs and guns, a soaring opium trade, and a plummeting life expectancy. However, the occupation has also caused a broader, deeper, and more widespread dysfunction in Afghanistan that leads to the deaths and suffering of countless Afghans: corruption. For people in Afghanistan, corruption that permeates through society poses barriers to accessing basic needs, such as food and shelter. It increases the exploitation of people in Afghanistan from exploitation by imperialist occupation to

exploitation by Afghanistan’s own corrupt government, supported by the imperialist forces.

Essentially, corruption occurs on two levels: within high-ranking government officials and others who possess a significant amount of political and economic control over the country, and within lower-level government offices, such as the judiciary and the police. In these lower levels, corruption typically takes the form of bribes demanded of people before they can have documents officially signed, appear in court, or even get work.

Eid Mohammad, a twelve-year-old boy who sells spinach on the street, said “I pay 6 dollars [a day] to policemen so that I can stay here. If not, they trample over the vegetables.” Mohammad also observed that the police “beat the people who do not pay up.” This level of corruption, though, comes as little surprise in a country where



Roadside bomb in Kandahar. May 17 2006.

Afghanistan Canada’s Iraq

the average salary for even a well-paid government officer is only \$60 USD per month – not enough to pay half of a month’s rent in Kabul. Even those individuals privileged enough to hold a good job in Afghanistan can barely afford to survive. They hold enough power

funded primarily by money being invested in the country, which they direct or actually control. Many top officials have been accused of receiving payments from foreign companies, or funnelling money into investment projects such as the Kabul City Centre Mall,

corruption is fully supported by occupying forces in Afghanistan, as the occupiers profit from the investment. As well, they are the primary supporters of this government, which does not represent people in Afghanistan. Likewise, the elites of Afghanistan

disillusioned with the officials who run their country and grassroots support for the insurgency is growing as a result.” (April 17, 2006). The deteriorating quality of life, the rampant corruption, and the lack of any real “democracy” in Afghanistan exposes the reality that the government of Canada does not support the needs of the Afghan people there. They support a corrupt government that steals the few meagre pennies that the people of the country have, lining their own pockets with it and directing the money into largely foreign-owned investment that regular people in Afghanistan never see a penny of.

Afghans bear the double burden of fighting not only against occupying forces, but also against the corrupt and repressive government of their country. In many ways, people in Afghanistan feel the effects of occupation most directly through the corruption and exploitation carried out by their government. However, their fight cannot be solely against a repressive government in their country. It also must be against the occupation, as the occupying forces are not only a direct threat to people in Afghanistan in their daily lives, they are also a support system for the repressive government that is exploiting people in Afghanistan.

What way to go?

No matter the claims of the occupying forces, people in Afghanistan do not now live in a free and democratic, or even

to be able to supplement their income with bribes and the like – although it is at the expense of others. The problem of corruption in Afghanistan does not begin with those with lower-level government jobs, however. Corruption from higher levels of authority is felt at its greatest at the bottom rungs of the social ladder, where poor and working people are forced to shell out their few pennies of food money in order to pay a bribe.

Poverty and corruption: Two sides of the same coin

What causes much of the poverty of Afghan people? What causes government officers to threaten and to take bribes from people in order to earn enough to survive? It is corruption on a higher level, within the government’s top positions and within the elite of Afghanistan.

While 80% of Afghanistan’s 31 million people live in poverty, a small handful live in luxury,

which brings profits to foreign investors and the Afghan elite, but not to poor and working people. Mariam Rawi, representative of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) noted, “this [corruption] is happening in a country that has received \$12Billion dollars in aid while another 10 billion were pledged at the recent London conference. Even a fraction of this aid has not been used for the benefit and welfare of our people, but filled the pockets of the warlords and high rank officials” (April 27, 2006).

This corruption is in addition to the fact that much of the so-called “aid money” that is invested in Afghanistan is invested through organizations such as the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA), a private-sector support agency that encourages foreign investment in Afghanistan, which does not see any benefit for regular people in Afghanistan. This

continue to collaborate with imperialism, and continue to direct reconstruction money into investment projects that benefit only the interests of the Afghan ruling class and imperialism.

The government of Canada and occupation of Afghanistan

While the government of Canada maintains its guise of “building democracy” in Afghanistan, it is becoming more and more clear that the “democracy” that the Canadian military is supporting there is a farce. The so-called democracy of the Afghan government is robbing from the poor and giving to the rich, supporting investments in which 50% of the profit goes to foreign company owners, and 50% of the profit goes to Afghan business owners. People in Afghanistan do not support the government that has been installed by the occupation forces, and as a recent article from the Al Jazeera news agency noted “Many Afghans are

marginally improved society. The rampant corruption in Afghanistan today, which widens the chasm between the elites and the poor and working class, truly shows whose interest this occupation is in: the imperialist ruling class of Canada and as well as their well-supported partners – the corrupt ruling class of Afghanistan. For regular people in Afghanistan, “freedom and democracy” means the freedom to build a government and a society that truly represents their interests – not the interest of imperialism or of the ruling and elite class of Afghanistan. The only way to do this is for people in Afghanistan to have control of their land, their resources, and their country – in other words, an immediate end to the occupation.

CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN NOW!
STOP THE CANADIAN WAR DRIVE!
BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!



Canadian soldier during raid on Kandahar village. May 17 2006.



Canadian patrol outside Kabul. August 2005.



Canadian soldier in Kandahar. April 2006.

People in Canada Say: BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME NOW

MAWO Petition Drive Against Canada's War in Afghanistan: Over 10,000 Signatures

By Nita Palmer

May 18th 2006 – Over 10,000 people in Canada have declared their opposition to Canada's occupation of Afghanistan on petition, via Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO)'s 'Canada Out of Afghanistan' petition drive. Since January 2004, MAWO has collected signatures for the Canada Out campaign throughout Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. Response has been incredibly positive, especially in recent months, as the government of Canada's increasing war drive in Afghanistan has created a growing opposition to the occupation among people in Canada.

Numerous polls showing the level of support for Canadian military operations in Afghanistan have been released within the last few months. These results have been incredibly varied, showing anything from 67% against the Canadian military being in Afghanistan in a poll conducted by CTV in March, to 70% in favour of "peacekeeping" operations in Afghanistan, according to an Angus Reid poll, also in March. However, the collection of over 10,000 signatures against the occupation in the Lower Mainland alone, and more being collected every day, are a true measure of the amount of opposition to the occupation among working people in Canada.

Members of Parliament against Members of Society

In sharp contrast to the unity that

of Afghanistan. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the "take note" debate that was held in Parliament on April 10th. A subsequent article in the Toronto Star aptly noted that "the most striking aspect of the Monday night debate was the chasm between Canadian voters and the people who purport to represent them." (April 15th 2006).

Over the past year, the government of Canada and the Canadian elite have grown increasingly aggressive in their participation in the occupation of Afghanistan and military operations worldwide. In 2005, the military budget was doubled to \$25.8Billion. Two thousand more troops were deployed to Afghanistan, where they took charge of the NATO occupation of Kandahar and Southern Afghanistan. Most recently, on May 17th the commitment of deployment of Canadian troops to Kandahar was formally extended by two years, until 2009.

Government of Canada reveals its plans

While the most marked increase in Canadian military aggression abroad has been in Afghanistan, Canada has also been increasing its aggression against other countries. The government of Canada has tried to hide behind a mask of humanitarianism for not deploying troops to Iraq. However, Paul Cellucci, former US Ambassador to Canada, accurately stated that "Ironically, the Canadians... will provide more support indirectly to this war in Iraq than most of

the war in Iraq, as well as from the Canadian military's deployment of ships to the Persian Gulf to support the war, and the RCMP's deployment of officers to Jordan to train over 32,000 Iraqi police.

Another front that the ruling class in Canada has opened in its war on oppressed people is in Haiti, where Canada played a leading role in the overthrow of the Haitian people's democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and has subsequently deployed over 100 RCMP officers to train the Haitian National Police in repressing the Haitian people.

The recent years of increase in aggression by the government of Canada against oppressed people around the world cannot be seen in single, isolated cases. Canada's new International Policy Statement released last year stated, "We are in the midst of a major rebalancing of global power... in a world of traditional and emerging giants, independent countries like Canada-countries with small populations-risk being swept aside, their influence diminished, their ability to compete hampered. That may sound dramatic, but the stakes are that high. We will have to be smart, focused, agile, creative and dogged in the pursuit of our interests." This declaration came alongside more statements calling for Canada to rise above its "middle power status" in this new era.

What next for us after 10,000 signatures: Continue to Organize, Educate, Mobilize!

As poor and working people in Canada, we must ask whose interests this war drive, particularly the occupation of Afghanistan, is representing. A 2005 report by UNICEF showed that between 1993-2004, while 6% of the central government expenditure was allocated to defence spending, just 3% was allocated



TOWARDS AN ANTI-WAR LABOUR MOVEMENT:

VDLC PASSES IMPORTANT ANTI-WAR RESOLUTION!

By Ivan Drury

On May 16th 2006, on the eve of the government of Canada's vote to extend Canada's occupation of Afghanistan to 2009, the Vancouver and District Labour Council (VDLC)

calling for the government of Canada to "remove all Canadian military forces from Afghanistan immediately" is direct, clear, and needs no interpretation. Fire This Time welcomes this development as an important sign of the labour movement's leadership into the anti-

working people in Canada show against the occupation of Afghanistan, however, Canadian MPs have showed consistent support for the occupation

the 46 countries that are fully supporting our efforts there." This support has come from Canadian corporation SNC-Lavalin, the largest supplier of arms to

to health, and 2% to education. Clearly, the war drive in Afghanistan and its increased defence spending is not in the interests of regular people in Canada. But even more, Afghan people feel the effects of the Canadian occupation of their country, as life expectancy drops, women's rights remain non-existent, and all Afghan people have seen of the promised "reconstruction" is the building of hotels and shopping malls that remain inaccessible to them.

According to their own actions and statements, the ruling class in Canada is in Afghanistan for their own economic interests. According to people across Canada – including over 10,000 people in the BC Lower Mainland alone – the occupation of Afghanistan is not in our interest, and as Canada's war drive increases, people in Canada are becoming increasingly against it. In order to protect its interests, the ruling class in Canada must continue this war drive. For people in Canada, our

passed a historic motion against the Canadian occupation of Afghanistan.

The passing of this motion against the Canadian war drive is an important precedent for the labour movement in Canada, especially as the government and ruling class of Canada are traveling faster and further in the other direction, deeper into the occupation of Afghanistan.

The most important part of this motion is not in the political problems in the "whereas" points of the motion.

This motion is important because it is a sign of the development of anti-war consciousness amongst working people in Vancouver. We are certain that workers in Vancouver are not alone in Canada in their opposition to Canada's occupation of Afghanistan.

The passing of this motion clearly

war camp, and a step towards the mass anti-war movement – a development that is strongly in the favor of all working, poor, and oppressed people in Canada, and everywhere in the world.

Motion passed by the Vancouver and District Labour Council, May 16, 2006

Subject: Canadian Troops Out of Afghanistan

WHEREAS: Canadian ground troops are now actively participating in the US initiated "Operation Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS: This puts Canadian soldiers into an aggressive military role where they have been forced to kill civilians, some of whom have been shown to be innocent bystanders; and

WHEREAS: Canada has no strategic national interest in Afghanistan other than to please the United States which has become mired in an 'unwinnable' war in that country; now
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Vancouver and District Labour Council call on the Canadian Government, through the Canadian Labour Congress, to remove all Canadian military forces from Afghanistan immediately; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Vancouver and District Labour Council reiterate our view that Canada's interests are best served by maintaining our standing as a peace-keeping nation in the world and not through aggressive military occupation of other countries.



The Newspaper Of

FIRE THIS TIME MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

-ISSN 1712 - 1817 -

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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)

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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.

Volume 3 Issue 3

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.



IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES SHOWING THE PATH FOR STRUGGLE: MOBILIZE!

DEFEND IMMIGRANT RIGHTS
EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL WORKERS! STATUS FOR ALL!

By Ivan Drury

On March 25th 2006 non-status workers in the US wrote a new chapter in the history of the Americas. In every single major city in the United States, and countless small cities and towns, millions of people wrote their names in streets that had always regarded them as anonymous and disposable. These “Marches for Dignity” bore signs with the simple sentiments of honest people: “Am I not a human being?” / “Don’t I deserve rights?” / “What do my taxes buy me?”... Many of the homemade signs were emblazoned with the defensive slogans and rhetorical questions of people who have had a fight imposed on them, a fight that only injustice demands they wage.

On April 10th, they emerged again, millions of non-status people, their families and supporters, in every imaginable corner of the US, this time with American flags even more common than slogans, questions, and demands. The American flag that confronts the non-status worker as a hostile mask over the state that will take and take and take from them and never offer anything but insecurity and exploitation in return. The American flags flying above endless seas of people who will never be legally “American” lost their international meaning as a symbol of imperialist war and occupation. The flag was transformed, for a day, into a symbol of pleading hope for the 12 million-plus non-Americans in the prison house of nationalities known as the United States of America.

On May 1st, again they marched, this

non-status people. But the gravity that brought so many millions of people to the street is the long-standing anti-immigrant racism of the US government and much of society.

The Sensenbrenner Bill was not to be the beginning of ‘extra-legal’ existence for non-status people in the US. The purpose of this Bill, for the US ruling class, was not to eliminate so-called “illegal” workers. After all, the Bill was proposed by a representative of the same capitalist ruling class in the US that profits off of the super-exploited labour of millions and millions of non-status people. The purpose of the Sensenbrenner Bill was to make life for difficult for non-status workers in the US - to make their employment more insecure, their lives more uncertain and secretive, their labour more exploitable. The purpose of the Bill was to terrorize the masses of unnamed and unknown non-status workers in the US, to silence them and hide them away, to divide them further from the rest of the US working class and to stop them from organizing against their oppression. In this respect, the immediate goals of the Sensenbrenner Bill were already a colossal failure. The US ruling class did not accurately calculate the depths of resentment and yearning for justice that lay incubating in the masses of non-status workers. Rather than terror, the Sensenbrenner Bill unleashed the collective action of a people with nothing to lose.

While the Sensenbrenner Bill has been set back, the watered down versions of it that have been presented are hardly better, and remain a far cry from the blanket amnesty and status for all

government reported in the European media that they had received notice from the government of Canada that 15,000 to 22,000 non-status Portuguese people would be deported.

The combination of the sudden wave of deportations and the appearance of the massive immigrant rights rallies in the US raised the issue of immigration and the status of non-status people in Canada.

The government of Canada has released estimates of numbers of non-status people in Canada as “as many as 400,000” and independent sources put that number as high as 600,000 people. In Toronto, these people make up 75% of the construction industry labour force. Without them, there would be no construction industry in Toronto... exactly because, as non-status workers, they get paid less than their “legal” co-workers, “keeping costs down” and increasing the profits of the bosses.

The problem in Canada is paralleled with the problem in the US. For non-status workers the problem is that they don’t make enough money to survive, their lives are insecure, they have no democratic or labour rights under Canadian law, and they are treated as inhuman.

Maintaining cheap labour market in Canada

For the Canadian ruling class, the “illegal” labour market is more and more important to maintain and even expand in order to expand the super-exploitable labour market. But at the same time, as this section of the working class grows larger and less transitory, as was the case with the Portuguese community in Toronto, their ability to organize for their rights as workers also grows. This was also the case with the Toronto construction-working Portuguese community, as was shown in the thousands-strong support rallies organized by Universal Workers Union, Local 183, the biggest construction workers union in the Toronto area.

The strategy of the Canadian ruling class to deal with this contradictory problem mirrors the strategy adopted by the US ruling class – to



Dallas, Texas.
April 9 2006.

time with a boycott of US products and a day dubbed, “A Day Without I m m i g r a n t s .” Without the support of organized labour, 2 million of the most legally vulnerable and employment-insecure people in the US walked off the job and into the streets. According to the Economist magazine, “At the twin ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, only around 10% of the lorry-drivers turned up for work; in both California and Florida farm workers in their tens of thousands left the fields untended; in the Midwest, meat processors such as Tyson Foods close shop for the day.” The best of the spirit of Mayday was alive in the streets of the US this year.

It would be incorrect to pin the responsibility for these marches to any organization or network of organizations. People poured into the streets the way that milk pours onto the floor when you tip a jug on its side – the job was done by gravity. By this formula, the tipping of the jug was the passing of House Resolution 4437 (The Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005), known as the “Sensenbrenner Bill.” This Bill, passed through the House of Representatives but – especially with the unprecedented mass opposition to it – unlikely to pass through the Senate into law, would make non-status people in the US and the people and organizations that support them politically or materially, felony criminals, liable to be locked up. Beyond the immediate and extreme criminalization of non-status people, the Bill would see the construction of a 700-mile long wall along the Mexican border, and the mass deportation of



that is necessary for a resolution to the immediate problems of “illegal” immigration in the US. The US ruling class is continuing its denial of democratic rights to so-called “illegal” workers, and continuing its assault on the labour conditions and human rights of the same people. .

Not just a US problem – the status of non-status people in Canada

At the end of March the government of Canada staged a siege on Dufferin Mall in Toronto’s Portuguese community and, overnight, deported two dozen families who had been living and working in Canada for fifteen years and longer. Immigration minister Monte Solberg tried to calm fears of a massive crackdown on so-called “illegals” in Canada by saying that the Conservative government was keeping with previously existing policy of deporting 10,000 people a year. But this was contrasted with this weekend deportation of people whose lives are full integrated in the workforce and society in Canada and the announcement in the Toronto Star that more than 100 Portuguese families in the Toronto area “will be receiving their deportation orders in the coming weeks.” Further, the Portuguese

deepen insecurity, division, and terror amongst non-status workers to drive them deeper underground. Along with direct attacks on non-status people through arrests, round ups, detentions, and deportations comes a parallel drive to deepen racism and xenophobia amongst “Canadian” workers. The government of Canada seeks to perpetrate the myth that the sub-working-class position of non-status people is the fault of these workers themselves and not the businesses and industry barons that demand lower and lower wages.

Recent talk of guest worker pilot programs in the industries of Fort McMurray, Alberta, the fruit fields in the interior of BC, and the

construction industry of Toronto are not meant as solutions for the plight of non-status workers. These programs will regulate a certain number of workers, for their labour to be used and more easily controlled – as needed – but the base of permanent non-status workers will remain, and even suffer more.

The non-status worker labour market is controlled through mass deportations that spark panic through all non-status communities in Canada and drive them further underground. “Security Certificate” legislation that allows non-citizens to be locked up for indefinite periods of time without charges, evidence, or trial is further evidence of the inhuman status of non-status people in Canada. And on top of these immediate and constant threats is the hopelessness of changing this situation through the immigration system itself. Canada’s new immigration minister Monte Solberg said recently that he thinks the previous government’s immigration targets were too high. Not that it matters much for non-status people anyway. The pre-removal risk assessment acceptance rate (a last ditch process against deportation) is less than 3%. The acceptance rate for Humanitarian and Compassionate applications (a process that is supposed to

allow non-status people in Canada to apply for immigration from within Canada if leaving Canada to make an application would exact unreasonable hardship) is less than 5%. Non-status people have little choice but to remain without status, and to suffer the super-exploitation that this brings.

The rights of workers are workers’ rights! Status for All!

The so-called “illegal” workforce in Canada is nothing new. Immigrants have been imported specifically for their uses as a labour force since before the confederation of Canada. But under the pressure of international capitalist crisis, immigrants are coming under the guns of the war at home, as capitalists seek to make more profit while being squeezed by greater and greater competition.

For working people, regardless of their nationality, citizenship, or country of origin, the defense of the rights of all working people is the struggle is each and every single working person. The rights, or absolute lack of rights, of non-status people, “illegal,” undocumented workers is an issue

that must be taken up by specially the labour movement, and all progressive organizations, and all working, poor and oppressed people in Canada.

The recent massive and powerful demonstrations in the US are a sign of what is possible when non-status workers themselves – a minority within the working class – organize collectively in defense of their rights. Through the actions of these millions of people in the streets of the US, the rights of non-status workers has emerged as an issue for all working people in the US and Canada. This movement is in an early stage of development in Canada, but it has much to learn from the power of the immigrant rights movement in the US. It is possible for non-status people to challenge anti-immigrant racism. It is possible for non-status people to fight for their rights under imperialist laws. It is possible for them to win. For the rest of the working class the challenge is to join them, shoulder to shoulder in the streets, in the factories, on the picket lines, on the frontlines of the struggle against exploitation and injustice.



New York, New York.
April 1 2006.

AS LONG AS THE GRASS SHALL GROW, WE WILL DEFEND OURSELVES BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY: SIX NATIONS & THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

By Aaron Mercredi

A Colonial and Violent Government

While government representatives publicly sit at negotiation tables and privately plan how to crush the people of Six Nations, the people inside the reclamation site are planning and waiting for what the government of Canada's next move will be. On April 20th, the Ontario Provincial Police raided the Six Nations reclamation site at Caledonia, beating and arresting 16 people who were peacefully asserting Six Nations sovereignty over the land. If we've learned anything from this and Canada's past actions, it is that the need for Indigenous people to defend themselves has been re-enforced.

Six Nations people and their supporters had occupied the area since February 28th, when they prevented a luxury home development from being built on their land. The police raid was taken on at the same time as a slander campaign through ruling class media outlets, telling people in Canada that this was a justified act since they were dealing with a 'lawless' group of Natives who were dangerous to the Canadian population. These tactics are nothing new for Canada.

the anti-terrorist unit of the RCMP, the Integrated National Security Enforcement Team (INSET) and the Vancouver Police Department blocked off the Burrard bridge, ambushing three Indigenous men who were transporting legally obtained hunting rifles. Two of the men, Dave Dennis and James Sakej Ward, were well-known for their involvement in the West Coast and East Coast Warrior Societies. They were involved in struggles at Burnt Church, Cheam, Esowista, Saanich as well as other times that communities have asked for their



Bolckade at Six Nations.

help in defending themselves against attacks by Canada's colonial 'law' enforcement agencies and its suppression of their food harvesting, and theft of their land.

non-violent with us. -Malcolm X

Malcolm X said this in response to the lynching of black people in the US and the government's refusal to defend them against the racist attacks by the Klu Klux Klan and police agencies. It is a fundamental right of people to defend themselves when they are under attack, by any means necessary. It is also a fundamental right for nations to arm themselves in case of an attack from another nation. For the Indigenous nations who exist within Canada's colonial borders, is this any different? Nations, who signed agreements with the British Crown or with Canada on a nation-to-nation basis, or Indigenous nations who have no such agreements. We are talking about nations who need to defend themselves against theft by Canada and its provinces. British Columbia is 97% unceded territory, which means that almost all of the land has never been handed over in a treaty and legally belongs to the many Indigenous nations who make up the area. Then, what legitimacy does a colonial Canadian gun law have for an Indigenous person in BC when the governance and even the existence of this province is illegitimate?



Bolckade at Six Nations.

At Six Nations, Indigenous people peacefully reclaimed their land that was being taken from them. Their struggle is not alone. It is bound up with the Inuit community in Labrador who just lost a young girl to tuberculosis in one of the richest countries in the world. It is bound up with the broken promises and inaction by the government to compensate the survivors of the residential schools. It is Native people taking a stand against injustice. As the Clan mothers, the families, the young and old activists, the Warrior Alliance and all the supporters head in to another day of defending Six Nations land, we need to unconditionally support their demands and their right to defend themselves.

During Oka, the government sent in the Securite Quebec, and the Canadian military to crush a group of Mohawk people who were standing up against the expansion of an 18-hole golf course on to their sacred burial grounds. Canada's media portrayed them as terrorists and thugs, when any photo of that standoff will actually show you families and young children together on the other side of the barricades. The media blamed the lobster crisis on Miqmaq fishers at Burnt Church and tried to justify the actions of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans whose fully loaded enforcement vessels were ramming unarmed Miqmaq fishermen who were trying to pull up their nets from the water. They tried to justify the huge RCMP presence at Gustafsen Lake. They manipulated events and told the Canadian public that they were being attacked by the angry mob of Natives inside the camp, when it was they who were the ones inflicting the violence. It was revealed later that that was a well-orchestrated slander campaign by the RCMP and the corporate media.

But this begs the question, was that the only time that this happened? No, it was the only time they were caught.

The Criminalization of the Non-Violent

When Indigenous people assert their rights as Indigenous people, tensions flare and it is easier for the media to ignite racism against Indigenous people. But, what about when Indigenous people are targeted for exercising rights that an ordinary Canadian citizen is entitled to? On June 27th 2005,

There was no blockade or standoff going on when 30 police officers held them at gunpoint, confiscated fourteen new hunting rifles and 10,000 rounds of ammunition, camping and survival gear, and held them in a military barracks. No, these guns were being used as part of a cultural, hunting and survival-training program for the Tsawataineuk First Nation, located on the central BC coast, called the Outdoor Indigenous Traditional Training, to teach youth hunting and survival skills. Did any of this matter the RCMP? No. The rifles, the supplies, everything that was taken from these men remains locked up. The



RCMP could not get away with pressing any charges against them since there was nothing illegal about what they were doing. What they did though, however, was send a strong message to Indigenous communities and Native activists who would side with the Warrior Societies: "Look what happened to them. This can happen to you too if you are militant in asserting your rights."

Self-Defense, a human right

"We are non-violent with those who are

Prayer Run For World Peace Begins in Vancouver!

By Aaron Mercredi

On May 14th, ten runners took off from the Trout Lake Community Centre in East Vancouver to begin the first leg of a long-distance run to Alaska. The Prayer Run for World Peace is a 3,640km run by Indigenous youth that starts in Coast Salish territory, Vancouver, and ends up at Eklutna Indian Reservation near Anchorage, Alaska. There, the runners will experience and witness the conditions of the environment they will inherit. Sponsored by the Wolakota Youth Council and the Alliance of Native Americans, this run has brought youth from as far away as South Dakota to participate.

"Prayer Run for World Peace's goal is to bring positive change by encouraging a conscious awareness by running with our prayers for World Peace," said Graci Horne, President of the Wolakota Youth Council.

"The youth of today will face great hardships as we become the caretakers of Grandmother Earth. Today, the glaciers are melting, leaving us with higher levels of water that will affect our water supply, flooding land and severe storms due to the neglect of previous generations. We need to make a change in the way we live, soon, before a better life is not attainable. Our word of sacrifice and commitment is the only thing we own. The rest, including our bodies, belongs to the earth."

The runners were joined by other Indigenous youth when they left from the Mother's Day Pow Wow in Vancouver. Runners of all nations are encouraged to join the long distance runners from different locations along the way, and can participate for

the entire route or just sections. Over 20 reservations and small communities will be travelled through as the youth make their way north.

The Prayer Run will culminate with a four-day gathering for World Peace and Prayer Day with Chief Arvol Looking Horse, the 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Bundle. The event will be hosted by the Inuit Nation from June 18th to 21st.

This initiative, organized and led by young Indigenous people from across the continent is a positive reaction to the injustices and struggles we face every day as Indigenous people, and as our land and resources are continually taken and developed for the profit of a few. For more information on the run, how you can support it, or to get involved, please visit www.wolakota.org.





Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Stands in Solidarity with Six Nations Protesters

The recent standoff in Caledonia, Ontario is merely a symptom of a much greater problem – the disdainful manner by which elected governments address Aboriginal land claims.

Aboriginal peoples in Canada have waited long enough for their treaty rights to be recognized and land claims dealt with. The Six Nations filed a claim to the land in 1995 and 10 years later, with the claim still unresolved, the Ontario government gave Henco Industries the go-ahead to begin development on the disputed land.

It was this decision by the Ontario Government that prompted the Six Nations to reclaim the land on February 28, 2006. The members of the Six Nations remained on the land in peaceful protest for 51 days until the OPP escalated the tense situation by raiding the protester's camp in the early morning of April 20, 2006, only one day after Premier McGuinty promised a peaceful resolution to this dispute. The protest is now in its 76th day.

The PSAC calls on the government to negotiate meaningfully and to peacefully resolve the Six Nations land claim as well as all current and future Aboriginal land claims. The PSAC feels that if this and other land claims were dealt with in a fair and timely manner, the most recent standoff in Caledonia, as well as the tragedies that occurred in Ipperwash, Oka, and Gustafsen Lake, could have been avoided.

Members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada stand in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples seeking peaceful resolutions to Aboriginal land claims in Canada.

JUSTICE FOR FRANK PAUL: AN INDIGENOUS MAN NOT FORGOTTEN, A STRUGGLE NEVER OVER

By Aaron Mercredi

Video Surveillance

On December 6th, 1998, Frank Paul's motionless body was dragged across the floor of the downtown police station by a Vancouver Police Department constable. His rain-soaked clothes left a wet streak on the concrete floor as the officer dragged him from the paddy-wagon to the elevator. Minutes later, his still motionless wet body was dragged back from the elevator and in to a paddy wagon. Hours later he was found frozen to death in a downtown East Side alley.

Frank Paul was a Miqmaq man who lived in the downtown East Side. He was known to police and was taken into custody twice on that cold December day for being intoxicated in public. The first time, he was taken to the police jail, and put in the 'drunk tank' to sober up while his wet clothes were drying. He was released early that evening, walking out of the station unassisted. Two hours later, he was picked up by officers again, intoxicated and unable to speak coherently or stand, and was carried to the paddy wagon. He was taken back to the police jail, where police surveillance tapes showed him being dragged like a wet bag of garbage across the floor. Despite the fact that he laid there motionless, the sergeant on duty who knew Frank Paul determined that he did not believe he was intoxicated. He

reported that his condition "did not appear any different to his usual state of post-gaol sobriety."

The order was given to "breach Mr. Paul out of the (downtown) area," and he was taken back in to the elevator and dragged back in to the paddy wagon. He was left



leaning against an alley wall as the mercury dropped in another freezing December night. He died of hypothermia.

Seven years and still no justice

Seven years later and still no one has been held accountable for the death of Frank Paul. After a three-year internal investigation, the VPD suspended the constable for one day and the sergeant for two days, and made recommendations on how to deal with

by a police officer in another East side alley. Can we forget about the 'starlight tours' in Saskatchewan, where the police would beat young Native men, drive them to the outskirts of the city, take their jackets, leaving them to freeze to death in the below zero degree winter, like what happened with Neil Stonechild?

Can we forget about how there is still no justice for Dudley George, who was killed by the Ontario Provincial Police at Ipperwash?

Historically, Indigenous people are the victims of the police forces of this country, who were used to steal the land and force treaties on Indigenous nations to build the racist and colonial Canada that exists today. The nature of Canada hasn't changed since then. It survives off of pilfering the land and resources of Indigenous people, and needs to continue to crush us as a people.

The Push for a Public Inquiry

On December 6th, 2005, family, friends and community members gathered at Main and Hastings for a memorial rally in the name of Frank Paul, but also in recognition of all of the Indigenous people who have suffered at the hands of Canada's colonial police. It was seven years to the day of his freezing death in a Vancouver alley. Dozens of people lined the street and marched to the Police headquarters downtown, continuing to demand for a public inquiry in to his death.

Frank Paul was a victim of the VPD. He

DARFUR: Imperialist Excuse for Military Intervention in Sudan

By Shannon Bundock

On May 16th resolution 1679 was passed in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Within resolution 1679, the UNSC has endorsed the replacement of the African Union Mission in Sudan by UN troops. To facilitate this, resolution 1679 has made a one-week deadline for the deployment of an "assessment mission on all relevant aspects of the mandate of the United Nations operation in Darfur, including force structure, additional force requirements, potential troop-contributing countries and a detailed financial evaluation of future costs".

While the discussion on sending UN troops into Darfur is not new, this latest UNSC resolution is another step for a carefully constructed case, which is setting the stage for expanded imperialist intervention in Sudan.

The foundation of the discussion on a UN deployment is built on the argument that Darfur, Sudan is in need of "peacekeepers". In 2003, a conflict escalated between two organizations in the Darfur region (the Justice and Equality Movement-JEM and the Sudan Liberation Army-SLA) against the Sudanese government. JEM and SLA were demanding rights, equality, representation and an end to persecution by the Sudanese government of the indigenous black African population in Sudan. The government responded to attacks on government sites, with air raids. Following this the Janjaweed, a government supported militia, terrorized the bombed out villages, raping, injuring



and killing many.

While this is an ongoing and horrific situation, it is unfortunately not unprecedented. Throughout Africa, disease, starvation, poverty, violence - the wounds of decades of colonialism - kill millions. What is different about the crisis in Darfur is that it has been consciously taken up as a torch by imperialist countries (e.g. US & Canada) and the UN as a problem for the "world powers" to "solve".

Why does the US suddenly care about Africa?

cases of drunkenness in the future.

On June 20th, 2003, the graphic surveillance photos showing Frank Paul in the police station were released to the public, unleashing more public protests to this senseless death. More and more people were demanding a public inquiry in to the tragic and avoidable death, with groups support ranging from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs all the way to Vancouver City Council. Dirk Ryneveld, Police Complaint Commissioner, originally recommended a public inquiry but was rejected by Solicitor General, Rich Coleman. Despite public pressure, Frank Paul's case eventually became one of 50 cases of police misconduct that were deemed too insignificant for a public inquiry.

The death, the cover-up, and the insignificance that is blanketing this case is known all too well in Vancouver and across Canada. On December 26th, 2004, Gerald Chenery, a 29-year-old Nisga'a man, was shot dead by 11 bullets fired

was a victim of the poverty that Canada imposed on him as an Indigenous person, and a victim of alcoholism that is the legacy of the colonial war on Indigenous people in this country. He was a victim of Canada, where all his life his human rights were denied. He lived in the most populated Indigenous postal code in Canada, the downtown East Side, which suffers from the highest poverty rates, the same as most Native Reserves. He suffered because his life was not valued by the racist police force, as Neil Stonechild and Gerald Chenery's lives were not valued by the police force. Just as the lives of Dudley George, Matthew Dumas, Darryl Night, and J.J. Harper were not valued either. In a country where we make up only 3.3% of the population, we make up more than 18% of prison populations. Is this any coincidence? We need to continue to demand a public inquiry into Frank Paul's death, and we need to expose the racist and colonial crimes that Canada continues to commit against Indigenous people.

"The al Qaeda terrorists lost a base in Afghanistan, but they operate in many other places. We're on their trail, from Pakistan, to the Philippines, to the Horn of Africa." - President George Bush to the 85th Annual American Legion National Convention, August 2003.

Africa is a continent that was plundered to the utmost depths by colonialist powers. Fifty-four countries sit atop a land stripped of wealth and resources. These countries house masses of people forced into poverty, their brothers and sisters scattered across the world after being violently abducted and sold off in a global

slave trade.

Following the initial European invasions and colonial projects, the emerging giant of the United States parachuted into Africa for further plundering of resources and access to markets. In recent years, the US has increased its military presence in Africa, with a few hundred in Djibouti as part of "Operation Enduring Freedom", a mission of the so-called "War on Terror".

More troops in Africa should come as no surprise as the world powers slip into an

Continues on Page 9



Towards a continental revolution

Bolivia: the spirit of Che Guevara after 40 years

By Ivan Drury

...The people who rose up in the last several years got riddled with bullets, but they prevented the gas from evaporating into the hands of other, unprivatized the water in Cochabamba and La Paz. overthrew governments governed from abroad and said no to the income tax and other wise orders from the International Monetary Fund.

-Eduardo Galeano, (from) *The Second Founding of Bolivia*

Above all else, Evo Morales was elected the new president of Bolivia on December 18th 2005 based on two important factors. First, his promise to nationalize the vast gas resources of Bolivia. And second, the mass confidence of workers, peasants, and the 80% Indigenous majority that he would do it. On May 1st 2006 he kept his word. On Mayday, at 12:30pm, while President Evo Morales announced the nationalization of all hydrocarbons in the poorest country in South America, Bolivian troops occupied the offices, oil fields, factories, and gas stations of every oil company in Bolivia. With them, they brought a message, clearly spelled out in the banners hung from the corporate executive suite windows as well as the neon signs of filling stations. The



Bolivian miner with the image of Che Guevara on his helmet.

workers that amounts to 10% of Bolivia's entire landmass, and brought in 5,000 Cuban doctors to begin a national health care program. He has arrested corrupt gas and airline executives, signed an important new trade and solidarity agreement with Cuba and Venezuela, and nationalized the entire gas reserves in Bolivia. Bolivia has been caught in the gears of a historic revolutionary process. Within this process Evo Morales has been lifted up on the shoulders of the people who have, for years, marched to surround the old capital La Paz, to blockade the new capital Sucre, to occupy the mines, and fight in the streets for sovereignty and justice. The poor and illiterate Indigenous majority in Bolivia have crafted Morales into a tool through the breathtaking power of their hopes, dreams, and collective action. With this tool in hand they will now set upon the task of remaking Bolivia in their own image, to smash the poverty, illiteracy, hunger, imperialist domination, and colonial rule that has driven them to the end of the old road. A new road must be carved out of the unknown.

The battle against the enemy at home: Lessons from Venezuela

With the opening of a second front in the imperialist war drive from the Middle East to Latin America through the 2004 invasion of Haiti the US has served notice to Cuba, Venezuela, and now Bolivia, that the US will not hesitate to take that which is not "given." Morales is aware of this threat. When a terrorist bombing rocked La Paz in March, Morales responded quickly, "The United States claims to fight terrorism, yet Americans come to put bombs in our hotels. This is an attack on Bolivian democracy." The lesson is not lost either on the extreme-minority ruling class elite in Bolivia. While this imperialist threat is directed primarily against the oppressed people in Latin America, and plied indirectly against rival

banners read, "Nationalized: Property of Bolivians." And the banners flirted with the winds of change. Picking up where the banners left off, these winds carried a message from impoverished, backwards, landlocked Bolivia to the home bases of these imperialist corporations, to the lands that Bolivia's wealth was the sole legal property of, until the nationalizations of Mayday. In the words of Bolivia's new state oil company advisor, Manuel Morales Oliviera, this message is, "As of now, there is a new important actor [...]: the Bolivian state and government."

It is true that the nationalization of Bolivia's gas reserves and production facilities was a significant move, and even a historic development in the development of the revolutionary process in Bolivia and Latin America, but this process did not begin with the nationalization of Bolivian gas, and it will not end there.

It is true that the governments of imperialist countries and heads of corporations reacted with outrage to the nationalization of Bolivian gas. In the words of a Wall Street Energy analyst quoted in the Financial Times, "This sends a very negative signal to the oil and gas market. It is a signal of rising nationalism that could spread from Bolivia and Venezuela to Mexico and as far as Kuwait." Or, if you prefer, the threat of Spain's Prime Minister Zapatero that the nationalization could force Spain to "reconsider" its aid commitment to Bolivia. Or the accusation of US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice that Morales was engaging in "demagoguery". But their concern is not contained within this single act.

Che's Children

From January 27 to 30th, 2006 the National Post ran a series of articles called "Che's



Bolivian president Evo Morales with Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez.

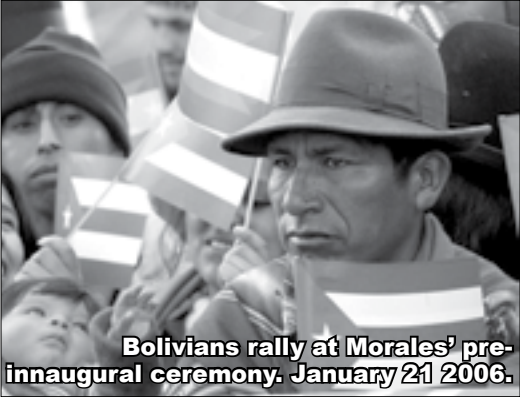
Children: Latin America's New Left" spurred by the election of Morales and his relations with Fidel Castro in Cuba and Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. The second installment of this series was called "Socialism's Hothouse". It warns, "[Morales's] inauguration comes as Latin America's left undergoes an extraordinary rebirth." [...] "Latin America is up for grabs," says Larry Birns, director of Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs. 'At the very time when the US has one of the most conservative administrations, it's dealing with a Latin America that is moving to the left.'" Or more plainly, in the words of a US Embassy Analyst in Bolivia in April 2004, "The conditions Che didn't find are here now." Out of these conditions have emerged revolutionary actions by the new Bolivian government. In his first 30 days in office, Morales carried out hundred of meetings with community and movement

organizations to connect himself with these movements and their needs and demands. By his 100th day in office he had initiated a literacy program based on Cuba's historic literacy campaign, raised the minimum wage by 10% and announced plans for a 100% increase in the months to come, cut 57% of his own wage and the wages of all government ministers and redirected the money to education, set the foundation for the formation of a national assembly to rewrite the Bolivian constitution beginning in August, begun a land reform program for the redistribution of farmland to peasants and

imperialist powers, the threat is also felt by the ruling class in Bolivia and throughout Latin America. These henchmen of imperialism have long enjoyed support and cooperation with imperialism, but that comfort threatens to change dramatically as the level of imperialist competition in Latin America cancels out "fair" diplomatic negotiation, contracts and deals.

The pressure of imperialist war expands like helium into the balloon of the Latin American puppet ruling classes, demanding more and more of them, at the very time that the bayonets of the oppressed people in their nations press with greater and greater determination in from the outside. The contradiction cannot sustain – something's gotta give. In Bolivia, this 'something' was the election of Morales to president. But rather than resolve the crisis, this election raised the conflict between oppressed people in Bolivia and imperialism to a higher and more decisive level.

Morales is the product of a fierce class struggle in Bolivia. In the two years that led up to his election, three presidents were knocked out of power by the powerful mobilizations of workers, peasants, and Indigenous people. These movements more than proved their ability to remove puppets from power – corrupt presidents are probably Bolivia's #1 export to Miami – but in each case the movement was unable to generate a leadership capable of taking power. With each successive insurrection, the people of Bolivia found themselves back at square one, with a new head on the same



Bolivians rally at Morales' pre-inaugural ceremony. January 21 2006.

old colonial-state machinery. Into this vacuum of leadership emerged Evo. His party Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) went into the election with a simple 10 point program: Coca growers rights, food sovereignty, land reform, against bureaucracy, against corruption in government, regional autonomy, development of industry, constituent assembly, against neo-liberalism, and at the top, the nationalization of gas.

This program represented, in a very basic way, the demands of the workers and peasants movement that had brought him into power to do the historically necessary job of winning Bolivia back from the clutches of imperialism. The movement placed him there enthusiastically, but although 54% of the vote is the largest margin by which any president has ever won in Bolivia, it is far from unanimous. For some ultra-left political elements

the pre-inauguration airport handshake between Morales and Fidel was more than diplomacy. Their embrace meant even more than the agreement for 50,000 Bolivians to receive free eye surgeries and free training in Cuba for 5,000 Bolivians as doctors for the majority-poor and healthcare-less Bolivians. Framed by the massive Havana airport banner emblazoned with early Cuban-revolutionary Jose Marti’s words “My Homeland is Humanity,” the sight of Fidel and the newly elected representative of the revolutionary process in Bolivia arm in arm is a welcome sight for millions of working and poor people in Bolivia, in Latin America, and throughout the world.

It is no coincidence that two days after his meeting, with Fidel and Chavez in Havana to sign a trade-solidarity agreement with them, Morales nationalized Bolivia’s gas reserves. Bolivia’s step to join the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas

discriminated.”(our emphasis added) It means that Bolivia will be able to build a national health care system with its own doctors, educated in Cuba. It means that Bolivia will have the raw materials and the technical expertise they need to develop their nation industrially. It means, again in the words of the Joint Communique, “The leaders agree that only a new and genuine integration based on the principles of mutual aid, solidarity and respect for self-determination can provide a suitable response to the level of social justice, cultural diversity, equity and the right to development which all people deserve and claim for.” It meant that Bolivia had officially joined the bloc of independent anti-imperialist countries in the Americas.

Victory to the Bolivian revolution! Towards a continental revolution in the Americas!

“Companeros and companeras, as I said in Tiwanaku [on January 21 at the Indigenous presidential inauguration], if I am not advancing enough, then push me.”

- President Evo Morales, in a statement recounting his first month in power, March 13th, 2006

The spirit of Che Guevara is unquenchable internationalism and relentless international class struggle against imperialism, and capitalism, towards socialist revolution. Che lives on in Bolivia, Venezuela, and Cuba. Oppressed people throughout Latin America and the world have their eyes on Bolivia, Venezuela and Cuba. The ingredients in the processes that are burning, growing, learning, developing, progressing, and getting all the time

of change in Bolivia. He is the *product* of a racing factory of change. Bent over the belts, greasing the wheels, tightening the bolts of the production lines in this factory, are the millions of Indigenous people, peasants, miners, and workers of Bolivia. As far as the workers in this factory are concerned, Morales is not a finished product, and the contradictions, pains and super-exploitation that have driven Bolivians to the brink of revolution are not resolved.

The struggle between the oppressed people of Bolivia and imperialism (and the Bolivian ruling class) is far from over. People in Bolivia, both of oppressed and ruling classes, know this. It is the

within the oppressed peoples movement – including leadership of the trade union federation COB – Morales’ basically nationalist program was nowhere near radical enough. These elements, both within Bolivia and especially in the ‘left’ outside of Bolivia and in imperialist countries, failed to see that the election of Morales represented a historic step forward for the working class and oppressed people in Bolivia. They failed to see that this nationalist program would inevitably place Morales and the movement on the path of confrontation with the capitalist ruling class in Bolivia and their imperialist lords. Dropped into the boiling cauldron of the contradictions between the national interests of Bolivia and global imperialism, Morales’ program is being stretched to its limits and is destined to burst at the seams to emerge as a struggle against capitalism.

Morales evolves with Bolivia

“[Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez are] the commanders of the forces for the liberation of the Americas and the world.”

- Evo Morales, Dec 30, 2005 in Havana

The power of the example of Cuba is seen in the developing leadership and the developing revolutionary movements in Venezuela and Bolivia. And the power of these nations united have caused a sea change in Latin America.

On December 30th, within days of his election, and a good month before his inauguration, Bolivian president-elect Morales flew to Cuba to meet with Cuban president Fidel Castro and cast a friendship between Cuba and a new Bolivia.

In the shadow of the guns of war aimed from Washington and Miami at Cuba, Venezuela, and anyone in Latin America that allies themselves with Cuba and Venezuela’s struggle against imperialism,



Workers and students demonstration in Bolivia. January 18 1979.

(ALBA) on April 29th was no small thing. It means that Morales’ promise to re-nationalize the Bolivian airline is a reality. It means that, in the words of the joint communiqué issued after the signing of ALBA, “in the particular case of Bolivia, they shall work on the complicated task of making the *best possible use* of natural resources such as gas, oil, and others, for the development of its agricultural potential and the training of skilled human resource, so that the benefits may improve the lives of the poor, the exploited and the

stronger in these countries are not at all particular to these countries. But the struggle is very far from over. The reason that the revolutionary process in Bolivia and Venezuela can be called revolutionary is not because they have accomplished revolutions that Morales and Chavez can hang on their walls or pin on their chests as badges.

The great fuss from the camp of exploitation, imperialism and capitalism is that Morales himself is not the engine

tremendous, task of working, poor, and oppressed people in Bolivia, and especially, in the belly of the imperialist beast in Canada, to complete this process. At the same time, we must be on guard and defend the gains of the Bolivian revolutionary process with everything we’ve got, education organization, agitation and mobilization. The Bolivian working and oppressed masses now more than ever need our solidarity and support. Let’s roll on... VIVA BOLIVIA!



Continued From Page 6

economic crisis and push themselves for wider and deeper market and resource access. The crisis they face is characterized by rising unemployment, inflation, and overproduction- as a result of the rapid decline the fight to control the largest regions of

resource rich, strategic land has been intensified.

Similar to many countries in the Middle East and Latin America, the end of colonial governance of African countries has not meant an end to colonial intervention. Like many third world countries, a shift was orchestrated from

direct colonialism to puppet dictatorships. Proxy governments throughout the world are diplomatically supported or opposed by western powers based on the balance of forces, imperialist rivalries and what long and short-term gains can be had. Today, as the occupation of Iraq sits at the centre of the US's military foreign policy, their fight for political and economic hegemony colors each international move.

The era of imperialist war and occupation

In the Caribbean, the Canada-US-France-UN occupation of Haiti is currently being used as a launching pad for imperialist intervention throughout Latin America. In the Middle East, the NATO occupation of Afghanistan serves as the first base for expansion in that region. The targeting of the Sudanese government follows this same formula. The crisis in Darfur is a convenient excuse for an intervention in Sudan, and expansion from there.

While the United States cries crocodile tears for Darfur, their plans for entering into Sudan follow the cold calculation of what is best for America's national interests. Entering Sudan with UN troops, or potentially NATO troops, means a deeper expansion of the imperialist era of war and occupation into Africa.

There are other factors in this calculation that relate to the interest that the US has in maintaining Sudan's stability for

imperialist pillage and control. Hundreds of years of social, political and economic crisis has led to the development of an unsettled population that is opening a fight for sovereignty and political control of their country.

The UN and US both appear to side with the "rebel" SLA and JEM groups and against the Sudanese government. The threat of SLA and JEM – and more importantly the sentiment that they reflect – is not just threatening to the government of Sudan. For US interests, a successful revolt and change of government in Sudan, has the potential to trigger uprisings across the continent. Intervening with UN or NATO troops also serves to take the reins of a potentially explosive situation, and ensuring that it doesn't get out of hand.

Hands off Sudan!

The people of Darfur will not benefit from intervention by the US, the UN or NATO. To glimpse the future of a UN-patrolled Sudan, one can look to Haiti, where UN troops routinely oversee the massacres of Haitian people by the Canada-trained Haitian National Police. To glimpse the future of a NATO-patrolled Sudan, one can look to Afghanistan, where NATO forces are undertaking house-to-house raids, shooting Afghans at military checkpoints, and participating in "counter-terrorism" missions against Afghans who fight for self-determination. To glimpse the

future of a US-patrolled Sudan, one can look to Iraq – 200,000 dead Iraqis, daily firefights, bombings, air raids.

These are only three examples in a list of hundreds of UN, NATO and US led interventions. Unequivocally, in no case has the final result of such interventions been in favor of the inhabitants of the country. What could possibly make Sudan any different?

The calls for intervention in Darfur, while often well meaning, are misguided. What the people of Darfur, the people of Sudan, people of Africa and all oppressed nations around the world need is an end to any and all foreign interventions in their countries. They need to drive out the parasites of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which work for imperialist countries to keep oppressed nations in impossible debt. They need to reclaim their economies from foreign domination. They need to drive out the imperialist interests, which plunder their resources and steal their labor.

People across the world, must trust the capacity of the people of Sudan that they can solve the crisis that they face. The antiwar movement must recognize the maneuverings of imperialism for what they are and take up the demands:

**HANDS OFF SUDAN!
HANDS OFF DARFUR!
NO TO IMPERIALIST
INTERVENTION IN
AFRICA!**

HAZEM JAMJOUR, OF AL-AWDA AND MOSTAFA HENAWAY, OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT TOUR RECEIVED A WARM WELCOMING IN VANCOUVER

By Shannon Bundock

March 2006 marked the third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. In cities and towns across the world, people came to the streets to demand an end to the US-led imperialist war and occupation, which has claimed the lives of at least 200,000 Iraqis since 2003. Throughout the week prior to and following March 18th 2006, Vancouver was abuzz with anti-war picket actions, meetings, forums, and cultural events organized by local anti-war coalition, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO).

The "Global Week of Action Against War and Occupation and for Self-Determination of Oppressed Nations" began on March 13th, in the streets, drawing dozens of people and major media. On that day MAWO organized a picket action in response to the Prime Minister Harper's March 12th "surprise visit" to Afghanistan and the Canadian government's escalating occupation of Afghanistan.

With the picket action setting the tone, the character of the Global Week of Action Against War and Occupation was one of urgency. It not only marked the 2003 invasion of Iraq, but also focused on the expansion and development of the era of war and occupation throughout Afghanistan, Haiti, Palestine, and Indigenous Nations

in Canada. In addition, the week incorporated a special space for those countries coming under threat as a new "axis of evil": Iran, Cuba and Venezuela.

Following the March 13th picket, the global week of action was jam-packed - including a forum on March 15th entitled "Racist Cartoons, Islamophobia: the Roots and Consequences", a forum at Langara College on March 17th titled "Colonialism, War, Occupation and the Struggle for Self-Determination of Oppressed Nations", an antiwar demonstration on March 18th, an all-day antiwar conference and cultural celebration during the day and evening of March 19th, two

forums at Simon Fraser University (SFU) and Capilano College on March 20th, both entitled "Colonialism and the Fight for Self-Determination", a Vancouver city-wide forum March 20th under the title "Self Determination for Palestine! Understanding the Palestinian Struggle and Peace in the Middle East", and a forum at University of British Columbia (UBC) on March 21st "Is Israel an Apartheid State?"

Featured in this week of activity were two guest speakers from Toronto. Hazem Jamjoum, of the Al-Awda Palestine Right to Return Coalition, an organizer with the

University of Toronto Arab Students' Collective, and a founding member of the Coalition Against Israel's War Crimes in Toronto spoke at many events, alongside Mostafa Henaway of the Toronto Solidarity Project, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty and the International Solidarity Movement.

While in Vancouver, Hazem and Mostafa spoke at the university and college events as well as at the city-wide forum in Vancouver and at Mobilization Against War and Occupation's all-day conference, "Against the Imperialist War Drive! For the Self-determination of Oppressed Nations".

The impact of the Global Week of Action Against War and Occupation was widespread – campus antiwar groups were mobilized to organize coordinated events; attendance was high at all of the educational forums and the events were lively with notably active participation and interest from those in attendance. The thread running throughout the week was that the anniversary of the invasion of Iraq is part the opening of the era of war and occupation. The antiwar movement must not stop to commemorate the invasion, but rather incorporate Iraq into the center of demands and consistent organizing for self-determination for all oppressed nations and an end to ongoing imperialist war drives.

Along side Iraq, Palestine holds

an important position as a nation resisting occupation for 58 years by the Zionist settler-state of Israel. The Global Week of Action Against War and Occupation put a spotlight on Palestine with presentations given throughout the week by Hazem Jamjoum and Mostafa Henaway. As a small magnification of one important aspect of the week, Fire This Time has printed the presentation given by Hazem Jamjoum at the Vancouver city-wide forum March 20th under the title "Self Determination for Palestine, Understanding the Palestinian Struggle and Peace in the Middle East". At this event, and throughout the week of events, Hazem spoke on the occupation of Palestine by the Zionist Apartheid state of Israel, with a focus on the Right of Return for Palestinians. On the occasion of formation of State of Israel –15 of May 1948- we choose the following excerpt of his March 20th presentation. Subtitles are from FTT.

Self Determination for Palestine- Understanding the Palestinian Struggle and Peace in the Middle East

Today I am going to talk about the development of what methods Zionism has used to colonize Palestine and essentially to assert its domination and hegemony over the Indigenous population – the Palestinians.



The Birth of Zionist Movement

You can’t really understand what is happening in Palestine, without understanding what Zionism is. Essentially, the Zionist movement is a European Jewish movement that came out in Europe in the late 19th century. What the Zionist movement advocated was the creation of a Jewish state on the land of Palestine. The Zionist movement started off as a tiny minority within the Jewish community. It was also attacked by the religious part of the Jewish community because what it advocated was building the Jewish State before the Messiah came. This reflected the fact that the Zionist movement was actually a secular movement, it wasn’t a religious movement.

By 1897 the decision within the Zionist movement had come that Palestine would be the land that they would want to create a Jewish State on. They began to organize very seriously to reach their goal of creating a Jewish State on the land of Palestine.

In 1897 the organization that was set up to create Israel on the land of Palestine, was called the World Zionist Organization (WZO), which still exists. From 1897 they recognized that what they wanted to do was organize support from the ruling classes of the different super powers at the time – they tried with Germany, France, but the most intense effort was with Britain. They finally got Britain to adopt Zionism as part of Britain’s own strategic interests in the Middle East. In 1917, just as WWI is finishing up, Lord Arthur Balfour of the British cabinet sends a letter to one of the biggest Zionists, and also biggest capitalists in Britain at the time, who was Lord Rothschild. [the letter was] basically saying

countries.

In 1947-48 the British, as a result of becoming very weakened after WWII, had to withdrawal from many of the colonies, including Palestine. The Zionist movement took the chance to unilaterally declare that the state of Israel was now independent, and was a state that was in existence, on May 15th, 1948.

They didn’t just do this randomly, they had already begun preparations. By 1947, they realized the contradiction that they were in. The Jewish land ownership in 1946-1947 that the Jewish National Fund and other arms of the World Zionist Organization had been able to acquire amounted to no more and 6%-7% of the land. Also in terms of population, in most districts the Jewish population is a tiny minority with only one exception, which is Jaffa. This was actually the locust of Jewish migration into Palestine and this is where Tel Aviv is. Jaffa was one of the most important Palestinian cities, it was a port. It was also the city that my grandmother was kicked out of, at this point in our story. They realized that if they were going to create a Jewish State, they would have to somehow get rid of the Indigenous population. There was over 1.2 Million Palestinians on the land, and no more than 600, 000 Jewish people on the land.

Ethnic Cleansing of Palestinians

So they began to systematically remove and expel Palestinians from their villages and their towns, systematically destroying the villages and the towns. In the period of 1947-48, of the over 1.2 million Palestinians living on the land of Palestine, 800,000 were expelled. In many cases these were people

trees.

For the refugees themselves it was a very intense period of ethnic cleansing. In this few months period, 800,000 people being expelled in all directions, 13,000 people were killed. A strategy was used of massacring people and publicizing the massacres to scare others off. It wasn’t just forcible expulsion, it was also using psychological warfare to convince people that they Israelis

and that their land be returned to them. 15% of the land then is given to the Jewish National Fund (JNF), and most of the rest goes under the authority of the Israel Lands Administration (ILA). 50% of the Board of Governors of the ILA are members of the JNF and the policy that the land is for Jewish-use-only begins to be implemented by the ILA as well.

93% of the land of Israel cannot

who are internally displaced is also considered ‘absentee property’, although they are not absentees. The Israeli genius legal mind created a category for them – they are “present absentees”. There are 250,000 “present absentees” in Israel, who are Palestinians that are internally displaced.

In 1965, Israel passed a law that re-zoned many of the villages to make them “non-residential agricultural



A Palestinian women protesting the presence of Israeli occupation soldiers.

were approaching and you had better run, or else they are going to kill you. Many people feared for their lives. For the most part the people who became refugees lived in refugee camps in neighboring states, in the West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt.

After the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, Israel was accepted into the United Nations [UN] at the

be owned by or controlled by Indigenous Palestinians. Between 1948-1967, the Israelis concentrate the Palestinian population into ghettos and concentration towns, mostly in the cities of Palestine. Mobility in and out of these ghettos becomes very difficult, you have an ID card that says you are Arab and according to this ID card, they can tell you where you can and cannot be. What it means usually is that you cannot leave the ghetto without

land” and so all of these villages became unrecognized by the state overnight. So they don’t exist on any Israeli official map, and today 100,000 Palestinians live in these unrecognized villages. They don’t get any electricity, water – none of the things that a government would normally supply. Also because it is re-zoned as non-residential, the houses that people live in and which have been there for hundreds of years are now slated for destruction.

that the British government looks favourably upon the creation of the Jewish State on the land of Palestine.

After World War I, the British took control of Palestine, which they had already promised it to the Jewish people.

Jewish National Fund and Creation of Israel

One of the most important institutions set up by the WZO the creation of the Israeli state is the Jewish National Fund (JNF). In its constitution, the purpose of the JNF is to acquire land, by purchase or otherwise in the land of “Greater Israel”; from the Nile to the Euphrates. Any piece of land that the Jewish National Fund did acquire, by any means that it did acquire it, would be for the sole purpose of Jewish use and serving the interest of Jewish people as defined by the WZO. Another arm of the World Zionist Organization was the Jewish Colonization Agency. The Jewish Agency, as it became later, was to settle Jewish people, to bring them in from other parts of the world, particularly Europe at this point. Both the Jewish National Fund and an arm of the Jewish Agency operate as charities here in Canada.

All through the 30’s and into the 40’s, there is a massive influx of Jewish refugees into Palestine, fleeing the Nazi Holocaust. This is also in part due to the fact that countries like Canada and the United States and Britain closed off their borders to Jewish refugees coming from Europe, as a result of anti-Semitic policies in this country, in the United States, in Britain, in Australia, and in several other



Hazem Jamjoum Speaking at a MAWO forum “Self Determination for Palestine! Understanding the Palestinian Struggle and Peace in the Middle East” . March 21 2006.

who lived in villages that were destroyed by the Zionist movement in 1947-48. Over 530 villages and 11 towns destroyed; razed to the ground. Right after the declaration of the state, most of the lands of these villages were transferred to the Jewish National Fund [JNF] or the Israeli Lands Authority. What the JNF did was build big National Parks. These big National Parks were built and declared “parks” so that no one could come and say “This is our land” – [the response would be] “no actually it is State land”. The JNF operates as an environmental organization and can call itself a charity here in Canada: because they build parks and plant

behest of the United States, even though one of the conditions for being accepted into the UN was that Israel allow the return of the [Palestinian] refugees, something called UN Resolution 194. [This resolution] demands both that the refugees be allowed to return and that their properties be restituted to the refugees.

Israel as an Apartheid State

Israel then implemented an Apartheid strategy on the Palestinians that remained. One of the main tenets becomes for Israel not to allow the return of the refugees, which is the central demand of the Palestinian struggle; that the refugees return

permission from an [Israeli] military commander. Palestinians with citizenship in Israel are governed under military law, while the rest of the Jewish Israelis are governed under civilian law.

Other manifestations of the system of Apartheid in Israel is that a number of the Palestinians whose villages were destroyed, did not cross an international boundary and became displaced within Israel.

The land that was stolen from the refugees under Israeli law is called absentee property. It is under the custodian of ‘absentee property’ in the Israeli ministry of finance. The land of the people

On a weekly to monthly basis the Israeli military will go into these unrecognized villages and destroy the homes of these [non-Jewish] citizens of Israel.

Annexation of West Bank and Gaza Strip

In 1967 Israel occupies the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula. In order to maximize the Israeli control of the land and minimize the number of Indigenous Palestinians, the main tenet is to export the Jewish civilian population of Israel into the West Bank to de facto, on the ground, start taking land. Throughout the 1970’s-80’s the geography of the West Bank and Gaza is changed. 250,000 Palestinians are ethnically cleansed from the West Bank and then life is made miserable in the West Bank and Gaza.

By the early 1990’s, a number of factors led the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leadership to see itself as needing to talk to Israel on Israel’s terms. This brought about the Oslo Agreement. The reason that this agreement did not end the conflict was that the Oslo Agreement was nothing more and nothing less than Israel getting the PLO to agree to the Apartheid map. All of the peace agreements subsequent to that, all the proposed maps look the same – three Bantustans divided up. Not satisfied with this, but along the same lines, the Israelis began to build a wall. This served to encircle the Palestinian Bantustans into open-air prisons.

This is the situation now. This is all under the guise of something illusive called the “peace process”, which is nothing more than a blue print for Apartheid.

The Work of Karl Marx and the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century

By Ricardo Alarcon
Edited By Walter Lippmann
A CubaNews translation by Joe Bryak

“Let us remember that he said that it was not enough that the idea clamored to be made reality, but that it was also necessary that reality shout out to be made into idea.” - Franz Mehring

I will not attempt to delineate here the ample and rich intellectual production of Karl Marx, his deep analysis of capitalism or the principal events of his era, nor will I touch upon his exemplary life as a social fighter and revolutionary leader. I know that these themes are familiar to you all.

I propose, if you allow me, to separate Marx from Marxism. With that I allude to the necessity of thinking of Marx as Marx, rather than from any of the versions of Marxism, to imagine him declaring the challenges of the twenty-first century, separating what is essential of his work from what others made of his work. Instead of embarking on the endless succession of reviews of his thinking that goes along with

ideology, is not gospel in which we are given Revealed Truth, set in stone and eternal, but an endless flow of suggestions to keep working on with intelligence, in order to continue researching and struggling for truth.”

To take his work, on top of any other consideration, as a source of inspiration and guide for those who, like he, want not only to explain the world but, more than anything, transform it, fighting until achieving socialism.

We are not trying to find in his texts data that may seem useful to the analysis of contemporary reality, of capitalism as it is today, something which he didn’t try to do nor would have been able to propose doing.

Our obligation is to arm ourselves with all of his ideology and from that build a theory and practice that corresponds with that reality and helps to transform it.

There is probably no higher nor more urgent priority for socialists than this: to define a strategic conception and precisely delineate the tactics and methods of struggle adequate for confronting the capitalism that exists now. The theoretical tools at our disposal

much less with the imaginary disappearance of class struggle, which some intended to convert in immoveable dogmas in rushed texts that inundated the planet at the beginnings of the last decade of the twentieth century.

The collapse of the USSR and the bankruptcy of the so-called “real socialism” gave way for a triumphalist operation skillfully launched by the main centers of imperialism which, nevertheless, could hardly hide their essentially defensive character with its apparently total and definitive victory, capitalism, in reality, entered a new phase that could be terminal, in which its contradictions and limitations are manifested with a frank crudeness and in which arise new, unsuspected possibilities for revolutionary action.

That paradox perhaps may explain the short duration of that triumphalism in the academic level. Few today repeat that nonsense about the “end of history.” Not even Fukuyama does it, more busy these days in criticizing the failure of the policies of Bush which are, nevertheless, much due to his own laborious and wordy work. The present crisis within the U.S. neoconservative movement

to achieve, whose enormous meaning no one will be able to tear out of the memory of the proletariat but which was a specific project—that is to say, a human work, with virtues and defects, glories and shadows, a result of immense sacrifice of a concrete people in circumstances and conditions likewise concrete—and not the outcome of a predestined and universal idea.

The conversion of the Soviet experience into a paradigm for those who in other places fought their own anti-capitalist battles, and the imperative obligation of defending it from its inflamed and powerful enemies, led to the subordination of a great part of the revolutionary movement to the policies and interests of the USSR, which did not always correspond to those of other peoples. The Cold War



Ricardo Alarcon

thoroughly penetrated many organizations and individuals, and they couldn’t react rationally when the system that supported their faith collapsed. They had lived convinced that they were part of an unbeatable force, owners and administrators of truths scientifically demonstrated, and they marched in an enthusiastic procession in

those who have claimed him as their own, as well as with those who have tried unsuccessfully to bury him, it is necessary to rescue his fundamental legacy, that which makes him transcend his era to be [with us] here and now in the struggle for human emancipation.

I take as a starting point the warning, not always heeded, of Rosa Luxemburg: “The work Capital of Marx, like all his

need to be sharpened for their efficient employment in this era that presents new challenges for the revolutionary movement.

These notes do not have any other aim than contributing to the discussion of that crucial theme and obviously lack any pretension of exhausting it. They have been edited having in mind that which from the great unfinished text declared Rosa Luxemburg: “Incomplete as they are, these two volumes enclose values infinitely more precious than any definitive and perfect truth, the spur for the labor of thought and that critical analysis and judgment of ideas, which is what is most genuine in the theory that Karl Marx has left to us.”

Another indispensable observation: The necessity of elaborating a revolutionary theory that brings victory confronted with what has been called neo-liberal globalization has absolutely nothing to do with a supposed liquidation of Marxism and

suggests that not a few question now if they were the true winners of the Cold War.

Self-critical reflection is called for on our side as well.

We should admit our own errors, especially those that served as fertile ground for the bourgeois manipulation of the destruction of the Soviet model. This is not the time for profound analysis of the failure of an experience that now belongs to historians. But it is inevitable that we underline here something that led to the defeat and to its advantageous use by the enemy.

That project—independently of Lenin and of the creative spirit that animated the first years of the Bolshevik revolution—reduced Marxism to a determinist and mechanist school of thought, transformed research into dogma, thought into propaganda, until the point of confining it to a condition of terminal hardening of the arteries. It constructed a simplified “science” that thought it had demonstrated that socialism would inevitably come about, by itself, as an unavoidable consequence of a predetermined history and that that socialism would continue its march, also uncontested, according to laws and rules codified in a strange ritual. Socialism, therefore, was inevitable and invincible; with it one would truly arrive to the end of history. Not any socialism, but that one in particular, that which, with admirable struggle, Lenin and the Bolsheviks tried

and the division of the world into two blocks of antagonistic states that threatened each other with mutual nuclear annihilation, reduced to a minimum the capacity of critical thought and reinforced dogmatism.

In honor of the truth one must render homage to the numberless men and women who sacrificed their lives, the greater part

which, curiously, the founder did not march, having declared, with all naturalness, “I am not a Marxist.”

The myth destroyed, old dogmatists were incapable of appreciating the new possibilities in the revolutionary movement, the spaces heretofore nonexistent that were necessary to explore with audacity and creativity.



May Day in Havana. May 1 2006.



May Day in Villa Clara. May 1 2006.

in total anonymity, and died heroically in any corner of the planet defending the land of the Soviets, its policies and its application in its own native soil, as wrong as it may have been in more than a few cases. For them, respect and admiration. But what is being considered now is recognizing the very harmful consequences of that tendency.

The tendency to blindly “tail”

There were those who, in unsurpassed acrobatics, joined the “conquerors,” converting treason into their new religion.

But there is a growing number of those who do not conform, are unsatisfied and rebel. All the rhetoric about U.S. hegemony falls to pieces with its bogging down in Iraq, the undeniable contradictions and limitations of its economy, the awakening of

masses that were supposed to be asleep there, and the corruption and moral fissure that undermine its political system.

Their associates in Europe are in the same boat. Accustomed as well to the “bloc” discipline and “tailism,” they don’t arrive at the knowledge of the depth of the insurmountable crisis of that which it was, but no longer is, omnipotent boss.

In Latin America and in other parts of the Third World, meanwhile, radical processes are affirmed and plans are put forth that seek to eliminate, or at least reduce, imperialist domination.

For the first time, anti-capitalist malaise is manifested,



simultaneously and everywhere, in advanced countries and in those left behind and is not limited to the proletariat and other exploited sectors. This

definitive formation has to take place in constant interrelation with practice, in a process in which both form an inseparable whole. But we are not speaking of just any practice but that of a movement that is both “truly mass and truly revolutionary.”

When can a movement be defined as truly a mass movement and when does it acquire the quality of being truly revolutionary? The answers will not be found in a research laboratory, nor will they erupt from academic debate. Revolutionaries themselves will have to create them, men and women of flesh and blood, acting from the masses, building their movement and trying to make it ever more revolutionary.

changed men are a product of different circumstances and of a modified education, forgets that it is men, precisely, who make circumstances change and that even the educator needs to be educated. This leads, then, inevitably, to the division of society in two parts, one of which is on top of society (this, for example, in Robert Owen)

“The coincidence of the modification of circumstances and of human activity can only be conceived and understood rationally as revolutionary practice.”

In the Second Declaration of Havana, Cubans proclaimed that “the duty of every revolutionary is to make revolution.” To make it means to create a new world in spite of the obstacles and limitations that circumstances impose, in a ceaseless battle in which both man and reality will go on transforming each other reciprocally.

“A certain form of socialism will emerge inevitably from the also inevitable decay of capitalism” -- Joseph A. Schumpeter

The prediction that I just cited has been the object of implacable denunciation on the part of bourgeois thinkers. In 1942 it was difficult to see the fall of capitalism as something inevitable. Its author, nevertheless, did not cease believing in it until the end.

Eight years afterward, just before dying, he said: “Marx was wrong in his diagnosis of how capitalist society would fall; but he was

Visiting Cuba Through the Eyes of a Young Canadian Activist

Memoir of a trip with Adventure, Education and Politics!



OR How I Learned to Love Cuba!

Part 2

By Sophie Ziner

The wheels of our plane hit the hot tarmac at the Jose Marti international airport in Havana, came to a stop, and with my heart beating hard in my chest, I climbed off the plane and set my feet- for the first time, on Cuban soil. The first thing to meet my eyes was a huge sign, running the length of the building in front of me reading “Patria es Humanidad”- Humanity is my Homeland. At the end of the nineteenth century Jose Marti said that short quote while fighting for Cuba’s independence from imperialist intervention. As I would learn over my next week in Cuba, this powerful idea has a presence everywhere in

rooms. This is where we stayed for most of the trip.

Our bus into Havana brought us past carefully painted billboards, promoting not perfume and cell phones, but literacy, community, safe sex, volunteer work, organic gardening and mobilization. I noticed that there were people standing alongside the road, people in suits, people dressed for all sorts of work, and I asked someone if everyone was waiting for busses. They weren’t waiting for busses, they were hitchhiking- it turned out that in most cases, in Cuba it’s illegal not to pick someone up if you have space in your car!

Havana, compared to grey and rainy Vancouver, was full of colour and sounds, people and traffic, bikes, smoke and horns.

is not only expressed today in the struggles that we could call “classics”--between classes and nations that are exploited and exploiters--but in those that are added, at times with more vigor, those that demand the preservation of the environment, or work for the rights of women and discriminated people and those excluded because of gender, ethnicity or religion.

A diverse group, multicolor, in which there is no shortage of contradictions and paradoxes grows in front of the dominant system. It is not yet the rainbow that announces the end of the storm. Spontaneity characterizes it; it needs articulation and coherence that need to be stimulated without sectarianism, without being carried away with wildness. The great challenge of revolutionaries, of communists, is to define our part, the place that we should occupy in this battle. For that we need a theory.

In that sense one must return to the well known but forgotten definition of Lenin: “A correct revolutionary theory is only formed in a definitive manner in close connection with practical experience in a movement that is truly mass and truly revolutionary.”

That theory, on a world scale, does not exist in fact, to serve as a guide in the struggle to substitute the present order and transform it in the direction toward socialism. That theory has to be formed and its

“Man [sic] thinks as he lives,” which more than a few militants still repeat, without warning of the mistake nor of its paralyzing effects. The relation between man and his surroundings is of

not wrong in the prediction that finally it would fall.”

In 1950 U.S. capitalism reached the zenith of its hegemony. It was the only nuclear power, it hadn’t

“
answers will not be found
in a research laboratory,
nor will they erupt
from academic debate.
Revolutionaries themselves
will have to create them,
men and women of flesh
and blood
”

decisive importance for ethics and politics and in order to understand the Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach. To transform the world the key is in the Third Thesis. Let’s remember the statements of Marx:

“The materialist theory that men are product of circumstances and of education, and that, therefore,

suffered the devastation that the world war had wreaked on the other developed countries, it dominated Western Europe and Latin America economically and politically, it possessed a superiority in science and technology.

At the middle of the last century

Cuba, and I would see its impact everywhere we visited.

The group I was traveling with, Pastors for Peace, is a US based solidarity group, which

Old buildings and old cars were interspersed with lush and expansive community gardens, mangos dripping off trees behind fences, red tomatoes peeking

A section of Havana Airport.



has traveled to Cuba collecting and bringing humanitarian aid through the US for the last 16 years, intentionally breaking the US law in a symbolic gesture against the US blockade of Cuba. Having crossed the US/ Mexican border at Reynosa with 180 tons of aid, the 150 of us “Caravanistas” had gone on to Tampico, where the busloads of goods had been loaded onto barges, and we had boarded a plane and flew to Cuba (See FTT Vol. 3 Issue1- for the first part of my trip).

In Havana, I stayed in the Martin Luther King Memorial Centre, a Cuban organization that help co-organize the Caravan’s stay in Cuba, along with the Cuban Council of Churches and the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). It’s a big sunny building attached to a Baptist Church, with dormitory

out through rows of beans. The Malecón, a long broad boulevard running the length of the shore in Havana, looked just like the pictures I had seen, only on the days we were visiting, it was not full of the millions of people marching in one of Cuba’s famous mobilizations.

The first few days in Havana were packed with events and visits. We got to visit churches, farms, schools, clinics; had evenings with cultural performances and dancing (one night we got a special performance from one of Cuba’s great hip hop crews- Anonimo Consejo which was incredible).

It was through these visits that we began to be introduced to the goals and principles that Cuba works with. The Cuba we were seeing was a place where peoples’ well-being was a priority. We learned about every thing from



the world was quite different from what it is today. By a route that they probably did not foresee we are now nearer the fulfillment of the prophecy in which, paradoxically, both the author of Capital and his tenacious Austro-North American critic coincided.

The protagonist has changed, the subject of history, man. The world population has grown in an exponential manner since the days of the publication of the Communist Manifesto



and it continues doing so. Man traveled through tens of thousands of years to arrive at the first billion. It took a century to triple the double of that figure. Each 25 years is added to that figure a quantity similar to that which represented the whole planet when Karl Marx was born. At a similar rhythm the natural resources of the earth is exhausted and animal and vegetable species are annihilated forever. Man is the only being

ever many more--in spite of early death, misery, hunger--and also those who in an unstoppable spiral, are displaced toward the enclaves of opulence.

The Third World penetrates the First. The latter needs the former and at the same time rejects it. In Europe and North America appears an undesirable protagonist, a mute guest that demands its rights. While here we carry out this important collective reflection animated by the example of a truly

creative and humanist thinker and try to find the paths toward a better world, the U.S. Congress continues discussing what to do with those who number at least 11 million people--that is, the Cuban population--the so-called undocumented, searching for formulas that allow them to continue to be exploited while access to that society is closed.

The migratory phenomenon will be maintained and will gain in size along with capitalism, with

raises an essential question that goes to the very roots of the political system that the West has attempted to set as an obligatory model for all. There is an increasingly growing number of those who work hard there, pay their taxes, die in their wars, but cannot vote nor be elected. In today's Rome the participation of the citizens is reduced while the mass of those excluded is constantly growing, the modern "barbarians." In this very building, recently, professor Robert Dahl--prominent apologist for the archetypical capitalist--recognized in such marginalization the principal lack of contemporary liberal democracy.

The end of that exclusion, the struggle for democracy, specifically including the democratization of Western societies, should be a priority for those who wish to transform the world. This is yet more urgent if we perceive the other face of the migratory phenomenon together with it grows, in parallel, racial hatred, xenophobia, which feeds fascist tendencies today present in an obvious manner in those societies.

The migratory problem reflects, thus, an aspect of capitalism today that it is also worthwhile reflecting on. While the emigrants are humiliated and super exploited in the countries where they end up, there they are used also as instruments for the oppression of the local workers. Being used as the international reserve army, stripped of rights, and until now not organized,

they serve to lower wages, are forced to accept conditions that, as Bush the lesser likes to say, U.S. workers do not accept.

To free the immigrants from their exploitation becomes, therefore, essential for the emancipation of the workers in the developed countries. To forge a union between both exploited sectors, in an area that has had advances that are still insufficient but whose importance cannot be underestimated, is today a task that cannot be postponed. To rescue the role of the labor union, true bulwark of civil society and to guarantee the rights of all workers, without exceptions, to organize oneself is an indispensable response to a capitalism that ever more openly casts off its "liberal" mask and demonstrates the perverse face of tyranny.

Fascism must be stopped. It is necessary to prevent it from being able to gather its

the programs to set up University satellite schools in remote areas, to the program where every child under the age of 7 is guaranteed one litre of milk a day. No Cuban we met was a millionaire. No Cuban we met owned a shipping company, or a sugar plantation or a chain of stores, personally. As it was explained to us, these things are not a priority in Cuba, the priority is to make sure everyone has the basic things they need to live with dignity, and to develop in good health.

We also got to see the limitations that the 46-year-old US imposed blockade of Cuba has brought.



Costing the Cuban people an estimated \$82Billion over the years, the blockade continues to prevent Cubans from accessing medical supplies, technological equipment, food, and many other much needed goods and services. Where Cuba has more doctors per capita than anywhere in the world, hospitals and clinics are still undersupplied with medicines and equipment-things as simple as disposable

permanently. He talked about the spirit of internationalism that the school is founded on, how at first the school was only open to students from Latin America, but how they realized the effectiveness of the school and the need that people all over the world had for doctors and they expanded it to give spaces to students from any country. There are currently almost 4,000 students at the school, from 24 countries, with over 33 ethnic groups represented. Incredibly, there are also 500 spaces available for US students, but because of the travel

blockade and red tape the US administration puts up, there are only 71 American students at this time. August 1st, the first students graduated from the school. The school takes a holistic approach to medicine, training doctors on three principals- Academic Science, Social Commitment and Professional Development.

After the introduction, a young

that has dedicated himself with so much fury and efficiency to destroy life.

Irreversible climactic changes, forests transformed into deserts, poisoned waters, unbreathable air, irremediably degraded soils, astounding conglomerations of human beings in uninhabitable and always growing urban clogs are distressing worries that compose a reality not known before.

Beyond ideologies the people continue discovering that which is obvious. In 1992, at the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro, governments and civil society put ourselves in agreement that in order to save the earth it was necessary "to change the patterns of production and of consumption," words subscribed to by many, including Bush senior. They were words, certainly. But they imply explicit recognition although in the text of a document, of the necessity of the radical transformation of the relations between men and between them and nature.

The subject, besides, inevitably moves. Population grows exponentially but it doesn't do so equally in all parts of the world.

In the so-called developed countries it is frozen and even tends to shrink. In the rest, in that part of the world that was baptized as the Third, they are more,

its present characteristics, as it is expanded through the whole world. Capitalism cannot stop it, just as it is neither capable of abandoning those characteristics and much less transform itself into another thing.

The Central Intelligence Agency of the United States has prognosticated that, as a consequence of that phenomenon, very soon deep changes will have been produced in the cultures of several European countries. The struggle for the rights of immigrants and against discrimination expressed in public demonstrations that mobilized millions of people and in the historic May Day protest--a date that never before had been expressed in this way in the United States--brings to the forefront a political force that now cannot be easily ignored.

The presence of millions of people discriminated against and lacking civil and political rights



own victims into a senseless opposition. Never again should a Nixon be able to mobilize construction workers against the youth who, in the seventies of the last century, rebelled against the war in Vietnam. It is possible to unite them. We saw them united, in Seattle, both opposing neo-liberal globalization.

One must help them to converge, and it is possible to propose this to them, and it is a crucial aspect of the world today and in the struggle to change it.

The poor try to emigrate to the rich world to escape poverty. The rich, meanwhile, try to place their capital in the poor countries in order to increase their profits with the misery of others and inevitably worsen the conditions of work and of life for workers in the developed countries. Few in the United States and Europe would identify themselves as members of a worker aristocracy, beneficiary of the dropping of crumbs coming from the colonies. Today they are seen as those defeated by

a system that, among other things, depends ever more on “outsourcing” and the maquila and that imposes everywhere the dogma of the omnipotent market and “free trade.”

To forge convergence, to later

peace and life. To fight to create new models, to forge alliances where possible or meanwhile promote points or moments of coincidence between the diverse forces that today, for the most varied motives, are out of step with the world as it is, should constitute the principal guide for revolutionaries.

To struggle so that the antiwar and anti-globalization movements flow into the same great stream and that all those discriminated against, all the marginalized be included is the main duty of revolutionaries today. It is the way to create a better world. It is the road to take in advancing toward socialism. To achieve socialism in this century there must be “heroic creation,” a creation that is authentic, independent, and therefore diverse and unique.

Ricardo Alarcón is Vice President of Cuba and President of the National Assembly of People’s Power.

He gave the above speech at the opening of 3rd International Marx Conference, On May 3, 2006. Convention Palace, Havana, Cuba

“To struggle so that the antiwar and anti-globalization movements flow into the same great stream and that all those discriminated against, all the marginalized be included is the main duty of revolutionaries today.”

on reach unity between the exploited people of the First and Third World, is now not only possible but necessary. But it is not enough to work for unity between all the proletariat of the world, of the First and Third World, of the South and of the North. Antifascist unity is essential for democracy,

It was a very moving speech- everyone was in tears by the end of it.

Later in the summer, upon returning home, I would see reports all over the news, about a horrible hurricane that ripped through the gulf states of the US. I would watch news reports showing thousands of poor, mostly black and latino people, their lives reduced to shambles, virtually abandoned by the government of the United States. I would also read about Cuba’s response to this tragedy- an offer to send 1,500 fully equipped doctors to assist the people of New Orleans, only for the US to turn this offer down. As I would read these things through August and September, I would think constantly of that young woman from Philly, and the offer that she accepted and why.

The impact of these visits, not just to the ELAM, but also to the other schools, the churches, the clinics, the farms, the community gardens, all of it- of seeing real life in Cuba, began to accumulate, on my fellow caravanistas and me. Questions were flying around- of “why Cuba?” How could a country, so small and under so much attack do such great things? And why? Why didn’t the countries we were coming from have the same values, the same institutions? What did Cuba have the United States didn’t have? Canada?

My mind kept coming back to the same thing, time after time- the first thing I saw in Cuba. “Humanity is my Homeland”. The foundation of the Cuban Revolution, the vision that the Cuban Revolution was built on- fighting for all human life- not

just in Cuba, but also for every single person around the world.

One of the most viscous attacks that Cuba has faced since the revolution is the constant slander from the ruling class’s media in the US, including the accusation that Cuba is a violator of human rights. The people of Cuba are great at exposing the US on this accusation though- a friend I met told me

“Oh, there are human rights violations that take place in Cuba- they just all take place in the US military base in Guantanamo Bay.” (In Cuba you never see a flag at full mast, there is always space at the top, to remember that all of Cuba is not free because Guantanamo is still occupied and people are suffering there.)

I started to see that it went beyond that too though- that not only was the blockade of Cuba a horrible violation of these human rights that the US claim to treasure so much, but that the things that Cuba had fought for and gained in spite of this blockade were representing REAL human rights.

So why Cuba? What is so threatening about this island of 11.5 million people, in the middle of the ocean? What would compel the US government to attack it so fiercely?

The answers would begin to unfold as we got ready to celebrate the 26th of July, the national celebration of the revolution, with a speech by Fidel Castro himself at the Karl Marx theatre.

To be continued...

La obra de Carlos Marx y los desafíos del siglo XXI

Por Ricardo Alarcon

EL presidente de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular de Cuba, y Vicepresidente De Cuba

III Conferencia Internacional “La obra de Carlos Marx y los desafíos , La Habana, Cuba, Mayo 3-6, 2006

“Recordemos que decía que no bastaba que la idea clamase por hacerse realidad, sino que era necesario que la realidad gritase también por eruirse en idea” - Franz Mehring

No intentaré abordar aquí la amplia y rica producción intelectual de Carlos Marx, su profundo análisis del capitalismo o de los principales acontecimientos de su época ni tampoco lo haré acerca de su vida ejemplar como luchador social y dirigente revolucionario. Se que estos temas resultan familiares a ustedes.

Les propongo, si se me concede la licencia, separar a Marx del marxismo. Con ello aludo a la necesidad de pensar a Marx desde Marx más que desde cualquiera de las versiones del marxismo, imaginarlo a él planteándose los desafíos del Siglo XXI, apartando lo esencial de su obra, de lo que de su obra hicieron otros. En lugar de embarcarnos

en la nunca acabada sucesión de relecturas de su pensamiento que han acompañado a quienes lo reivindicán como suyo, tanto como a los que se empeñan inútilmente en sepultarlo, es necesario rescatar su legado fundamental, aquello que le hace trascender su tiempo para estar aquí y ahora, en la lucha por la emancipación humana.

Tomo como punto de partida la advertencia, no siempre escuchada, de Rosa Luxemburgo: “la obra capital de Marx, como su ideología toda, no es ningún evangelio en que se nos brinden verdades de última instancia, acabadas y perennes, sino manantial inagotable de sugerencias para seguir trabajando con la inteligencia, para seguir investigando y luchando por la verdad”.

Asumir su obra, por encima de cualquier otra consideración, como fuente de inspiración y guía para quienes como él queremos no sólo interpretar acertadamente el mundo sino sobre todo transformarlo luchando hasta alcanzar el socialismo.

No se trata de encontrar en sus textos citas que parezcan útiles al análisis de la realidad contemporánea, del capitalismo tal cual es hoy día, algo de lo que él no se ocupó ni habría podido proponérselo.

Nuestra obligación, es valernos

de su ideología toda y desde ella construir una teoría y una práctica que corresponda con esa realidad y contribuya a transformarla.

Probablemente no exista prioridad más alta ni urgencia mayor para los socialistas: definir una concepción estratégica y precisar las tácticas y los métodos de lucha adecuados para enfrentar al capitalismo realmente existente. Las herramientas teóricas a nuestra disposición requieren ser afiladas para su empleo eficaz en esta etapa que plantea nuevos desafíos al movimiento revolucionario.

Estas notas no tienen otro propósito que contribuir a la discusión de ese crucial tema y carecen, obviamente, de cualquier pretensión de agotarlo. Han sido redactadas teniendo presente lo que del gran texto inconcluso afirmara también Rosa Luxemburgo: “Inacabados como quedaron, estos dos tomos encierran valores infinitamente más preciosos que cualquier verdad definitiva y perfecta: el acicate para la labor del pensamiento y ese análisis crítico y de enjuiciamiento de las propias ideas, que es lo que hay de más genuino en la teoría que nos ha legado Carlos Marx”.

Otra observación indispensable. La necesidad de elaborar una teoría revolucionaria que sirva a la victoria frente a lo que se ha dado en llamar



Ricardo Alarcon y Fidel Castro. May 1 1996.

la globalización neoliberal no tiene absolutamente nada que ver con una pretendida liquidación del marxismo y mucho menos con la imaginaria desaparición de la lucha de clases que algunos intentaron convertir en dogmas inamovibles en apresurados textos que inundaron el planeta a comienzos de la última década del Siglo XX.

La disolución de la URSS y la bancarrota del denominado “socialismo real” dieron paso a una operación triunfalista hábilmente desplegada por los principales



centros del imperialismo que, sin embargo, apenas podía ocultar su carácter esencialmente defensivo: con su victoria aparentemente total y definitiva, el capitalismo, en realidad, entraba en una nueva fase que pudiera ser terminal en la que sus contradicciones y limitaciones se manifiestan con una crudeza no disimulada y en la que surgen nuevas, insospechadas, posibilidades para la acción revolucionaria.

Esa paradoja quizás explique la escasa duración de aquel triunfalismo en el plano académico. Pocos repiten hoy aquella bobería acerca del

y los bolcheviques, cuya enorme significación nadie podrá arrancar de la memoria del proletariado pero que era eso, un proyecto específico, -es decir, una obra humana, con virtudes y defectos, glorias y sombras, resultado de inmensos sacrificios de un pueblo concreto en circunstancias y condiciones también concretas- y no la realización de una idea predestinada y universal.

La conversión de la experiencia soviética en paradigma para quienes en otros lugares libraban sus propias luchas anticapitalistas, y la imperiosa

obligación de defenderla frente a sus enconados y poderosos enemigos, condujo a la subordinación de gran parte del movimiento revolucionario a la política y los intereses de la URSS que no siempre correspondían con los de otros pueblos. La guerra fría y la división del mundo en dos bloques de estados antagónicos que se amenazaban mutuamente con la aniquilación nuclear, redujo al mínimo la capacidad del pensamiento crítico y reforzó el dogmatismo.

En honor a la verdad hay que rendir homenaje a los incontables

socavan su sistema político.

No andan lejos sus socios en Europa. Acostumbrados, ellos también, a la disciplina bloquista y el “seguidismo” no alcanzan a descubrir la profundidad de la crisis insuperable del que fue, pero ya no es, omnipotente jefe.

En América Latina y en otras partes del Tercer Mundo, entretanto, se afirman procesos radicales y se adelantan esquemas de concertación que buscan eliminar, o al menos reducir, la dominación imperialista.

El malestar anticapitalista, por primera vez, se manifiesta, al mismo tiempo en todas partes, en los países avanzados y en los atrasados y no se reduce sólo a los proletarios y otras capas explotadas. No sólo se expresa hoy en las luchas que pudiéramos llamar “clásicas” -entre clases y naciones explotadas y explotadoras- sino que a ellas se agregan, a veces con más aliento, las que exigen la salvación del medio ambiente, o los derechos de la mujer y de los discriminados y excluidos por cuestiones de sexo, etnia o religión.

Un conjunto diverso, multicolor, en el que no faltan contradicciones y paradojas surge frente al sistema dominante No es aún el arco iris que anuncia el fin de la tormenta. Lo caracteriza la espontaneidad, requiere articulación y coherencia que deben ser estimuladas sin sectarismo, sin arrebatarle la frescura.

El gran reto de los revolucionarios, de los comunistas, es definir nuestro papel, el lugar que debemos ocupar en esta batalla. Para ello necesitamos una teoría.

En ese sentido hay que regresar a la tan conocida como olvidada definición de Lenin: “Una acertada teoría revolucionaria sólo se forma de manera definitiva en estrecha conexión con la experiencia práctica



¿Cuándo puede un movimiento ser definido como verdaderamente de masas y cuándo adquiere la cualidad de verdaderamente revolucionario? Las respuestas no se encontrarán en un laboratorio de investigación ni brotarán del debate académico. Habrán de crearlas los propios revolucionarios, hombres y mujeres de carne y hueso, actuando desde las masas, construyendo su movimiento y tratando de hacerlo cada vez más revolucionario. La vida entera del genial jefe bolchevique puede

circunstancias y de la educación, y de que, por tanto, los hombres modificados son producto de circunstancias distintas y de una educación modificada, olvida que son los hombres, precisamente, los que hacen que cambien las circunstancias y que el propio educador necesita ser educado. Conduce, pues, forzosamente, a la división de la sociedad en dos partes, una de las cuales está por encima de la sociedad (así, por ejemplo, en Roberto Owen)

“fin de la historia”. No lo hace ya siquiera Fukuyama, más preocupado en estos días en criticar el fracaso de la política de Bush que tanto le debe, sin embargo, a sus elucubraciones. La actual crisis dentro del movimiento neoconservador norteamericano sugiere que no son pocos quienes se cuestionan ahora si verdaderamente fueron ellos los vencedores de la Guerra Fría.

De nuestro lado se impone asimismo la reflexión autocrítica.

Debemos admitir nuestros propios errores sobre todo los que sirvieron de abono a la manipulación burguesa del derrumbe del modelo soviético. No es este el momento para profundizar en el análisis del fracaso de una experiencia que ya pertenece a los historiadores. Pero sí resulta ineludible subrayar aquí algo que condujo a la derrota y a su ventajosa utilización por el enemigo.

Ese proyecto -independientemente de Lenin y del espíritu creador que animó los primeros años de la Revolución bolchevique- redujo el marxismo a una escolástica determinista y mecanicista, transformó la investigación en dogma, el pensamiento en propaganda, hasta atraparlo en una esclerosis sin salida. Fabricó una “ciencia” simplificadora que creyó demostrar que el socialismo se realizaría inevitablemente, por sí mismo, como ineluctable consecuencia de una historia predeterminada y que ese socialismo seguiría su marcha, también incontestable, conforme a leyes y reglas codificadas en extraño ritual. El socialismo, en resumen, era inevitable e invencible, con él se arribaría verdaderamente al fin de la historia. No cualquier socialismo sino ese en particular, el que en admirable hazaña trataron de alcanzar Lenin

hombres y mujeres que sacrificaron sus vidas, la mayor parte en total anonimato y murieron heroicamente en cualquier rincón del planeta defendiendo al país de los soviets, a su política y a su aplicación en el propio terruño por equivocada que fuera en no pocos casos. Para ellos respeto y admiración. Pero de lo que se trata ahora es de reconocer las consecuencias muy nocivas de esa tendencia.

El “seguidismo” caló hondamente en muchos, organizaciones e individuos, que no pudieron reaccionar racionalmente cuando se desplomó el sistema que era sustento de su fe. Habían vivido convencidos de ser parte de un conjunto imbatible, dueños y administradores de verdades científicamente demostradas y marchaban en una entusiasta procesión de la que, curiosamente, no participaba el fundador, quien simplemente, con toda naturalidad, había aclarado “je ne suis pas marxiste”.

Derrumbado el mito, antiguos dogmáticos fueron incapaces de apreciar las nuevas posibilidades del movimiento revolucionario, los espacios antes inexistentes que era necesario explorar con audacia y creatividad. Hubo quienes, en acrobacia insuperable, se sumaron a los “vencedores” convirtiendo la traición en su nueva religión.

Pero crece el número de los inconformes, de los insatisfechos, de los que se rebelan. Toda la retórica acerca de la hegemonía norteamericana se da de cachetes con su empanamiento en Iraq, las insalvables contradicciones y limitaciones de su economía, el despertar de masas que allá suponían dormidas, y la corrupción y el resquebrajamiento moral que

de un movimiento verdaderamente de masas y verdaderamente revolucionario”.

Esa teoría, a escala mundial, no existe como algo hecho, que sirva de guía en la lucha para sustituir

resumirse en ese empeño.

Una persistente leyenda atribuye al autor del Capital haber dicho que “el hombre piensa como vive”, lo cual repiten aun no pocos

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el actual orden y transformarlo en dirección al socialismo. La teoría hay que formarla y su formación definitiva tiene que realizarse en una interrelación constante con la práctica, en un proceso del que ambos integran un todo inseparable. Pero no se trata de cualquier práctica sino la de un movimiento que sea, a la vez, “verdaderamente de masas y verdaderamente revolucionario”.

militanes sin advertir el error ni sus efectos paralizantes. La relación entre el hombre y su entorno es de importancia decisiva para la ética y la política y para comprender la Undécima Tesis sobre Feuerbach. Para transformar el mundo la clave está en la Tercera Tesis. Recordemos las precisiones de Marx:

“La teoría materialista de que los hombres son producto de las

La coincidencia de la modificación de las circunstancias y de la actividad humana sólo puede concebirse y entenderse racionalmente como práctica revolucionaria”.

En la Segunda Declaración de La Habana los cubanos proclamamos que “el deber de todo revolucionario es hacer la revolución”. Hacerla significa crear un mundo nuevo a partir de los obstáculos y limitaciones que imponen las circunstancias, en un incesante batallar en el que ambos, el hombre y la realidad circundante, se irán transformando recíprocamente.

“Una cierta forma de socialismo surgirá inevitablemente de la también inevitable descomposición del capitalismo” - Joseph A. Schumpeter

La predicción que acabo de citar ha sido objeto de implacables denuestos por parte de los pensadores burgueses. En 1942 era difícil ver la caída del capitalismo como algo inevitable. Su autor, sin embargo, no dejó de creer en ella hasta el último instante.

Ocho años después, poco antes de morir, sostuvo: “Marx se equivocó en su diagnóstico sobre el modo en que la sociedad capitalista se derrumbaría; pero no se equivocó en la predicción de que finalmente se derrumbaría”.

En 1950 el capitalismo norteamericano alcanzaba el cenit de su hegemonía. Era la única potencia nuclear, no sufrió la devastación que la Guerra Mundial había causado a todos los demás países desarrollados, dominaba económica y políticamente a Europa Occidental y a América Latina, poseía una indiscutida superioridad en la ciencia y la tecnología.

A mediados del siglo pasado el mundo era bastante diferente al de





hoy. Por caminos que probablemente ellos no sospechaban estamos más próximos ahora al cumplimiento de la profecía en la que coincidieron, paradójicamente, el autor del Capital y su tenaz crítico austro-norteamericano.

Ha cambiado el protagonista, el sujeto de la historia, el hombre. La población mundial ha crecido de manera exponencial desde los días de la publicación del Manifiesto Comunista y continúa haciéndolo. El hombre transitó decenas de miles de años para llegar al primer millar de millones. Le bastó un siglo para triplicar el doble de esa cifra. Cada 25 años aproximadamente se suman a ella una cantidad semejante a la que totalizaba el planeta cuando nació Karl Marx.

A ritmo semejante se agotan los recursos naturales de la Tierra y se aniquilan, para siempre, especies animales y vegetales. El hombre es el único ser que se ha dedicado con tanta saña y eficacia a destruir la vida.

Cambios climáticos irreversibles, bosques transformados en desiertos, aguas envenenadas, atmósferas irrespirables, suelos irremediablemente degradados,

mejor, el Congreso norteamericano sigue discutiendo que hacer con quienes calculan al menos once millones de personas -es decir la población cubana-, los llamados indocumentados, en busca de fórmulas que les permitan seguir explotándolos mientras les cierran el acceso a aquella sociedad.

El fenómeno migratorio se mantendrá y ganará en masividad en la misma medida que el capitalismo, con sus características actuales, se expande por todo el mundo. El capitalismo no puede detenerlo como tampoco está en condiciones de abandonar esas características y mucho menos de transformarse a sí mismo en otra cosa.

La Agencia Central de Inteligencia de Estados Unidos ha pronosticado que, como consecuencia de ese fenómeno, muy pronto se habrán producido modificaciones profundas en las culturas de varios países de Europa. La lucha por los derechos de los inmigrantes y contra la discriminación expresada en manifestaciones públicas que movilizaron a millones de personas y en la histórica protesta del Primero de Mayo -fecha que nunca antes se había celebrado así en Norteamérica- sitúa en primer plano una fuerza

y hasta ahora desorganizados, ellos sirven para deprimir los salarios, obligados a aceptar condiciones que, como gusta decir a Bush, el pequeño, no aceptan los trabajadores norteamericanos.

Liberar de su explotación y discriminación a los inmigrantes deviene, pues, en algo esencial para la emancipación de los trabajadores en los países desarrollados. Forjar la unión entre ambos sectores explotados, en lo que ha habido avances aún insuficientes pero cuya importancianopuedesersubestimada, es hoy una tarea impostergable. Rescatar el papel del sindicato, verdadero sustento de la sociedad civil y garantizar el derecho de todos los trabajadores, sin excepciones, a sindicalizarse es indispensable respuesta a un capitalismo que cada vez más abiertamente se despoja de su máscara “liberal” y muestra el rostro perverso de la tiranía.

Hay que cerrarle el paso al fascismo. Es preciso impedir que consiga enfrentar en una oposición insensata a sus víctimas. Que nunca más pueda un Nixon movilizar a los obreros de la construcción contra los jóvenes que, en los años setenta del pasado siglo, se rebelaban contra la guerra de Viet Nam. Unirlos es posible. Unidos

los vimos, en Seattle, oponiéndose ambos a la globalización neoliberal.

Hay que contribuir a que converjan, y es posible proponérselo, ese es aspecto crucial del mundo contemporáneo y del empeño por cambiarlo.

Los pobres tratan de emigrar hacia el mundo rico para escapar de la pobreza. Los ricos, entretanto, buscan colocar sus capitales en los países pobres a fin de incrementar sus ganancias con la miseria ajena e inevitablemente deprimir las condiciones de trabajo y de vida de los trabajadores en los países centrales.

Pocos en Norteamérica y Europa se identificarían como integrantes de una aristocracia obrera, beneficiaria del reparto de migajas provenientes de las colonias. Hoy se reconocen más bien como los derrotados de un sistema que, entre otras cosas, depende cada vez más del “outsourcing” y la maquila y que impone por todas partes el dogma del mercado omnipotente y el “libre comercio”.

Construir la convergencia, para alcanzar más tarde la unión, entre los explotados del Primero y del Tercer Mundo, es ahora no sólo posible sino necesario.

Pero no basta con trabajar por la unidad entre todos los proletarios del mundo, del Primero y el Tercero, del Sur y el Norte. Es imprescindible la unión antifascista, por la democracia, por la paz y la vida. Esforzarse por crear nuevas articulaciones, por forjar alianzas donde sea posible o mientras tanto promover puntos o momentos de coincidencia entre las diversas fuerzas que hoy, por las más diversas motivaciones, están inconformes con el mundo tal cual es, debe constituir la guía principal para los revolucionarios.

Empeñarse por que fluyan en un mismo torrente el movimiento contra la guerra y el que se enfrenta a la globalización y que a su caudal se incorporen todos los discriminados, todos los marginados, es el deber principal, hoy día, de los revolucionarios. Es la vía para conquistar un mundo mejor. Es el camino para avanzar hacia el socialismo. Para alcanzar el socialismo en este Siglo que habrá de ser necesariamente “creación heroica” y como tal auténtica, independiente y por ello, diversa, irrepetible.

inauditas aglomeraciones de seres humanos en urbanizaciones inhabitables y siempre multiplicadas, son preocupaciones angustiosas que integran una realidad antes no conocida.

Más allá de las ideologías la gente va descubriendo lo que es obvio. En 1992, en la Cumbre de la Tierra en Río de Janeiro, los gobiernos y la sociedad civil nos pusimos de acuerdo en que para salvar el mundo era necesario “cambiar los patrones de producción y consumo”, palabras suscritas por muchos, incluido Bush padre. Fueron palabras, ciertamente. Pero implican el reconocimiento explícito, aunque sea en el texto de un documento, de la necesidad de transformación radical de las relaciones entre los hombres y entre ellos y la naturaleza.

El sujeto, además, inevitablemente se mueve. La población aumenta exponencialmente pero no lo hace por igual en todo el mundo.

En los llamados países desarrollados se estanca y en algunos incluso tiende a decrecer. En el resto, en aquella parte del mundo que fue bautizada como el Tercero, son más, cada vez muchos más, sus pobladores -a pesar de la muerte temprana, la miseria, el hambre- y también los que en espiral indetenible, se desplazan hacia los enclaves de opulencia.

El Tercer Mundo penetra en el Primero. Este último lo necesita y a la vez lo rechaza. En Europa y Norteamérica aparece un protagonista indeseado, un convidado de piedra que exige sus derechos.

Mientras acá llevamos a cabo esta importante reflexión colectiva animados por el ejemplo de un pensador verdaderamente creador y humanista y tratamos de encontrar los senderos hacia un mundo

política que ya no podrá ser ignorada fácilmente.

La presencia de millones de personas discriminadas y carentes de derechos civiles y políticos, plantea un cuestionamiento esencial que va a las raíces mismas del sistema político que Occidente ha pretendido convertir en modelo obligatorio para todos. Cada vez más se incrementa el número de los que allá trabajan duramente, pagan sus impuestos, mueren en sus guerras, pero no pueden votar ni ser elegidos. En la Roma actual se reduce la participación de los ciudadanos mientras aumenta constantemente la masa de los excluidos, los “bárbaros” modernos. En este mismo edificio, recientemente, el profesor Robert Dahl -destacado apologista del arquetipo capitalista- reconoció en tal marginación la carencia principal de la democracia liberal contemporánea.

El fin de esa exclusión, la lucha por la democracia, incluyendo específicamente la democratización de las sociedades occidentales, debe ser una prioridad para todos los que quieren transformar el mundo. Ella es aún más urgente si nos percatamos de la otra cara del fenómeno migratorio: junto a él crece también, paralelamente, el odio racista, la xenofobia, que nutre las tendencias fascizantes, presentes hoy de manera evidente en esas sociedades.

El problema migratorio refleja, asimismo, un aspecto del capitalismo actual sobre el que también conviene reflexionar. Mientras los emigrantes son humillados y sobreexplotados en los países donde van a parar, ahí son utilizados también como instrumentos para la opresión de los trabajadores locales. Empleándolos como el ejército internacional de reserva, desprovistos de derechos,

SAN SALVADOR ATENCO: OPEN VEIN OF MEXICO

By Tamara Hansen

“I don’t even call it violence when it’s in self defence; I call it intelligence” - Malcolm X

On May 3rd 2006 Mexican police harassed and arrested flower vendors in Texcoco, a town just north of Mexico City, who were ‘suspected of illegally selling flowers’. The vendors appealed to local people in Atenco for support, which resulted in a blockade being erected blocking the highway in solidarity with the flower vendors.

This is when the Mexican Police began cracking skulls. Just under 100 people were arrested-many carried away dripping in blood; 11 police officers were taken hostage by the local people; and one 14-year-old boy was shot and killed by police.

The next day – May 4th the police came back for revenge. Six officers who had been held hostage had been release at around midnight, but still the government of Mexico sent over 1,000 police into a town of around 10,000 people and unleashed a flurry of violence and repression.

The pretext for this repression was to find the police officers that had been taken. However by the end of the day what



happened was clear: tear gas was used to evacuate the streets as the police began door-to-door searches; around 200 people were arrested; many people were brutally beaten; and over two dozen women charge that during their arrest they were fondled or raped by police.

The Mexican Government Responds

All of these acts of terror happened if not under the government’s orders, at least under their watch, so you think the government would at least feign concern for the people brutalized in Atenco?

Instead Mexican president Vicente Fox attempted to criminalize

the people of Atenco saying, “The regrettable, violent acts perpetrated by a small group yesterday in the State of Mexico are an outrage against society and an attack on the rule of law... No cause justifies breaking the law.”

A Chilean student and filmmaker attending school in Mexico named Valentina Palma Novoa learned much about this “rule of law” in Atenco, on May 4th. Below is a small section of her eyewitness account:

“Cautiously, I got up to look at the street and I saw five police officers, devoid of any compassion, kicking and using their clubs to beat an old man



who lay strewn on the ground. I became more afraid... while the sound of shots became part of the town's landscape of sound. A man's voice yelled violently, "Come down here, you bastards on the roof." First, the two young men went down. I watched them being beaten from above... then a police officer yelled up to me, "Come down here, bitch. Come down here now."

I came down from the roof slowly, terrorized by the sight of the boys being beaten in the head. Two police officers took hold of me and pulled me forward while others beat me on the chest, back and legs with their clubs. My cries of pain increased when I heard the voice of someone asking my name for the list of arrested. I responded, "Valentina... Valentina Palma Novoa," while a police officer ordered me to shut my mouth and another hit me in the chest.

A man's voice ordered the officers to cover me with shields so people could not see how badly they had beaten me... They pulled me up by my hair and said, "Get in the truck, bitch." I could barely move but they demanded that we move incredibly quickly. They tossed me on top of other wounded and bleeding bodies and ordered me to lay my head in a pool of blood... Along the way, I was groped by the hands many police officers. I just closed my eyes and clenched my teeth, hoping that the worst would not happen."

Things did not get any better when the nation's top police official, the Public Security Secretary Eduardo Medina pardoned the actions of the police saying, "Obviously, when force is used in the heat of these circumstances, there are sometimes excesses that cannot

be avoided." To read Valentina's full account visit: <http://www.narconews.com/Issue41/article1802.html>

How will all of this affect the upcoming election in Mexico?

The brutality that took place in Atenco was shown all over Mexico, showing police being captured and beaten by people in Atenco and police beating unarmed protesters and non-



protesters both during and after their arrests. In many cases trying to paint the protesters as criminals or people who deserved to be beaten. After newspapers and media first tried to claim that 14-year-old Javier Cortes Santiago was killed by a firecracker, it became clear through autopsy reports that police had in fact shot him in the chest.

All of this is also a part of the lead up to the July 2nd presidential elections in Mexico. On Friday May 12th the Excelsior newspaper published a poll conducted throughout Mexico in which 50%

of those polled said they feared the government was on the brink of loosing control.

According to Elliott Young the director of Latin American Studies at Lewis & Clark College in Oregon, "The government is using the fear of a guerrilla movement like the Zapatistas to benefit the governing party. They're using it to say Mexico is on the brink of chaos and needs the strong hand of the state."

At this point it seems unclear if this suspected tactic will indeed impact the election coming up in early July. However, a recent poll published in El Universal taken between May 5th and 8th presidential candidate Felipe Calderon (who is running for the same party as current president Fox) was ahead of the more progressive candidate, Lopez Obrador, by four points. This is the first time he has out shot Obrador since polls began in the fall.

Frustrations Brewing

This is not the first time the people of Atenco have come together to defend their rights. Nor is it the first time the government of Mexico has met their struggle with violence.

In 2002, a group based in Atenco called the Community Front in Defence of the Land stopped the Fox government from building an airport on the land they use for farming. After facing attacks from the police the group successfully pushed back the government, winning a great victory. It was this same community that came together to defend the flower vendors of Texcoco.

Some independent news media is reporting how many people in Atenco feel the current repression

is payback from the government for opposing the airport. Jose Gomez a business owner in Atenco said, "They came to collect the bill... When we rejected the airport, this town was erased from the map. We've received no resources."

Promises of Prosperity: Realities of Poverty

Recently President Fox explained, "Five and a half years into my mandate, Mexico has been consolidated as one of the world's top ten economies, with the lowest inflation rates in history and twice the per capita income, in addition to the fact that economic variables are better than they are in the United States."

Today Mexico boasts an unemployment rate of only 3.9% (which is even lower than the United States at 5.1%) But what do all of these promises of prosperity mean when the most recent statistics from the World Bank show that over half of Mexico's population lives in poverty, with one-fifth living in extreme poverty.

Working and Poor People

Respond! Since the repression in Atenco took place thousands have participated in marches both inside and outside of Mexico demanding the release of the political prisoners held unjustly by the Mexican government. As many as three dozen prisoners are also reported to be on hunger strike protesting the poor conditions they face in jail and the cruelty they faced during their arrest.

On Saturday May 13th 2,500 people took to the streets in Mexico demanding the release of these prisoners. On Friday May 19th and Friday May 28th international days of action have been called to continue with this demand and to expose the brutality of the Government of Mexico. In Meixco, here in Vancouver and around the world we must raise our voices and continue on with the demand until the prisoners are released:

Police out of Atenco Now!
Release all Prisoners from Atenco Now!
Free all political prisoners in Mexico Now!



SAN SALVADOR ATENCO: VENA ABIERTA DE MÉXICO

Por Tamara Hansen

Traducion y Edition
Por Eloy Marina

"No lo llamaria violencia cuando es en defensa propia; Lo llamo inteligencia" - Malcolm X

El 3 de Mayo del 2006 la policia Mexicana atacó y arrestó a los vendedores de flores en Texcoco, una ciudad situada al norte de la ciudad de México, de quienes sospechaban de 'vender flores ilegalmente'. los cuales llamaron a los residentes de Atenco en busca de ayuda, lo cual resultó en el bloqueo de la autopista México - Texcoco en solidaridad con los vendedores de flores.

Aquí es cuando la Policía Mexicana empezó a romper cabezas. Alrededor de 100 personas fueron arrestadas, muchas de ellos golpeadas y aún sangrando; 11 oficiales fueron tomados presos por los residentes de Atenco; y un joven de 14 años fue asesinado por la policia.

Al siguiente día - 4 de Mayo la policia regresó en busca de venganza. Al punto de la medianoche liberaron a seis oficiales tomados como rehénés, aún así, el gobierno Mexicano mandó más de 1,000 cuerpos policiacos a dicha ciudad, cuya poblacion es de 10,000 habitantes aproximadamente, desencadenando una ola de violencia y represión.

La razón de dicha represión era la búsqueda de los oficiales captivos. Sin

como los golpeaban... un policia me grito "Bájate de ahí, perra. Bájate Ahora"

Lentamente bajé de la azotea, aterrorizada por el panorama de los chicos que fureon golpeados en la cabeza. Dos de los oficiales me aprehendieron y llevaron al frente, mientras otros me golpeaban en el pecho, espalda y piernas con sus macanas. Mis gritos de dolor aumentaron cuando escuche que alguien me preguntaba mi nombre, esto para la lista de detenidos. "Valentina... Valentina Palma Novoa" respondí, mientras otro oficial me ordenó que me callara y otro me golpeaba nuevamente en el pecho.

Una voz masculina ordenó a los policias que me escondieran tras sus escudos, esto para que la gente no viera en que tan mal condición estaba debido a la golpiza... Me jalaron del cabello y me ordenaron "súbete al camión, perra". Apenas me podía mover, aún así me apresuraron a subir. Me arrojaron encima de otros cuerpos heridos y sangrantes, y ordenaron que pusiera mi cara en un charco de sangre. A lo largo del camino fui manoseada por varios oficiales. Yo solo cerré los ojos y apreté los dientes, esperando que no pasara lo peor".

La situación no mejoró cuando Eduardo Medina, Secretario de Seguridad Pública, excuso los actos de violencia cometidos por los policias diciendo, "Es obvio que cuando la fuerza es usada en este tipo de circunstancias, algunas veces hay excesos que no pueden ser evadidos."

esclarificó que lo que realmente causó la muerte de Javier fue un disparo en el pecho de parte de la policia.

Todo esto es, en parte, a las futuras elecciones presidenciales que se llevarán a cabo el próximo 2 de Julio en México, el periódico Excelsior publicó, el día 12 de mayo, una encuesta llevada a cabo a lo largo y ancho del país, en la cual 50% de los entrevistados temían que el gobierno estuviera a punto de perder el control.

Elliott Young, director de Estudios Latino-Americanos en el Colegio Lewis & Clark en Oregon, EE.UU. declaró, "El gobierno, en Mexico, esta usando el miedo hacia un movimiento Guerrillero, como el de los Zapatistas en Chiapas, para beneficiar al partido gobernante, Partido Acción Nacional (P.A.N.). Usando dicho miedo como excusa para demostrar que lo que el pueblo Mexicano necesita es un partido de mano dura en el poder.

A estas alturas no queda claro si esta "táctica" realmente afectará el resultado de las próximas elecciones de Julio. Sin embargo, una reciente encuesta publicada en el periódico El Universal, realizada entre el 5 y 8 de Mayo, demuestra que Felipe Calderón (candidato del mismo partido que el actual presidente Fox) se encontraba a la cabeza de la carrera presidencial; arriba de López Obrador , candidato progresista del P.R.D., por tan solo cuatro puntos. Siendo esta la primera vez en la que se adelanta a Obrador desde que empezaron las encuestas el pasado Otoño.



embargo, al final del día lo acontecido era obvio: gas lacrimógeno fue usado para evacuar las calles mientras la policía hacía una redada de casa en casa; mas de 200 personas fueron detenidas; muchos fueron brutalmente golpeados; y mas de dos docenas de mujeres denunciaron abusos y violaciones de parte de la policía.

El Gobierno Mexicano Responde

Todos estos actos terroristas fueron llevados acabo por ordenes o al menos bajo supervisión del gobierno Mexicano.

¿Usted cree que el gobierno se preocupa, o al menos pretende preocuparse, por el brutalizado pueblo de Atenco?

Al contrario, sobre todo cuando el Presidente Vicente Fox intenta criminalizar al pueblo de Atenco declarando lo siguiente: “ Los rechazables actos violentos perpetrados ayer por un pequeño grupo en el Estado de México son una atrocidad en contra de la sociedad y un ataque en contra de la norma de ley... La violencia no tiene cabida ni se justifica en una sociedad democrática.”

Valentina Palma Novoa, estudiante y cineasta chilena que asiste a una escuela en Mexico, el pasado 4 de Mayo, en Atenco, vivió de primera mano lo que dicha “norma de ley” realmente significa. Abajo hay una pequeña reseña de su testimonio:

“Me puse en pie y cautelosamente mire hacia la calle y observe a cinco policías que, sin compasión, pateaban y golpeaban con sus macanas a un hombre de la tercera edad que yacía en el suelo. Me abatió el miedo... mientras tanto el sonido de disparos se fundía con el ruido habitual del poblado. Un hombre violentamente grito, “Los bastardos que estan en la azotea, vengan para aca”. Los dos jóvenes que estaban en dicha azotea bajaron, y desde donde me encontraba presencié



Para leer el testimonio completo de Valentina visite: <http://www.narconews.com/issue41/article1802.html>

¿Como afecta esto las próximas elecciones?

La brutalidad que tomo lugar en Atenco fue difundida por todo México, mostrando agresiones hacia los policías por los pobladores de Atenco, como a su vez, a la policía atacando tanto a protestantes como a no protestantes desarmados, durante y depués de los arrestos. En la mayoría de los casos mostrando a los protestantes como criminales o gente que merecía dicho trato. Los medios de comunicaión intentaron disfrazar la muerte de Javier Cortés Santiago, Joven de 14 años asesinado el 3 de Mayo, como un accidente con un cohete, la autopsia

Aumenta la Frustración

Esta no es la primera ocasión en la que los pobladores de Atenco se unen para defender sus derechos. Ni tampoco la primera en la que el gobierno Mexicano enfrenta esta lucha con violencia.

En el 2002, el Frente Comunitario en Defensa de la Tierra, grupo con base en Atenco, detuvo la propuesta del gobierno de Fox de construir un aeropuerto en tierra usada para la agricultura. Después de enfrentar numerosos ataques de la policía, dicho grupo logró sacar al gobierno de sus tierras, ganando así una gran victoria para dicha causa. Fue este mismo grupo el que acudió en apoyo de los vendedores de flores de Texcoco.

Muchos de los pobladores de Atenco sienten que la actual represión que

están sufriendo es, en gran parte, una venganza del gobierno hacia la oposición al proyecto del nuevo aeropuerto, reportan medios de comunicación independientes. Jose Gómez, dueño de un negocio en Atenco declaró, “solo vinieron a saldar cuentas.. cuando rechazamos el proyecto de aeropuerto, este poblado fue borrado del mapa, no hemos recibido nada de recursos.”

Promesas de Prosperidad: Realidades de Pobreza

El presidente Fox explicó recientemente, “Durante los cinco años y medio de mi mandato, México se ha consolidado como una de las mejores diez economías del mundo, con los índices the inflación más bajos en la historia y el doble de ingreso per capita, además del hecho de que las variables

económicas son mejores que en los Estados Unidos.”

Hoy día, México se jacta de que el índice de desempleo es del 3.9% (comparado con el 5.1% en Estados Unidos). Pero, ¿qué es lo que estas promesas de prosperidad realmente representan? Cuando las mas recientes estadísticas del Banco Mundial demuestran que más de la mitad de la población Mexicana vive en pobreza, con un quinto viviendo en condiciones de extrema pobreza.

La Comunidad Pobre y Obrera Responde

Desde que la represión en Atenco tomo lugar, miles de personas han participado en marchas tanto dentro como fuera de México, exigiendo la liberación de los prisioneros políticos encarcelados injustamente por el Gobierno de México. Se ha reportado que, aproximadamente tres docenas de prisioneros estan en huelga de hambre, esto en protesta a las malas condiciones que enfrentan en las cárceles y la crueldad que recibieron durante sus arrestos.

En México, el pasado Sábado 13 de Mayo, más de 2,500 personas salieron a la calle exigiendo la liberación de estos prisioneros. Este viernes 19 y el viernes 28 del presente més, se han convocado los Días Internacionales de Acción, para continuar con la demanda y exposición de la brutalidad del Gobierno Mexicano.

En México, aquí en Vancouver y alrededor del mundo debemos levantar nuestras voces y continuar con las demandas hasta que los prisioneros sean liberados.

¡POLICÍA FUERA DE ATENCO, YA!
¡LIBERTAD PARA LOS PRESOS DE ATENCO, YA!
¡LIBERTAD PARA TODOS LOS PRISIONEROS POLITICOS EN MÉXICO, YA!

CALL TO ACTION IN VANCOUVER: ACTIVISTS CONDEMN MEXICAN POLICE BRUTALITY AND REPRESSION IN ATENCO

By Tamara Hansen

The Other Campaign Vancouver & Organizations in Solidarity with Atenco came together after the news of the brutal repression in Atenco reached the ears of organizers in Vancouver (see article in this issue of FTT- “San Salvador Atenco: Open Vein of Mexico”).

A picket action was called for Thursday May 4th by a number of groups. Over 25 people came out to the initial action outside the Mexican Consulate chanting, “Release Atenco Prisoners NOW!” and “Police Out of Atenco NOW!” the group delivered a letter to the consulate promising to continue to come back and picket the consulate until the prisoners are released.

After the action, organizers with La Surda Latin American Collective, CIPO “RFM”- Vancouver, Friends and Family of Mexican Political Prisoners, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, Justicia for Migrant Workers, Mobilization Against War and Occupation, The Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, Ecumenical Taskforce for Justice in the Americas, the Fire This Time Newspaper, Bus Rider Union, No One is Illegal, and

Youth 3rd World Alliance, came together to form ‘The Other Campaign Vancouver & Organizations in Solidarity with Atenco.’ Due to a lack of complete information other groups and organizations who supported and participated in the actions, will be added in the



Vancouver, BC. May 8 2006.

next update.

Less than a week later, on Monday May 8th, a second picket outside the Mexican Consulate was organized as the group’s first official action. With over 60 people in attendance the group decided to march to the Vancouver Art Gallery and take the streets with their

message demanding justice for those held in San Salvador Atenco.

Later that week organizers set up a table at the Vancouver Art Gallery to collect signatures for a petition demanding freedom for the prisoners. While distributing more than 250 flyers in two hours, the group had a chance to talk to people about what was happening in Atenco. The solidarity and sympathy from people in Vancouver for the heroic struggle of people in Atenco and condemnation of Mexican police repression was indeed tremendous and very encouraging.

The group organized a third picket on Monday May 15th and another letter was delivered to the consulate. At the third picket it was announced that the Other Campaign, a group in Mexico, was calling for an international Day of Action for Friday May 19th.

‘The Other Campaign Vancouver & Organizations in Solidarity with Atenco’ decided to take up the call to action that will mobilize different cities around the world, including in Vancouver where people will



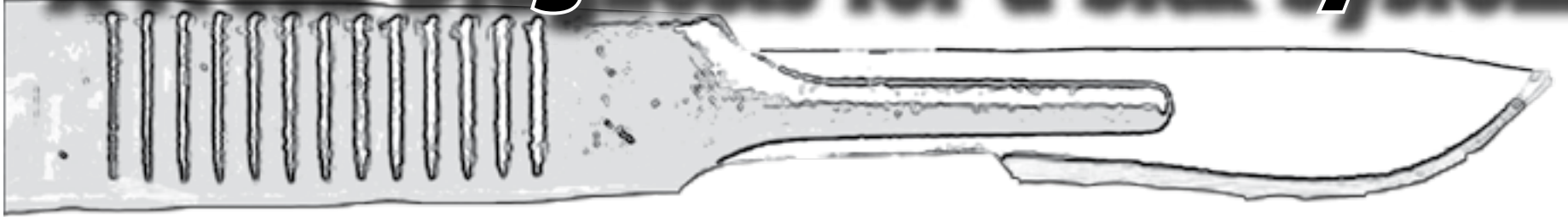
Vancouver, BC. May 8 2006.

gather at the Mexican Consulate at 11:00am and later will march to the Art Gallery to distribute information.

For more information or to get involved please contact: atenco_vancouver@yahoo.ca

Release all Prisoners from Atenco NOW
All Police Forces out of Atenco NOW
Free all Political Prisoners in Mexico NOW

Canadian Healthcare in Crisis: A Fresh Diagnosis for a Sick System



By Thomas Davies

The healthcare system in Canada is sick, so sick that some now suggest complete amputations of what have been its defining aspects for the past forty years –public services. Through an attack on spending and services especially over the past 15 years, the Federal and Provincial governments and their business allies have created a complete crisis situation, into which they now shove a sketchy prescription of more “dynamic” private systems. We need only to look to recent examples both inside and outside of Canada to realize that their proposals represent a literal dead-end for health access and care for the majority of people living in Canada, and should be completely opposed.

A History of Polarization

A national healthcare program has always been under attack by the same

here at CHUS where you can have forty patients sharing one or two beds...”

Canadian healthcare system is failing miserably to meet basic services. Canada lags behind even the U.S with only 2.1 physicians per



Injecting the Disease

The current crisis in healthcare is no accident – it was completely fabricated through a systematic ripping-apart of basic services through the 1990s. Between 1992 and 1998, hospital beds decreased by 30%, and \$20 billion was lost from the healthcare system in 1995, when the Liberal Party announced the Canadian Health and Social Transfer. This move chopped vital federal healthcare transfers to provinces, and resulted in cuts to education spaces for nurses, inadequate construction of long-term beds, and the now longer waits for surgery and other procedures.

By 2000, a *Gallup* poll found that 78% of Canadians perceived the healthcare system to be in crisis. Calls for solutions rang through the ever-crowded halls and waiting rooms of Canadian hospitals. In the crisis, the same business

and large, P3 hospitals involve contracting a private firm to undertake the creation and operation of a hospital, usually based on contracts of between 30 to 60 years. The services not directly involving medical staff are “bundled” into a single contract, which guarantees profit margins on everything from cleaning to record keeping. Terminating any individual contract is virtually impossible, and would mean terminating the whole with potential costs of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Is there any past precedent of this type of arrangement working? No. In England, after 15 years of “Private Finance Initiatives”, (the British equivalent of P3’s) the Labour government has announced it may have to raise taxes to compensate for the increased service costs. The National Health Service was forced to invest \$77 million in a crash program of hospital cleaning after an audit revealed that most of the hospitals relying on private contracts failed to meet cleaning standards. Staffing and minimum qualification levels have been

needed to be increased federal funds in the system, especially in the areas of advanced diagnostics, home care (later deleted), lowering drug costs, rural remote care, and primary health care.

The first ministers of Canada gathered in Ottawa in 2003 for a meeting billed as “the most important session on health care since Canada adopted Medicare”. In the end, the provincial ministers reluctantly agreed to about \$32 billion dollars in spending, mostly from funds that had already been promised. The territorial leaders refused to sign the agreement, as the North was to receive the same percentage of transfer payments



forces that tear at it today. When Tommy Douglas ran for premier of Saskatchewan for the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation Party (CCF) on a platform of nine points, which included “State covered medical, hospital, and dental services,” major companies such as Imperial Oil and Noranda Mines created a committee to campaign against him. A large department store chain even offered its catalogue mailing system to distribute anti-CCF materials. Major newspaper headlines in Saskatchewan warned against the “communist” CCF destroying the province, and mortgage companies phoned debt-ridden farmers, threatening to foreclose their farms if the CCF won.

Nevertheless, on June 15, 1944, Douglas solidly became the first CCF Premier of Saskatchewan. With the huge push of working and poor people around the province, government-funded healthcare in Saskatchewan became a reality in 1962. Spurred by this victory, people in other provinces pushed for the same gains. In 1966, federal legislation was introduced under Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to cover wider medical care (Medicare) services, including doctors’ services, throughout the country. By 1972, every province had implemented a health insurance program that fully paid for insured services.

Misdiagnosis

Between 1972 and now, Canada has developed an international reputation as a “beacon of healthcare”. The reality today, though, as any average person living in Canada will tell you, has become dangerously different.

1,000 population, and will soon face a nursing shortage of unprecedented proportions. According to a report released by the Canadian Nurses Association, Canada will lose 50,000 registered nurses to retirement over the next decade - almost 20% of the current workforce - and will lose an additional 53,000 between 2011 and 2016.

Waitlists for even basic procedures have increased across the board, and hospital beds are increasingly scarce. In August of last year, the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* published a report by Dr. Jacques Pepin, an infectious disease specialist at Sherbrooke University Hospital (CHUS) in Quebec, outlining the deterioration of sanitation and hospital conditions as a result of government cut-backs. Dr. Pepin reported, “There are departments

interests arose with new energy, calling for new “improvements” to healthcare through privatization.

The Worst Possible Medicine

The Canadian healthcare system has never been entirely public, with essentials such as pharmaceuticals, dental, and optometrist services not being covered within the health care plan. However, with the crisis of healthcare planted firmly in the minds of people living in Canada, the corporations and government have moved forward with the increased privatization of services.

Several privately run hospitals have opened in the country. New private clinics have also opened, offering CT scans and MRI services. As well, many provinces are pushing forward with “public private partnerships” (P3’s) in the healthcare sector. By

slashed to cut costs. The *British Medical Journal* reports that, on average, 26% of hospital beds have been cut and staff reduced by 30% (14% of doctors, 11% of nurses and 38% of support staff.)

Access is now also so unequal that a boy born in Manchester has a life expectancy of 10 years less than that of a boy born in Dorset. However, profit margins for the new private owners range from 15 - 25%.

Australia offers an important example of the horrific consequences of public private partnerships in healthcare. In 1995, the government of the Australian state of New South Wales hired a private company - Healthcare of Australia - to build and operate the Port Macquarie Base Hospital. The 20-year contract stipulated that 80% of the hospital’s patients must be public. Now, a report released by the state’s auditor general shows that the state government could have saved \$69.7 million by building the hospital itself, and that the hospital now costs \$4.5 million more to run each year than if it were publicly operated. Doctors have also threatened to abandon Port Macquarie, one of the state’s largest regional hospitals, because of budget problems which staff said were putting the lives of patients in jeopardy.

Placebo as Policy

In 2002, former Saskatchewan premier Roy Romanow released a highly anticipated report on the solutions for healthcare in Canada. Romanow stated the obvious: that public healthcare in Canada should not be eroded further, needed to be more responsive, and that there

as the provinces despite the much higher cost of delivering services in Canada’s most remote regions.

The Liberal Party then won the 2004 Federal election on a promise to “Fix Healthcare for a Generation.” Soon after their election, they announced a new Health Accord, promising some \$41 billion new dollars over 10 years to provide higher quality healthcare for “everyone”.

Community organizations were quick to criticize the move as disingenuous and another maneuver towards privatization. According to the Ontario Health Coalition, “the bottom line is that this accord will not protect the future of Medicare in Canada. It is very weak on accountability, standards and targeting. It does nothing to prevent for-profit corporations from taking over the health system...there is no enforcement of funding priorities and outcomes.”

A Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) study found more than 106 new major privatization initiatives announced since the 2003 Health Accord, and summarized that “[f]ederal money has gone to provinces without strings tied to non-profit and public delivery. For-profit health care companies, and those who can afford to pay, have benefited, while average working Canadians have seen less health care and more privatization.”

“Paying with Your Money and Your Life.”

A groundbreaking assault on public healthcare came through a June 9th Supreme Court ruling that struck down a Quebec law prohibiting private health insurance to cover



procedures already offered by the public system. The court found in 4 to 3 ruling that: “The prohibition on private (health insurance) jeopardizes the right to life, liberty, and security of the person of Canadians in an arbitrary manner, and is therefore not in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice”

Arguing that waitlists had grown to unreasonable and dangerous lengths, the legal arm of the Canadian government laid a few of its cards on the table, with an obvious move towards increasing privatization, apparently justified by the obvious crisis in public healthcare.

Never mind that an already available report by the Provincial Auditor of Ontario had found that the privatization of a cancer clinic *had not shortened waitlists*, and that individual treatment costs rose to significantly more than a public alternative – from \$3,000 to \$3,500.

Never mind as well that a McMaster University study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* revealed that, “Canadian governments would pay an extra \$7.2 billion in annual health care costs if Canada switched to investor-owned private for-profit hospitals.” According to Dr. P.J. Devereaux, the lead author of the study, “with for-profit care, you end up paying with your money, and your life.” This is based on a previous study by the group, which showed that the switch to for-profit hospitals would result in an additional 2,200 unnecessary deaths every year.

The Supreme Court also failed to address the fact that the majority of people living in Canada cannot afford a good quality private health insurance policy - which for a family of four in the United States is \$10,800



25% is spent on administrative costs.

There are also frighteningly real concerns of the kind of compromised and dangerous medical treatment given by profit driven corporations. For example, in 1997, Tenet Healthcare Corp. agreed to pay \$100 million to settle claims that patients were kept in psychiatric hospitals simply to maximize insurance payments.

Treatment Which Makes Sense

The best place to look for quality healthcare solutions isn't actually far from the United States. The island

Despite a U.S blockade, Cuba has the highest life expectancy in Latin American, the lowest infant mortality rate (at 6.22, lower than the U.S), and has 5.9 doctors for every 1000 people, compared with 5.5 in the U.S, 1.7 in the U.K, and 2 in Canada. Cuba has a similar life expectancy with all three of these countries (between 76.5 and 79 year) yet spends \$185 per person on healthcare a year, compared with \$4,500 for the U.S, \$2,500 for Canada, and \$2,250 for Britain.

Cuba places such an emphasis on health care that it even currently has 22,474 health specialists in 67 countries in the third world, and in

to pharmaceuticals.

According to Dr. Donald Lawrenchuck, medical director for the Wayne County, Michigan Health Department, “currently less than 1% of all the health care dollars in the U.S are spent on prevention, even though 50 prevent of all diseases are preventable. Every dollar we send immunizing someone saves 10 to 12 dollars.” In Canada, less than 6% of health expenditures in 2005 went to preventative care.

Why would the United States and Canadian governments and their business allies increase preventative care? Pharmaceutical companies

U.S a year.

The Supreme Court has suspended its ruling for 12 months, while in the meantime the Canadian government and big business continue to push forward with the giant Trojan Horse they've named “innovative healthcare” to further their completely profit driven privatization initiatives.

No Cure Here

For a clear warning of the fallout from increased privatization in healthcare – look at the pharmaceutical industry profits in Canada and its effects on medical spending. The nine largest drug companies made an average return on investment of 40.9% between 1991-2000, and whereas prescription drugs amounted to 8.7% of health care costs in the 1970s, today the figure is 16.2%

Let us also look to the “flexible” private healthcare system in the United States, where over 43.3 million people lack health insurance, with more than 125,000 people losing coverage every month. Where every year, according to a *Families USA* study, the deaths of 18,000 people between the ages of 25 and 64 can be attributed to lack of insurance. Where debt due to medical bills is the largest single cause of personal bankruptcies, even though 76% of those who filed for bankruptcy were actually *covered* under some sort of health insurance. Where the infant mortality rate has actually *increased* of late, from 6.8 to 7 deaths out of every 1000 live births.

According to the *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)*, overhead costs account for 2% of healthcare costs in Canada, while in the more “innovative” U.S. model,

of Cuba has been setting positive medical precedents for over forty years, through the recognition of healthcare as a fundamental human right.

An *American Association for World Health* study concluded in 1998 that years of U.S. sanctions had “dramatically harmed the health and nutrition of large number of ordinary Cuban citizens,” but that, “a humanitarian catastrophe has been averted only because the Cuban government has maintained a high level of budgetary support for a health care system designed to deliver primary and preventative health care to all citizens.”

1998 established the Latin American School of Medicine, where over 10,500 young people from 27 countries study medicine free of charge.

Let us remind ourselves that Cuba is a third world country under a tight economic blockade by the United States. How is it able to accomplish such medical feats, and what could be applied to the healthcare system in Canada?

Prevention, Prevention, Prevention

A country like Cuba, which recognizes healthcare as a fundamental right, not as a potential market, can focus healthcare on the simplest and most beneficial areas, which means prevention as opposed

certainly couldn't have made the same massive profits had sickness and diseased been curbed beforehand through recognition and treatment of symptoms, and the \$30 billion spent, according to the *Canadian Institute for Health Information*, on private care in Canada in 2004 alone would have been much smaller.

With an emphasis on prevention rather than cure, a Cuban family doctor's day to day work includes utilizing detailed prevention programs, consisting of a yearly categorizing of each patient into a group (healthy, at risk, ill or chronically ill, and disabled), and visiting them in their home a certain

number of times a year, according to what group they're in. Cuba is also able to develop cheap vaccines like the meningitis B vaccine, which now forms part of its free universal childcare program, and is distributed to other third world countries.

It's “Us” and “Them” in Healthcare As Well

In British Columbia, the front pages have exploded with headlines of ER doctors warning of the current catastrophe in the province after a no-holds barred attack on healthcare instituted by the B.C. Liberal government, who have closed one in five hospital beds around the province.

Recently, ER doctors from Vancouver General, Royal Columbia, and Lions' Gate Hospitals have spearheaded public outcry on the appalling state of healthcare. Dr. Bruce Campana, who was among a majority of ER doctors at VGH who signed an open letter to the public expressing non-confidence in his ER, summarized the current situation, “Let me be clear on this; people are suffering and dying in the emergency departments because of overcrowding and an insufficient number of doctors and nurses.”

And what does the Liberal government propose? Surprise, they plan to cut the number of ER doctors at the busy Mount Saint Joseph Hospital in Vancouver by 23% later this month, and push forward with a P3 hospital in Abbotsford. Luckily for BC taxpayers, before the 35-year contract was even signed, the payments to lawyers and consultants were only \$24 million, and the total cost rose only slightly, from \$210 to \$355 million. The increase in the yearly operating contract? From \$20 million to \$41 million...

Nationally, any doubts of the Canadian right wing's concerted campaign against public healthcare should be firmly laid to rest as of the January 23rd election of the Federal Conservatives. The Conservatives are clear that they are willing to “look at other options” (remember, “innovative”) other than public healthcare. Meanwhile, they also shrug publicly and lick their lips privately as Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta move forward with plans for increased privatization. Alberta Premier Ralph Klein's “Third Way” healthcare plan would basically detonate public healthcare, as it would allow doctors to work both publicly and privately simultaneously, and lacks any restrictions on choosing private healthcare.

However, within the myriad of varicolored pills bearing the names of endless reports, accords, “third ways”, partnerships, and contradictory terms being pushed towards the Canadian healthcare system by business elites, including the hardest of all to swallow, that of “private health care,” emerges the powerful and effective example of Cuba. An example proving that better care for everyone can be provided for less, much less, given that the priority remains maintaining quality and accessible healthcare as a fundamental human right. People have fought for this both inside and out of Canada, and always against the very same forces who push the privatization agenda today. Any remaining public aspects of healthcare in Canada must be maintained, and our demand should not only be against privatization, but for complete government funding of all aspects of healthcare.



HEU members on strike.
April 25 2004.



The Case of 5 Cuban Heroes in US Jails

By Noah Fine

"I've learned how fortunate I am to be defending these five young men as a U.S. attorney. I have been personally able to appreciate their courage, gallantry and strong principles, and this has been a privilege. I can also state that all the other attorneys on the team feel this way." - Leonard Weinglass part of the defence team for the 5 Cuban Heroes

A rash of terrorism against Cuba with a deadly case of manic negligence from the U.S.

While the US is busy fighting its "war on terror," abroad, millions of people around the world are asking, "what about the terrorism bred in the United States?" Who, if not the US government, is keeping tabs and combating this terror from the US? The answer to this question is simple: The people who come under attack from this aggression, notably, the Cuban people.

Since Cuba's revolution in 1959, its people have been under constant attack from Miami based terrorist groupings often supported by the CIA who commit acts of sabotage

Who are the 5 heroes?

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González, are 5 Cuban men that were sent by Cuba to Miami in the early 90's and jailed by the US in September of 1998. These men were sent to Miami on a mission against the terrorism that has plagued the Cuban people for fifty years. Unarmed and in every way unprotected, these men had the courageous job of infiltrating the right-wing Cuban community in Miami to uncover information that would lead to further terrorism against their people, they were successful. Throughout their mission, the 5 Cuban Heroes were able to stop over 170 acts of terror. These men were not honoured or even mentioned in the US for their great task. Instead after submitting the evidence they had collected about these right-wing terrorist groups, they were jailed, placed immediately in solitary confinement for 17 months, and handed a trial – the longest in US history – in the most unacceptable place for a trial to be held in the world that has

receiving news of this victory, the US government through a federal prosecutor requested that the entire 12 judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court review their decision in hopes of blocking any progress that could be made in the trial.

It has been over three months since the 11th Circuit Court began review of their previous decision for a re-trial and we still have no word of their current position. We have now only what we share with millions of people in Cuba and around the world: Our hope and conviction for the right of return for these 5 anti-terrorist Cubans to their families.

"I feel optimistic but at the same time I realise the limitations of the court system in this country, so I am ready to continue in the struggle, be it through a new trial or not. In that struggle I know we can count on you, and I am most grateful to you for your support and solidarity."

Fernando González one of the 5 Cuban Heroes in a letter to the Free the Cuban 5 Committee

Vancouver March 12, 2006

How you can Help

In Vancouver as part of the international effort to demand freedom for the 5 Cuban Heroes, the Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver has organized consistent education and actions to alert people in Canada about this case of injustice. Alongside forums, petitioning, and discussions, we have organized a protest at the US Consulate every month to build pressure against the US and to reach

the much-needed media coverage that is non-existent in the US. We will continue to fight in Vancouver for the liberty of these 5 innocent men and we encourage you to help us in this great task.

For more information about the Cuban 5 or upcoming events in Vancouver demanding their freedom please check out our website at www.vancubasolidarity.com/freethefivevan.html



Free the Cuban Five Committee - Vancouver Picket Action. April 24 2006.

against Cuba. One individual known particularly well by both the US government and the Cuban people for his commitment to terrorism is Luis Posada Carriles. A documented co-conspirator of the 1976 mid-air bombing of a Cuban airliner that killed all 73 people on board. Posada having escaped the arm of justice numerous times with help from the US is now awaiting results on his refugee claim in the US. This is a man- a terrorist with a documented history- has been given the ability to claim refugee status in the US, while five Cuban men-heroes- are in jail for attempting to end this ongoing terrorism on Cuba by Posada and his supporters in Miami.

anything to do with Cuba: Miami. Given sentences ranging from 15 years to two life sentences, it is in this condition that these 5 brave heroes have lived for almost 8 years without any evidence against them. Although charged with "conspiracy to commit espionage" and "conspiracy to commit murder" the prosecution admits it has no evidence to prove these accusations.

Legal roller coaster

In August 2005, 3 judges of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta granted the Cuban 5 a re-trial and change of venue to a place less hostile than that of Miami. This was a short-lived victory for a small bit of justice for the 5. After

A SHORT REPLY FROM GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ ONE OF THE 5 CUBAN HEROES

By Noah Fine

In mid-February we here in Vancouver felt it necessary to write to our 5 Cuban heroes with updates on our work and give support for their current battle for a re-trial. We were honoured to receive responses from these five great freedom fighters and have been anxious to share their message of solidarity with supporters across Canada, especially with all of you.

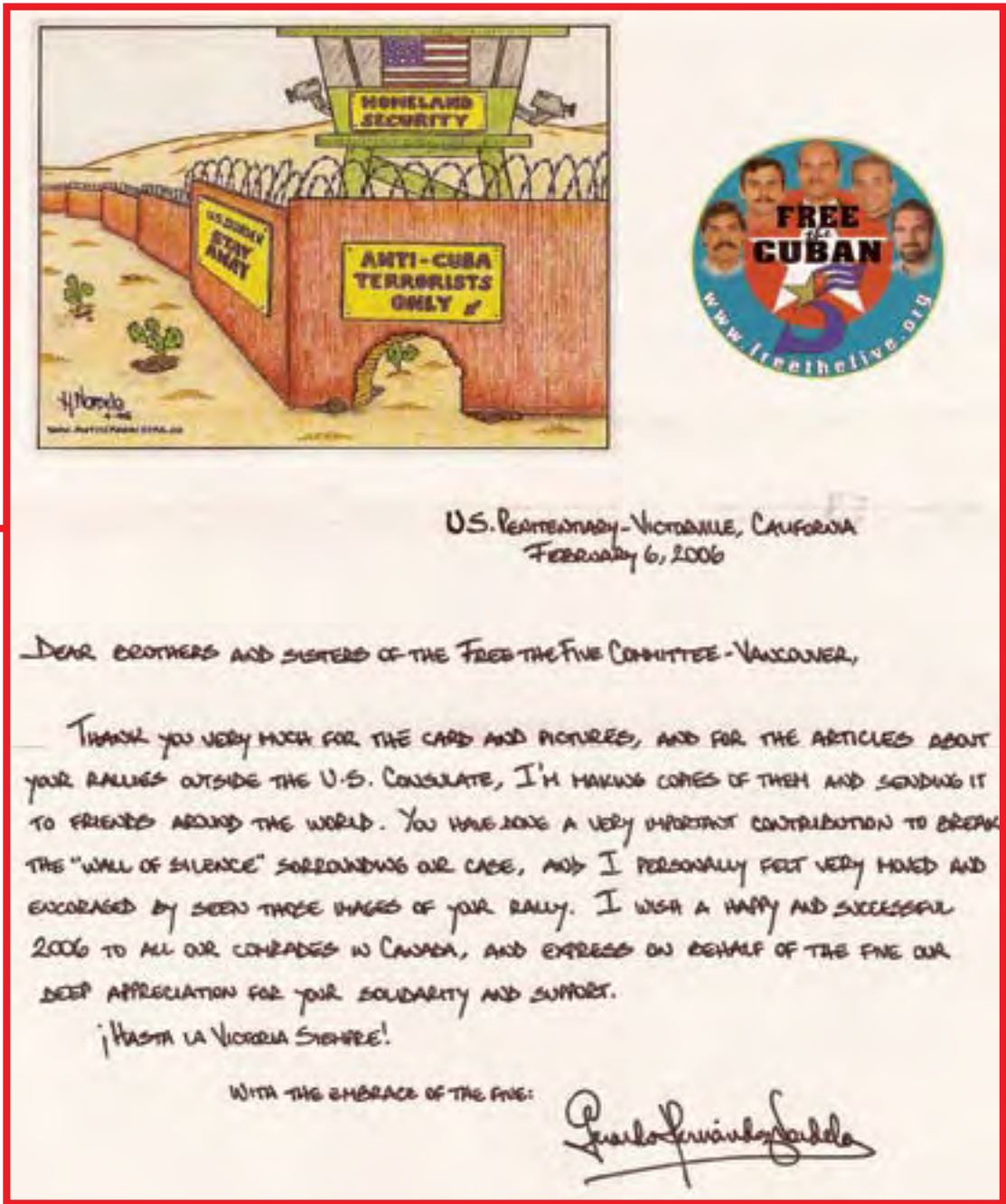
We would like to thank the 5 Heroes for contributing the ultimate sacrifice

in the fight against imperialism and for Humanity. To Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González, we thank you all for your human and revolutionary work.

Seremos como el Che - We will be like Che

In solidarity,

Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver



CUBAN AMBASSADOR VANCOUVER TOUR A HUGE SUCCESS! Hundreds Attend Events

By Tamara Hansen

On Friday March 31st 2006 Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) was honoured to co-host an event with the Cuban Ambassador to Canada, Ernesto Senti. The event was a part of a week long tour co-sponsored by the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association-Vancouver, the Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Church and the Free the Cuban Five Committee-Vancouver.

The Vancouver/Victoria tour saw the Honourable Ernesto Senti visit the University of Victoria, Capilano College, the University of British Columbia, Kitsilano and Moscrop Secondary Schools and the Peretz Centre for a city-wide event.

Whether speaking to young activists, activists who are young at heart, professors, intellectuals, high school students or the Vancouver and District Labour Council, Ernesto drew loud and enthusiastic applause. Speaking on Cuba's struggle for independence and on Canada-Cuba relations, every talk was slightly different depending on the topic, the mood and the questions.

At the Peretz Centre event in



Cuban Ambassador to Canada Ernesto Senti.

Vancouver, Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) began event with a brief account of her life-changing trip to Cuba last summer with the Che

Guevara Volunteer Brigade. She was followed by Nazir Rizvi, long-time President of the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association who gave a warm welcome to the Ambassador.

We would like to share with you here

excerpts from the talk the Cuban Ambassador to Canada Ernesto Senti gave that night:

Cuban Ambassador to Canada Ernesto Senti:

“Cuba, no matter our limitations... has always shared the few things we have”

Governments go and go and go, but you remain. That is why you are important to us. You have always supported us, since the beginning when Cuba was almost totally isolated (in terms of diplomatic relations) people like you stood together with us. It has such value for us, that is why the Cuban people try to show our gratitude every single second in our lives, because all of you here have always had a lot of courage, to not to hide your support for Cuba, but to show in any way your support for Cuba and that is quite important.

So let me thank you in this humble way for your constant support, but also for your future support. Because we rely people like you, really, and we will need your support no doubt about it, because we have a lot of fights ahead.


This is an important year for Cuba, even in relation to the last year, 2005. Despite the blockade, despite limitations (some from our common neighbour) the Cuban economy grew 11.8%. That sounds great, but it requires a lot of effort at the same time.

Why? Because for many years the main industry in Cuba was the sugar industry. Sugar prices for many years have been very low, although today they are trying to increase them. So we restructured our traditional sugar industry. We closed half of the sugar mills because we need the most efficient ones only.

Then all of the lands are now dedicated to other industries, to agriculture, cattle industry. No one, no one was left in the streets, the

Continues on Page 23

A Journey to Peace



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VANCOUVER, CANADA 23-28 JUNE

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[wear white]

status for all !!

Join us on May 27 with friends and family as we celebrate our communities courage and stand together for dignity and justice

saturday may 27 @ 2:00 pm

Vancouver Art Gallery

[robson & howe]

organized by: **status coalition**
a coalition of Middle Eastern, Latino, South Asian, African, Iranian, Chinese, and South East Asian immigrant community-based organizations
email: salc@resist.ca phone: 778-885-0040



government took care of hundreds of thousands of workers. They are studying, they are working and they are receiving 100% of the payroll. That is a policy of the Cuban revolution.

But in terms of politics, despite the US administration's policy towards Cuba we will have an interesting and very important event in Cuba next September, and for the second time in many years - the first time was back in 1979 - Cuba will become the president of the non-aligned movement.

This will be quite a challenge.

exactly the world right now.

So we must keep fighting, but as part of the reform of the UN there was an issue of trying to create a new order, instead of the UN Human Rights Commission. That organ has unfortunately been manipulated for many years, not only against Cuba but also against a group of countries, and the powers have never been condemned for violations of Human Rights. Okay, there was a decision, Cuba voted in favour, to create a new council for Human Rights. You know, Cuba has been a member of the of the former Human Rights Commission for many years. So the challenge

can ask ourselves: Is the blockade a violation of human rights when you cannot even find aspirin, or when we have experienced a disease for which we need urgent help and that help was just around the corner in the US, but because of the blockade we cannot reach it. Is this is violation of human rights?

Who are the violators of Human Right? Who has kept people without trial, under torture, and in addition- in an occupied territory, in Guantanamo Bay for years? So my friends not only for the sake of Cuba, I can say for the sake of mankind, we have a lot of challenges. By chance, we also

look back, and really it seems those years - the early 1990's to 1995 it was a nightmare, for us who were there. Maybe some people here went to Cuba during those years.

We still have a lot of problems; we are not a perfect society. We do not intend to present ourselves as the centre of the world, perfection, there is no perfect society. But I think that Cubans are quite proud of our values because these are human beings with respect. Which is the most important thing. The rest I consider value added really, if you don't have a respect you don't know solidarity, etc.

We are only human beings despite race, gender, and beliefs- religious or political, we have the same good and bad things and feelings. So then it is up to us to always find common ground to communicate and we can think and be totally different, but we need respect each other and to be as equals. Because no state is above the other, no citizens above the other in other countries, no matter how poor or developed it is. We can experience the same diseases and the same causes of death. We have the same friends for example, you can be quite rich, but if someone here blew up, we would all die. Because no one can gather all of the oxygen in one pocket to survive, even the richest person in the world. So far, as far as I know there is no chance on mars or on the moon.

Another lesson, and I know that you respect this very much, and we must really be proud of is that Cuba, no matter our limitations, no matter its development, has always shared the few things we have.

We have a lot of examples of that. A few recent examples: Remember the Haitian crisis?

earthquake; we have donated hospitals to Pakistan. We helped people in Sri Lanka after the tsunami. That is our duty. We do that for nothing, only because we have love for humanity.

Today, we are working quite closely with Venezuela. Not only with the number of doctors, teachers, paramedics or sport trainers that we have there. We are joining efforts, we are joining the strengths of both our countries. Venezuela, because it is a rich country which it is now using for the sake of its people. Cuba, because of the human resources we have our professionals.

Do you know that around 250,000 people from around Latin America, not only in Venezuela and Cuba, have been operated on for cataracts for free? We keep doing that today. You know very well that Cuba offered support with doctors and medicines to the US government during Hurricane Katrina, and they didn't respond. Now that we have won second place in the baseball [note: World Baseball Classic], now the money won will go to victims of Hurricane Katrina.

There are a lot of examples, but reason will prevail. It is true that sometimes it is quite hard and we must fight. That has been humankind for centuries, but reason will prevail and we are all sure of that otherwise we would not be here.

I am like you, as part of my people I want to thank you because all of you as a part of this great country and this great people are contributing to the bright future of our kids, and their kids too. Thank you very much.



Cuban Ambassador Ernesto Senti receives Squamish Raven carving from Giselle Aiabens Indigenous activist Capilano Students Union Organizer.

Because we will try together, along with the other members of the non-aligned movement, around 114 states, to discuss many things and to get support all across the world to respect the sovereignty, against war, against terrorism, respecting religion and beliefs of our countries.

We will have another challenge this year too. Do you know that the United Nations has been involved in reforming some of its institutions? That's okay, we need a solid United Nations. We must defend multilateralism. No matter that there are a lot of things we must do, no matter that there are some that try to constantly use the Security Council and United Nations for different purposes than those in the charter of that same United Nations. We need an organization that somehow gathers all of the states together. It is true that after more than 60 years, maybe the UN doesn't represent

is that the US has stated openly, that they don't want Cuba in that council because they consider Cuba a constant violator of Human Rights. It is our right as a member of the United Nations and founder of the UN to have a representative for candidacy to be elected again onto the new council. Elections have already been called within the UN general assembly for next May. That will be another struggle.

Of course we have constant challenges. Also for 2006 around September or October, Cuba will present the draft resolution condemning once more the needless blockade towards Cuba. It is a fact that all of the international community except three, basically three that always vote against it, support Cuba's right (like the right of any country) to live in peace, free in a normal environment, and without the blockade.

I know the answer, but maybe we



Ernesto Senti Speaks to 250 Capilano College Students.



have the same neighbour Canada and Cuba each with its own perception of our neighbour and our relations.

I think all of these elements are a part of your minute-by-minute work. We are happy because we are alive. Do you really feel the world expected us to survive after the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the historical links between the former socialist countries and Cuba? It was quite tough for us. Now we

We had a little more than 500 doctors, paramedics and other professionals in Haiti. No one touched one of our people because they were helping the Haitian people. And they are not only in the capital- they are all across the country.

We now have more than 30,000 doctors across the world, mainly in the Third World. Few of them are in the capitals, some of them in the middle of the jungles. They are there, our best ambassadors. We have almost 3,000 doctors, paramedics, professionals and technicians in Pakistan after the

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EVENTS and ACTIONS

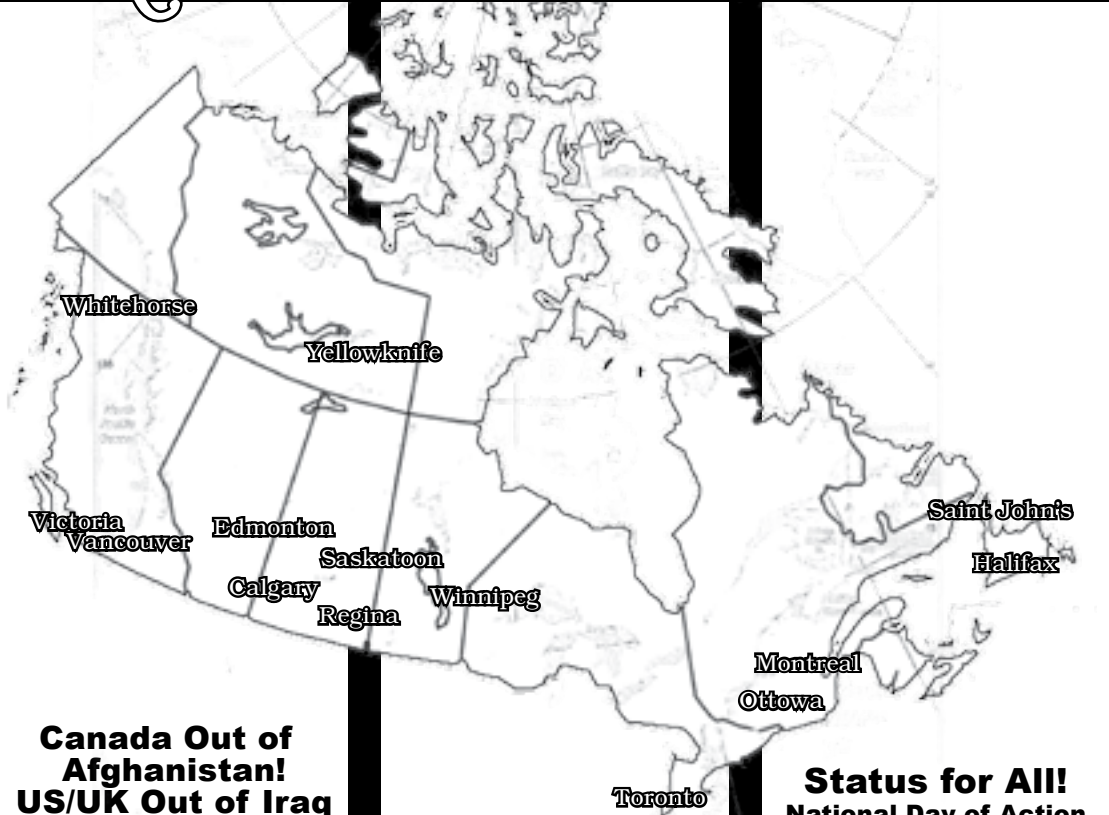
Vancouver

Status for All!
National Day of Action
March in support of
immigrant rights
Sat May 27 2:00pm
Vancouver Art
Gallery
(robson and howe)
Organized by
STATUS Coalition
saic@resist.ca
778-885-0040

Langley Latin Fair
Saturday, June 24th
info@
latinsummerfest.
com www.
latinsummerfest.
com/events.htm

World Peace Forum
June 23rd-28th
For more nfo:
worldpeaceforum.ca

**Picket Against
Canadian Occupation
of Afghanistan**
Thur May 25 12:30
Canadian Armed
Forces Recruitment
Centre
1070 W Georgia
mavovancouver.org
info@mavovancouver.org



**Canada Out of
Afghanistan!
US/UK Out of Iraq**
March and Rally
June 29 4pm
Vancouver Art Gallery
(Robson st @ Howe St)
mavovancouver.org
info@mavovancouver.org

Victoria

Victoria Days of Peace:
June 18-24
In support of World
Peace Forum 2006
For more information:
www.
victoriadaysofpeace.ca

**USA Hands
Off Cuba and
Venezuela!**
Sat May 20th 1pm
US Consulate
(University Ave)
Organized by: Canadian-
Cuban Friendship Association
- Toronto

Toronto

Status for All!
National Day of Action
March in support of
immigrant rights
Sat May 27th - 1pm
252 Bloor St.
Organized by: No One is
Illegal - Toronto

Entry, Exclusion and
Resistance: Syro-
Lebanese Immigration
History in Canada
[1880's to 1950's]
Thur May 25th - 7pm
School of Community
& Public Affairs
Concordia University
- 2149 MacKay St.
Suggested Donation \$5

**Weekly Vigils
Against the
Occupation of
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Friday, May 26th and
Friday, June 2nd - 5pm
Israeli Consulate (180
Bloor St. West) Organized
by: Jewish Women's
Committee to End the
Occupation
For information: jwceo@
hotmail.com | www.
coalitiontoronto.com

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and Canadian cities with
sister cities in Cuba.
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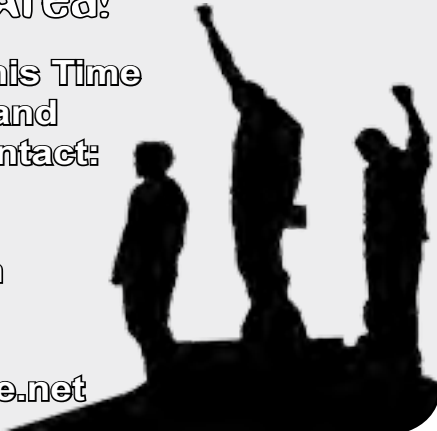
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RALLY @ 1:00PM
Vancouver Art Gallery (Robson St. Side)
MARCH @ 1:30PM

Organized by:
Hands Off Cuba & Venezuela May 20 Coalition
bcmay20demo@yahoo.ca

Endorsed by:
Hospital Employees Union BC, Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, Pastors for Peace, Capilano Students Union, UBC Social Justice Centre, Langara Students' Union, Tim Louis former Vancouver City Councilor, Lisa Barrett Bowen Island Councilor, Code Pink Women for Peace, Comox Valley Peace Group, Canadian Cuban Friendship Association (CCFA), Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC), Vancouver Internationalist Bolivarian Circle "Bob Everton", Milenio Spanish Language Newspaper, Shahrivand BC Newspaper, Working TV, Hands off Venezuela, Anti-social Skateshop, OS12 - Hip Hop Artist/Actor/Indigenous Activist, Canada-Bolivia Solidarity Committee, La Surda Latin American Collective, Latinos in Action, Victoria Goods for Cuba, Victoria in Solidarity with Venezuela, Free the Cuban 5 Committee - Vancouver, Michael Lebowitz - Professor Emeritus of Economics SFU, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), Republic Newspaper, Free the Cuban 5 Cttee - Courtenay, Okalani - Artist, MAWO-SFU Club, Communist League Canada, Bus Riders' Union, World Community Development Education Society, Kila How Yah FM - on Co-op Radio 102.7FM, Coalition Against War On the People of Iraq and Internationally (CAWOPI), Kootenay School of Writing, Michael Neuenen - writer, Fire This Time Newspaper, Iranian Cttee Against War, El Bus de las Siete - Coop Radio 102.7FM, Communist Party of Canada, Coalition of Concerned Citizens - JN Burnett Secondary, Obese Chief - Hip Hop Artist, Student Voice - Highland Secondary, Students for Peace - Nanaimo Secondary, La Vanguardia Newspaper, Youth Third World Alliance (Y3WA), Kanadian Posi Kidz, Ecumenical Task Force for the Americas, Fightback, Anticapitalist Community Forum, Collective Perspectives - Coop Radio 102.7FM, Community Solidarity Coalition - Victoria, Langara Students United Against War and Occupation (LSUAWO), Our Community Bikes, Douglas College Anti-War Club, Poets Against War, Work Less Party, The Knoll Magazine, Manik 1derful - Hip Hop Artist/Indigenous Activist, DADABASE, Colombia Solidarity Committee, America Latina al Dia (ALAD) - on Co-op Radio 102.7 FM, Group of Relatives and Friends of Political Prisoners in Mexico, Kitsilano Peace Group, Wolakota Youth Council, Sounds and Furies Productions - Vancouver, Grassroots Women, Korean Student Network Against War, Kwantlen Students Against War and Occupation, The Other Campaign Vancouver and Organizations in Solidarity with Atenco

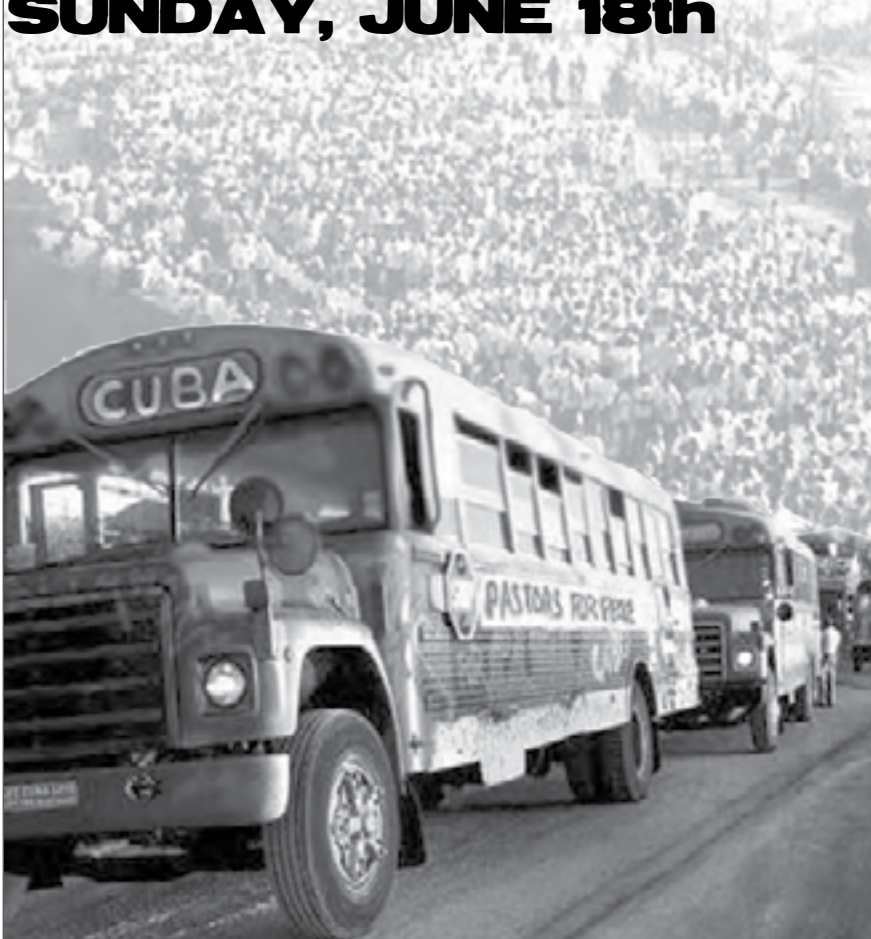
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SUNDAY, JUNE 18th



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june 29 4pm

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www.mawovancoouver.org