

ftt FIRE THIS TIME

In English / En Español



Interview with Former City Councillor Tim Louis Page 3

free the 5ive!



August 20, 2007

Join the Day of Action to Free the 5 Cuban Heroes Held in US Jails!

Page 4

Canada in Afghanistan portrait of failing a criminal and brutal war & occupation

By Nita Palmer

"We're working closely together to help the people of Afghanistan prosper. We work together to give the people of Afghanistan a chance to raise their children in a hopeful world. And we're working together to defeat those who would try to stop the advance of a free Afghan society."

These were the wise words of US President George W. Bush when he met with Afghan President Hamid Karzai on August 5th to discuss their ongoing collaboration in the occupation of Afghanistan. The questions that come to my mind at these words are: just who is George Bush thinking of when he claims that the US Government and the 43,000 occupation forces troops in Afghanistan are 'helping

been facing increasing protest and resistance from Afghans who are sick of seeing the six-year-long destruction of their country. As civilian casualties of NATO bombings rise, NATO's response has been simply bomb a village, apologize, promise they'll be more careful – and then turn around and do the same thing the next day. "One point in our new joint strategy [with NATO] is to use smaller and lighter bombs in aerial strikes," Zahir Azimi, spokesperson for Afghanistan's occupation-backed Ministry of Defense explained on July 30. Aleem Siddique, a UN spokesperson



Feb. 23rd 2007 Kabul, Afghanistan

the failure of the occupation, continue to deny what the facts so obviously show.

Afghanistan: Imperialists' Stepping-stone to Iran

people prosper'? What 'hopeful world' are Afghan children (1 in 4 of whom die before their 5th birthday - UNICEF) being raised in?

US, Canada, NATO: Working Together to Destroy Afghanistan

The occupation of Afghanistan by Canada, the US and NATO has stretched on for nearly six years now, since the US led the invasion of the country in October 2001. Without a doubt, these last six years have brought some of the worst destruction of human life Afghans have ever seen. Tens of thousands of Afghans have been killed in this war so far, although no accurate count of just how many deaths there have been exists. Unemployment in Afghanistan sits at 78% (CBC News), while 70% of Afghans live on less than \$2 per day. On top of this, recent bombing campaigns by NATO have shown a cold disregard for the lives of human beings – civilians are killed daily by air strikes. According to Human Rights Watch, in a three-month period between April and July, US and NATO forces dropped 407 bombs on Afghanistan – four times more than the number dropped on Iraq during that time.

Canada, NATO, and other occupation forces troops, along with the corrupt, occupation-backed Afghan government, have

in Kabul, responded with the sentiment of most Afghans: "We cannot say whether a small bomb or a big bomb is good. Any civilian casualty is unacceptable."

As for the popularity of Hamid Karzai's supposedly democratically elected government, former Afghan Prime Minister Ahmed Shah Ahmedzai said, "ten percent of people may say he is good and this will only be those people around him getting benefits. Ninety percent of people are unhappy." This is truly the best reflection of who George Bush is talking about when he says that the occupation of Afghanistan is helping people 'prosper' – the only group prospering in Afghanistan is a small group of wealthy elites who have been put in positions of power by the occupation.

The rosy portrait of Afghanistan that Bush and Karzai have tried to paint is stained with blood, and peace-loving people around the world know it. They have failed to establish any of their supposed goals of 'reconstruction' or 'helping the people of Afghanistan'. But Bush and Karzai, driven by their common interest of profit-making and in a desperate attempt to cover

In fact, for all their smiles and whitewashing of the destruction of Afghanistan, there was one point that Karzai and Bush disagreed on: Iran's role in Afghanistan. While Karzai commended Iran for the aid and development projects they have led in Afghanistan, Bush called



Oct. 19th 2006 Paktia Province, Afghanistan

Iran a "destabilizing influence" there. Karzai, as a member of the ruling class that owns virtually all the wealth in Afghanistan, is trying to protect the interests of the Afghan ruling class in making profit. Bush is protecting the interests of the US ruling class and US corporations in their profit-making and plundering.

Karzai is eyeing Iran, knowing that Iran is the biggest independent



Aug. 6th 2007 Camp David, Maryland



June 27th 2007 Kandahar Province, Afghanistan

economic and political force in the region – and that the Iranian government is capable of making life either very comfortable for the ruling class of Afghanistan, through investment and support, or making life very difficult for them if they don't cooperate with Iran's interests.

Bush, too, is eyeing Iran – but not with the interests of the Afghan ruling class in mind. Fundamentally, the war in Afghanistan is not simply about the 'war on terror' or even about plundering and exploiting in Afghanistan alone. Afghanistan is one piece of the imperialists' pie, one country under attack in an era of war and occupation that has spread from Afghanistan to Iraq, Haiti, Sudan and Somalia. Afghanistan's real advantage is that it is in a perfect strategic economic and military position. The economies of imperialist countries like the US, Canada and the UK are

The Reasons for Canada's War Drive

So where do the 2,600 Canadian troops that are occupying Afghanistan fit into this picture? Canada has been a leading participant in the destruction of Afghanistan since 2001. News of Canada's occupation, scarce six years ago, can now be seen daily on every major Canadian news channel. 66 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan to date. But a common misconception regarding Canada's occupation is that Canada is just following the policies of the US, or that Prime Minister Stephen Harper is being bullied into sending troops to Afghanistan by George Bush. One look at the words of the Canadian ruling class shows that this is false. Canada's "white paper on defense" says that Canada needs to break through the "glass ceiling of its middle-power status" and compete economically in "a world of rising giants". Pretty solid evidence that the Canadian ruling class has its own interests,

declining. In order to delay a complete economic disaster, they are expanding their control of resources and of trade markets through war and occupation – today focused in the Middle East. The US is leading this game right now, with Canada following closely behind. But in order for the US to be able to establish its complete hegemony and exploitation of the Middle East, it faces a big contender – Iran. Iran is the only country in the Middle East, which, since its revolution in 1979, has stood politically and economically independent from the US. In order for the US to control the Middle East, it must control

Iran, which today stands as an example of a pole of resistance to imperialism for people throughout the Middle East. Afghanistan, then, is a stepping stone along the US' path to capturing Iran. Naturally, the US is none too keen on Karzai establishing a friendly relationship with Iran, the country which the US has its eyes on attacking and plundering.

not the interests of the US, in mind in the occupation of Afghanistan.

As the destruction of Afghanistan continues, as more and more young Canadian soldiers come home in body bags, opposition to the war has been growing among people in Canada. The government of Canada has realized that they cannot maintain their occupation as it is today without having to contend with widespread opposition to the bloodthirsty war drive. They are increasingly trapped between the growing opposition to the war by people in Canada and the rising resistance in Afghanistan. Their profit-making needs mean that it is essential for them to establish their control over Afghanistan, and yet they have not managed to establish their control due to the growing Afghan resistance. Canada's current mission as part of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in southern Afghanistan is scheduled to end in 2009. Much talk has been going back and forth between the major political parties in Canada as to what will happen to the mission after this. Prime Minister Stephen Harper, leader of the Conservative party, has stated that his government will not continue the mission without the consensus of all parties in the government. But it is the consensus of the parties,

Continued on page 5

A street in Baghdad, Iraq, July 27, 2007.



poverty & human crisis in Iraq

By Shannon Bundock

"Sometimes we need to divide the only available bread with six members of my family because we don't have money to buy more. I had to leave my school because my father cannot afford notebooks and pencils....You cannot imagine what it is like to see your six-year-old sister sick and at risk of dying because your family has no money to buy medicine for her."

- Hudhar Zein, aged 11 (From the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) article 'Children suffer most in Iraq, says UNICEF report,')

This nation is freedom's home, and freedom's defender. – George Bush, December 2nd 2003.

Before the 2003 invasion, and even during it, the US promised that Iraq would soon see "freedom", "peace", "liberation" and "democracy". From the findings in the Oxfam/NCCI report, this supposed altruistic mission has resulted in one of the worst human tragedies of the twenty-first century.

According to the report, more than 43% of Iraqis suffer from "absolute poverty". As many as "eight million people are now in need of emergency assistance". The report

indicates that four million people are "food-insecure and in dire need of different types of humanitarian assistance" and there are "more than two million displaced people inside Iraq".

Further into the report, one can see a glimpse of the devastating effect of the economic crisis on the most vulnerable layers of society - in particular, on women and children.

"Children are hit the hardest by the decline in living standards. Child malnutrition rates have risen from 19% before the US-led invasion in 2003 to 28% now... As always, children pay a high price when livelihoods collapse ... More than 11% of newborn babies were born underweight in 2006, compared with 4% in 2003." Oxfam/NCCI report, July 2007.

"Most of the people killed in Iraq's violence - perhaps over 90 per cent - are men. Their deaths leave households headed by women

who struggle to survive the loss of the main breadwinner ... many projects created to provide jobs for women were abandoned..." Oxfam/NCCI report, July 2007.

One may ask the leaders of the US-UK mission, "What does this American 'freedom and democracy' mean for those who must struggle each day to find drinkable water, some scrap of food, and shelter from the torrent of bullets overhead?"

On top of the Oxfam/NCCI report, other news is flowing from the borders of Iraq. One week after the release of that report, Iraq's electricity ministry warned that the national power grid is on the brink of collapse. In the first week of August there were already four nation-wide blackouts. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Electricity said that Iraq's

successful occupation of Iraq is part of the strategy for slowing their own economic crisis of overproduction, rising unemployment, and the falling average rate of profit - in other words, the crisis of their own capitalist system. It also means securing a much-needed edge over their imperialist competitors on the world stage - the UK, Germany, Japan, France, etc.

The human crisis in Iraq has proven that these imperialist governments are willing to go to any length to meet their goals. It is also proving that in four and a half years, the most powerful military alliance in the world has been unable to secure Iraq for imperialist domination, despite the fact that US occupation troop levels have reached an all-time high of 162,000. And the fail-



Protest in Karbala against the visit of US Vice President Dick Cheney to Iraq. May 9, 2007.

power system is only meeting half of the actual demand. The reaction of the occupation forces? US General Michael Walsh told BBC that it is up to Iraq to deal with this electricity crisis by themselves.

ures continue to pile up - in June 2006, 40 cabinet ministers took office as part of the US puppet government in Iraq. Since then, seventeen have resigned or are boycotting meetings.

The above quotation appeared in a report released in July 2007 by Oxfam and the non-governmental organization Coordination Committee in Iraq (NCCI). The 40-page document, entitled "Rising to the Humanitarian Challenge in Iraq" outlines the severity of crisis that has been brought upon Iraqi people by war and occupation.

Since 2003, when US and UK warplanes flooded the skies and tanks rolled in, Iraq has been brutalized in a thousand ways. Mass killing, torture, rape and destruction have shaped Iraqi life for the past four and a half years. Heaped upon the upheaval brought by war is the poverty that comes with the shattered economy of an occupied country.

What did the US Promise to Bring to Iraq?

"It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America.

Is it just a Matter of Time? Will the Situation Improve?

While Bush, Blair, Gordon Brown and their friends may attempt to convince the world that the crisis in Iraq is all part of the bumpy road to "liberation", few are buying it. The war on Iraq was never initiated on a "humanitarian" basis. Words like "freedom" and "democracy" have always been lip-service. Right beneath the surface more substantial language is being spoken. Iraq is the center, the axis of a new strategy of war and occupation, or, if you will, a new era of war and occupation.

In Iraq, the US/UK and their allies are fighting to secure their position in the Middle East for plundering resources (of course including, but not limited to oil) and achieving political and military control of the region. Achieving these objectives is critical for the US ruling class because a secure and

What Road Leads Away from Poverty in Iraq?

The Oxfam/NCCI report is very thorough in its statistical breakdown of Iraq's plight. In fact, the report on its own could leave one with a feeling of hopelessness and desperation. However, if it is true that the crisis facing Iraq has been brought on by war and occupation, then there is still great reason to have hope. Hope for Iraq's future is being sown by the hands of millions of Iraqi people who - while faced with the aforementioned conditions - have never stopped resisting the occupation of their country.

The main uniting demand among Iraqis is for an immediate withdrawal of occupation forces from the country. With a country physically, politically and economically in shambles, the first stage of repair and recovery is to cut out the cancer of crisis at its roots. And that cancer is the occupation itself. Only following a full eradication of foreign occupation troops will Iraqis be presented the chance to tackle issues of unemployment, rebuilding infrastructure, health services etc.

The responsibility of peace-loving people around the world is to take on the challenge. Our brothers and sisters in Iraq have a future ahead - the question is 'what kind of future?' If we are silent and inactive, then the warmongers will win, no question. However, if we get involved in the anti-war movement to organize in solidarity with the Iraqi demands for self-determination and for an immediate withdrawal of the troops, then we too add our weight to the side of justice, humanity and for an end to the terrible situation that Iraq faces today.

**US/UK Out of Iraq!
End the Occupation!
Self-determination for Iraq Now!**

The Newspaper Of

FIRE THIS TIME MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

www.firethistime.net Volume 4 Issue 8 August 2007

Political Editor - Ali Yerevani
editor@firethistime.net

Editorial Board: Shannon Bundock, Ivan Drury, Tamara Hansen, Aaron Mercredi, Nita Palmer, Thomas Davies, Ali Yerevani
editorialboard@firethistime.net

Layout & Design - Shannon Bundock

Assistant - Sophie Ziner, Shakeel Lochan

Copy Editor - Tamara Hansen

Assistant - Lindsay Clarke & Nita Palmer

Publicity & Distribution Coordinators

Mike Chimenti, Kira Koshelanyk

Contributors to this Issue: José Angel, Max Tennant, Sophie Ziner, Alison Bodine, Mike Chimenti, Kira Koshelanyk, Shakeel Lochan, Janine Solanki, Manuel Yeye (from Cuba)

Contact

Phone - (604) 322-1764

Fax - (604) 322-1763

Email - info@firethistime.net

Mail - PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC, V5L 5G3

Subscriptions

For a one year subscription outside the lower mainland, make cheques payable to "Shannon Bundock" (Canada \$15, USA \$20, International \$30) Send to: PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC, V5L 5G3

Distribution

For Fire This Time in your area across BC, Canada, and Internationally contact Publicity and Distribution Coordinator Mike Chimenti Phone : (604) 518-5009
Email : distro@firethistime.net

Submissions

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

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

Donations

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 regularly send members of our editorial board on assignment throughout North America, the Caribbean and beyond in order to make Fire This Time a better resource. These efforts have strained our finances.

If you would like to help with a donation, please make cheques payable to "Shannon Bundock"

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

Reprint Policy

Reprinting of articles from Fire This Time by progressive media is welcomed, with source credit to the author and Fire This Time Newspaper. All other media or institutions must request permission.

- ISSN 1712 - 1817 -

FAIRNESS FOR CIVIC WORKERS

CUPE BARGAINING FOR BETTER COMMUNITIES

VANCOUVER AND LOWER MAINLAND CUPE WORKERS RESIST EMPLOYER OFFENSIVE

By Max Tennant
& Mike Chimenti

"We are always ready to negotiate ... the difficulty is the City of Vancouver has refused to bargain from day one." - Paul Faoro, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 15 President, July 19th 2007

For eight months, CUPE 391 (Vancouver library workers), CUPE 1004 (Vancouver outside workers) and CUPE 15 (Vancouver inside workers) have been without contracts. The unions have been fighting since December 31st 2006 to negotiate in good faith with the City of Vancouver. On numerous occasions during the month of July, CUPE tried to negotiate with the City to prevent a strike. However, the City showed no interest in negotiating with the Union and all three locals were forced to strike.

On July 9th the City of Vancouver tabled their final offer to CUPE 15, attempting to impose a settlement on city workers that did not address any of the workers' concerns. On July 19th, 89% of CUPE Local 15 members rejected the offer. The

next day the Union offered to negotiate an honest contract with the City, but were stonewalled by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) Labour Relations Bureau, forcing CUPE 15 to give 72 hour strike notice.

The main concern put forth by CUPE 15 is converting auxiliary workers to regular part-time or full-time positions which accumulate benefits and seniority. Two-thirds of Vancouver Parks Board indoor workers are auxiliary and do not receive benefits and statutory holiday pay or accumulate seniority, regardless of their many years of service.

"Not a single library workers' issue has been addressed in the days of talks that took place." - Ed Dickson, CUPE 391 Bargaining Committee Chair, July 20th 2007

On July 25th, after many attempts by the City's library workers to negotiate with the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Public Library Board, CUPE 391 decided to begin their strike action.

CUPE 391's main concern is pay equity. According to a CUPE re-

port titled "Overdue: Pay Equity for Library Workers," the predominately female library work force makes only 64 to 82 percent of the wage earned by municipal workers. Comparatively, the wage for library assistants in BC educational institutions is 22% more than municipal library assistants. As well, municipal librarians make \$10/hour less than librarians working at Capilano and Douglas colleges.

"The City said today that they were finally going to bargain and that they had some 'flexibility ... instead, they ... just left, without a word - they didn't even agree to any further bargaining dates," said Mike Jackson, president of CUPE 1004. (July 17th 2007) CUPE 1004 is demanding a fair wage increase in times of obvious prosperity for the City. As the cost of living continues to climb, along with housing costs, the City offered only 9.75 % over 39 months. The same city council that claims its finances are stretched thin approved a salary increase of 62% over two years for City Manager Judy Rogers, whose salary jumped from \$197,000 in 2004 to \$319,000 in 2006. Subsequently, CUPE 15's proposal of a

21% wage increase over five years was flatly rejected by GVRD negotiators as "unreasonable".

As the municipal strike continues, the City has begun a slander campaign against the workers, alleging that picketers assaulted a pregnant woman and slashed the tires on City vehicles. Counter to the City's attempts to characterize their employees as thugs, on August 1st CUPE 15 voluntarily took down their picket line at the Ray-Cam Community Center on East Hastings St. after members of the community asked for daycare and youth services to be reinstated.

As the strike in Vancouver extends into its 3rd week, municipal workers in every other Lower Mainland municipality have signed contracts guaranteeing them wage increases in each of the next five years. CUPE locals in Vancouver are fighting for the same goal as their union brothers and sisters in other Lower Mainland municipalities - a fair wage increase to maintain their standard of living, and security and fair treatment for currently unprotected auxiliary workers.

In the past few years, workers across Canada have been increasingly under attack. Cuts to social programs, healthcare and post-secondary education have all made life for working people increasingly difficult. In Vancouver alone, homelessness has doubled from 2002 to 2005. The final bills for the Olympics and the final results from the new wave of gentrification have yet to be tallied. This makes it increasingly important for working and oppressed people in BC and across Canada to support CUPE workers' struggles in Vancouver. The outcome of the CUPE strike in Vancouver will set the stage for the many labour struggles that are sure to come once the flood of Olympic investment money dries up and the economic boom it is fuelling collapses. Any gains won now, during times of "prosperity", advance the front lines of the working class battle for the right to control our own futures and put all working people in a better position to defend our rights and to defend the gains made by the struggles of millions of working people in Canada and around the world.

CUPE Has Been Very Reasonable in Their Demand

INTERVIEW WITH TIM LOUIS

ON MUNICIPAL WORKERS STRIKE

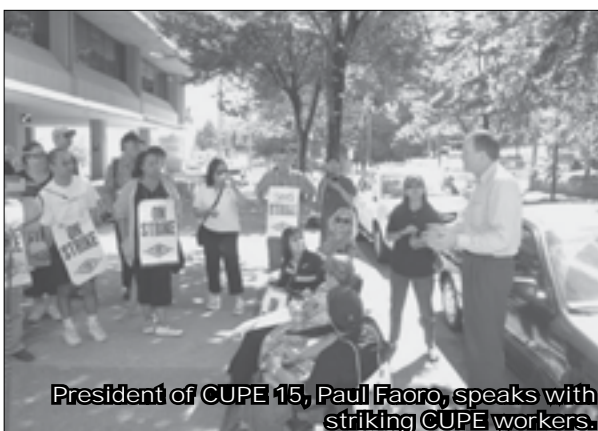
By Shannon Bundock

On August 8, 2007, seventeen days into the CUPE strike in Vancouver, British Columbia, I had the chance to discuss the state of civic politics with local municipal politician Tim Louis. Tim's perspective on the strike is particularly relevant as he has been active in municipal politics for decades, a civil litigation lawyer and has a strong history of public service. He was elected to the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation in 1990 and again in 1993. Tim was also key to the creation of BC Transit's HandiDart service for disabled transit users. While serving on the board of the Vancouver Public Library, Tim expanded services for print-impaired readers, and as chair of the finance committee, he shifted the library's budget from deficit to balance. Tim Louis served as a Vancouver City Councilor from 1999-2005. Currently he is an executive member of The Coalition of Progressive Electors - COPE in Vancouver. Below Tim digs into the issues at stake, why the current city council is resisting against CUPE and how things could be done differently.

FTT: First off, what is your take on all of this? Or perhaps I should ask, what do you think of the demands of the striking inside and outside workers, especially CUPE 15's demands for a fair and dignified contract with job reclassification, job security etc?

Tim Louis: As is too often the case with right-wing governments, what we see here is a very clear and deliberate attempt by the current municipal government to provoke a strike in an effort to gain popularity through an effort to turn the public against public sector workers. Fortunately in this particular case, the effort seems to have failed dismally.

The union has been very, very disciplined and very reasonable in their response to every unacceptable demand put forward by management. In particular, when management demanded a 39 month contract, CUPE took a very principled position and said, if 36 months is unacceptable to you, because you are concerned about a contract expiring just prior



President of CUPE 15, Paul Faoro, speaks with striking CUPE workers.



Tim Louis.

to the Olympics, and 39 months is unacceptable to us because we're concerned with a contract expiring just after the Olympics, then lets look at all the other options on the table, rather than arguing over "36 yes-no" or "39 yes-no". Let's look at a 24 month contract or a 48 month contract or even a 60 month contract. Management, in an effort to provoke a dispute dug in their heels and said, no it had to be a 39 month contract or there would be a strike.

The outlying municipalities, Richmond being the first, agreed to a 5 year contract, and that really boxed the management in Vancouver into a corner.

FTT: Can you elaborate a bit on why the majority of city council, and especially Mayor Sam Sullivan, are resisting the proposals by CUPE 15? What is their agenda really?

Tim Louis: As I alluded to in the previous answer, right-wing governments too often are unfortunately successful in provoking a strike and then blaming the victims for the strike - the victims being the workers who were simply putting forward very fair and very reasonable requests. I would frame them more as requests than demands.

The media, in partnership with the right-wing government of today, then tries to create an anti-public-sector worker environment within the public for electoral advantage, for political gain. So I think that's what's behind it.

FTT: What would you do if you were on city council - or Mayor of Vancouver - in this situation?

Tim Louis: One of the first things that I would do is honor COPE's commitment in the 2002 election campaign - a commitment that the now Vision councilors, in coalition with the NPA stopped city council from honoring. And that would be the reintroduction of the compressed work week - a work week that benefited workers by allowing them to work more hours four days a week in order to take the fifth day off. It benefited families by allowing families to spend more time with their breadwinner. It benefited the public increasing the hours city hall was open - working more hours fewer days meant longer days. And it also benefited the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from commuting to and from city hall by 20% - 4 days of week rather than 5 days a week. That would be one of the first things I would canvass with the union.

The second thing I would do would be offer to enter into any term contract other than the 36 or 39 week. I think that would be a very principled way of resolving one of the two major disputes - term of contract.

The third thing that I would do is offer a wage increase that would be a combination of the CPI [Consumer Price Index] and the GDP growth over the upcoming term, so that workers would not just stay constant in terms of inflation, but they would also stay constant in terms of as the economy grows workers should benefit from a share of that growth.

FTT: Do you have any final thoughts or comments?

Tim Louis: I love your paper!

FTT: Thanks so much for the interview

FREE THE CUBAN 5 HELD IN US JAILS

Vancouver Day of Action
AUGUST 20:

Appeals Court Hearing for the Cuban Five Heroes in Atlanta, US

By Janine Solanki

On Aug. 20th 2007, the US 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta will review the case of 5 Cuban men, who have been held in maximum security prisons in the US for almost 9 years, to decide if they should have a retrial. A retrial that could mean not only freedom for the 5, but also a victory over the brutal and corrupt US court system. But who are these men? From the hearts of every person in Cuba, to the over 300 Free the Cuban 5 Committees in almost 100 countries around the world, these men are heroes, who risked their lives to defend their people against terrorist acts.

Since the Cuban revolution triumphed in 1959 it has accomplished complete literacy, universal education up to a PhD, universal healthcare with the most doctors per capita than any country in the world, and many more gains

that benefit all people in Cuba. At the same time, right-wing anti-Cuban terrorist organizations working out of Miami, Florida with the support of the CIA and US government have constantly attacked Cuba, resulting in the deaths of at least 3500 Cubans. Terrorist groups like Alpha 66, Omega 7, and Brothers to the Rescue committed many of these acts, beginning with the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, to the 1976 bombing of the Air Cubana flight 455 which killed all 73 people on board, to hotel bombings, livestock poisoning, and other terrorist acts continuing today. In response to this, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, René González and Fernando González went to Miami to investigate these terrorist organizations, in defense of Cuba and to prevent the deaths of innocent people in Cuba.

As the vital information they

uncovered was collected, Cuba didn't keep it all for them selves, and they even passed it on to the FBI, to let the US know about terrorist groups operating within their own borders. With this information the US exposed their own hypocrisy and at the same time as they promoted their "war on terror" they ignored the anti-Cuban terrorist groups. Instead they arrested the 5 Cuban heroes and illegally put them into solitary confinement for 17 months. When the 5 finally received a trial it was held in Miami, the hotbed of anti-Cuban sentiment where an unbiased jury was impossible. The 5, unarmed, young men received sentences between 15 years and a double life sentence, with various rights, such as to see their family regularly were denied under trumped up charges of "conspiracy to commit espionage" and "conspiracy to commit murder." These are the charges that will be challenged on the Aug. 20th 2007

appeals hearing.

As we near this legal hurdle, defenders of the 5 see it as a chance for people around the world to build support and knowledge about these 5 heroes and to campaign for their freedom. During the initial trial, campaigning to defend the 5 was dampened by a complete media blackout about the case. Now, the efforts of commendable organizers, working for the rights of a country to defend itself, are breaking through the media barrier. On Aug. 6th 2007 the New York Times, after months of the Popular Education Project to Free the Five picketing outside the office, published a detailed article about the Cuban 5 and the upcoming appeal hearings. At the end of July Reuters published an article about the Cuban 5, and even the BBC aired a televised interview with Gerardo Hernández, one of the 5! (Read the BBC interview in this issue of Fire This Time).

Beyond being a case of human injustice that these 5 men have lived for almost 9 years in prison, these 5 men are also an inspiration to us, no matter what country you live in, of sacrificing the last 9 years of their lives to defend a country that gives people around the world hope that a better world is possible. From Cuba to Vancouver, join in organizing and mobilizing to defend our 5 Cuban Heroes, and at the same time as the appeals hearing is happening the Free the Cuban 5 Committee - Vancouver will be holding it's 20th picket action outside the US consulate (1075 West Pender) from 12:00noon to 1:00pm on August 20th. This action will be accompanied by a 24-hour vigil from 3PM Sunday Aug. 19th to 3PM Aug. 20th at the same place.

¡Volverán!

They will return!

Picket Action in Vancouver: Activists Demand the Freedom for 5 Cuban Heroes

By Janine Solanki

On July 12, the Free the Cuban 5 Committee - Vancouver at their 19th picket demanding the freedom of the 5 Cuban heroes, also stood in support with an organization that takes inspiration from the Cuban 5 and travels through the US (with the faces of the five colorfully painted on their busses) to defend the gains of the Cuban revolution and demand an end to the US Blockade on Cuba. Along with the demand of "Free the Cuban 5 Now!" more than 35 people at the US Consulate also demanded "Release the Aid to Cuba!" in response to the confiscation of aid stolen from Pastors for Peace on it's way

to Cuba, seized by US Homeland Security at the Quebec/Maine border.

Noah Fine, coordinator of the Free the Cuban 5 Committee - Vancouver (FC5CV) opened up the picket explaining how the demands were being echoed in the Cross-Canada day of action, and outlined the case of the Cuban 5. This point was reinforced

as a recorded message of Ellen Bernstein from Pastors for Peace carried a voice of solidarity from Texas, emphasizing the struggle that Cuba endures living under a 48 year blockade, and how Pastors for Peace and solidarity work through Canada and Vancouver plays an important role in the fight to end the blockade and free the 5! After a resolute and loud line of picketing,



Vancouver Free the Cuban 5 Committee Picket Action, July 12, 2007.

reflect the outrage felt from the recent theft of humanitarian aid by the US government and of the imprisonment of the Cuban 5! Release the Cuban 5 Now!



Vancouver Free the Cuban 5 Committee Picket Action, July 12, 2007.

Cuba Solidarity T-shirts from Vancouver! **only \$15!**

* Free the Cuban 5 Committee T-shirt (Left) 'Lift the Blockade' T-Shirt (Right)

To order contact Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) at: cubacommunities@yahoo.ca or 778-882-5223





By Nita Palmer

On June 29, 2007, Indigenous people, organizations and their supporters from all across Canada came together on a day of "Solidarity for Aboriginal Justice". The day of action, called by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and organized by a wide variety of groups in over a hundred different communities, was an important showing of unity in the fight for Indigenous rights and sovereignty.

In Vancouver, an action organized by the AFN-BC, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and the First Nations Summit brought out almost 400 people to a march from Queen Elizabeth Park to a rally at the Vancouver Public Library. Indigenous organizations, anti-war groups, unions and students' unions came together for the action.

From rallies to press conferences to public education campaigns to highway blockades like the one in Deseronto, ON, the list of events on this day of action was as long as the list of demands brought forward by protesters attending the actions. The high rates of Indigenous poverty, the over 500 missing or murdered Indigenous women in Canada, struggles over fishing and resource rights and of course land rights struggles were just a few of the issues raised.

One of the June 29th actions was a blockade of Highway 401 and the CN Rail line near Deseronto, ON, organized to call attention to the high levels of Indigenous poverty in Canada, lack of access to health care and poor living conditions on reserves. One in four Native children living on reserve live in poverty, and in the urban Indigenous population that number climbs to 40%. Many Native communities also face a lack of access to basic necessities such as clean drinking

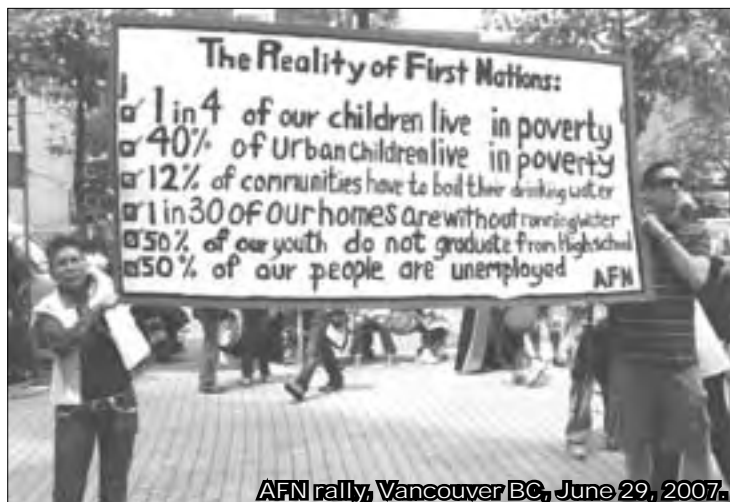
water. Nearly 4% of the Native population – tens of thousands of people – does not have access to clean running water.

Other blockades were set up around the country as well. Just outside of Peterborough, ON, the Alderville First Nation set up a blockade of County Road 45, while members of the M'Chigeeng First Nation near Sudbury, ON, set up a blockade of Highway 17. Both were to call attention to the high levels of Indigenous poverty and the deplorable living conditions on Native reserves in Canada. At Six Nations, near Caledonia, ON, a protest was organized to call attention to the fact that Six Nations has not seen a single penny of profit from a casino illegally built on their land. Over the last two years, the people of Six Nations have brought attention to Indigenous land rights struggles in their ongoing battle with the governments of Canada and Ontario and a

Assembly of First Nations

Day of Action a Huge Success!

Protests Unite Communities Around Demands for Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination



AFN rally, Vancouver BC, June 29, 2007.

development corporation against an illegal housing development on their land.

Whether it was a direct land confrontation, protests over Indigenous poverty and third-world living conditions on reserves, or demands that Indigenous people be afforded the same access to health care and education as Canadians, the June 29th Day of Action showed the importance of the struggle for Indigenous rights and self-

determination. The Day of Action was important in the unity it brought between Indigenous people from Vancouver to Halifax and the support it brought from many non-Native groups. We need continuing action like this to demand that the inherent rights of Indigenous people to control their own land and their own resources and to govern their own affairs without the interference of the government of Canada be upheld.



Marchers at the June 29th AFN rally in Vancouver, BC.

Afghanistan

Continued from page 1

not ordinary working people in Canada, that Stephen Harper is looking for. And none of the parties are fundamentally against the occupation of Afghanistan. The New Democratic Party (NDP) calls for a withdrawal of troops from the "counter-insurgency mission", not from the mission altogether. The Liberal party calls for an end to the "current combat mission in Southern Afghanistan" by 2009.

While a withdrawal from the unpopular combat mission may save face for the government of Canada, it is by no means calling for an end to the occupation. Occupation is occupation no matter who is at the forefront of carrying it out, and the government of Canada will still have blood on its hands, whether Canadian Forces soldiers are regularly participating in direct combat or not. From the Conservatives, talk is growing of training the Afghan police and military to do the job that Canadian Forces soldiers are doing now. Let's be clear on this - a change in the mission to focus on training Afghan forces to do the bidding of the Canadian government will not change the nature of the repression and bloodshed in Afghanistan – only the face of it.

Our Responsibility to Build the Anti-War Movement

As ordinary working and oppressed people in Canada, we must be clear that the maneuverings of the government and political parties in Canada do not mean an end to the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan. We must also be clear on our demands: for an immediate

withdrawal of ALL occupation forces from Afghanistan, and for self-determination of the Afghan people. Afghans have a long and proud tradition of fighting for their rights, fighting against occupation, and fighting to build a better society for themselves. The factor that is truly stopping the development of civil society in Afghanistan is not the growing grassroots Taliban resistance, which has emerged as unfortunately the only leadership fighting the occupation. The factor that is truly stopping the development of civil society in Afghanistan is the occupation itself.

As working and poor people in Canada, our interests don't lie with the government and the ruling class of Canada, which is destroying Afghanistan while cutting our social services, attacking our unions, and building up a racist and anti-immigrant fear campaign here. As the government continues to avoid public consultation or debate on the mission in Afghanistan, we must call for an independent public inquiry into Canada's war drive in Afghanistan - to ask why the government has spent over \$4 Billion in taxpayer dollars and sent over 2,600 soldiers to Afghanistan to carry out a bloody and senseless war drive without the consultation of people in Canada. We must also unite with people in Afghanistan and peace-loving people around the world to demand:

Canadian Troops Out of Afghanistan NOW!

NATO Out of Afghanistan NOW!

OUT NOW!

SUBSCRIBE!

DIARIO
Granma

NEWSPAPER

Send your name, address, province/

state, country and postal/zip code with the equivalent of \$40.00 USD (for 52 weeks) by postal or electronic bank transfer to:

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

In the United States or anywhere else in the world, go to the Pathfinder website at:

www.pathfinderpress.com



By Mike Chimenti

The last few months have seen many high level conferences and summits with representatives from every major imperialist country and multilateral organization, as well as leaders from some of the rebel factions in Darfur. At each step along the way, imperialists have been tightening the noose around Sudan and opening new avenues for attack.

UN: A Lion Without Teeth

On July 31st, United Nations (UN) Resolution 1769 was officially ratified. The deal, worked out at a meeting on June 12th, is a three-way agreement between the UN, African Union (AU) and the Sudanese



government allowing 26,000 foreign military "peacekeepers" into the Darfur region of Sudan. This new resolution was the reason behind the recent Paris Conference which saw the G8 nations, the EU, UN and AU all sit down, without the Sudanese government, to discuss how they would "solve" the crisis in Darfur. While the "international community" is hailing the passing of Resolution 1769 as the savior of people in Darfur, it was not so long ago that a similar resolution was given the same praise.

In August of 2006, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) passed Resolution

1706, which prophesied the deployment of 17,300 foreign soldiers and 3,300 civilian support staff to Darfur under the banner of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). Unfortunately for the imperialists trying to invade Sudan while waving the light blue flags of the UN, they were never able to muster the money or soldiers needed to actually deploy the force. Regardless of the complete absence of any boots on the ground, in October 2006, the UNGA felt compelled to extend the mission until April 30, 2007, marking a full year since the passing of the original resolution.

During the course of this entire year, the imperialists constantly beat the drum of war against the government of Sudan, claiming to be concerned only with the suffering of Darfuris, and not the billions of dollars of oil and gold buried beneath the land that millions of poor Sudanese live on.

Under the terms of the July 31st resolution, the UN will establish the United Nations Assistance Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). The end of October 2007 marks the end of the preparation period in which the UN will prepare to subsume the 7,000 soldier AU force already in Darfur. By December 31, they are then to be ready to command not only the military mission, but to coordinate and administer the "humanitarian" mission which the Assistant Secretary General for the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations



Ban Ki-moon Secretary General of the United Nations

characterized as "unprecedented". In an interview with the New York Times, Jane Hall Lute (the above mentioned Secretary) said, "This is a logistical and administrative undertaking, the kind of which is, for us in the United Nations, unprecedented."

The New Mission: The Old Mission with a New Face!

The details of the new mission are extremely vague. No concrete troop or personnel commitments from any countries have yet been made, and according to Secretary

IMPERIALISTS SAVING DARFUR, SUDAN: TALK IS CHEAP CONTINUATION OF CIVIL WAR IN SUMMITS & CONFERENCES

Lute, "It's premature at this point to say definitively what the exact composition of the force will be like." However, some countries have been quick to reassert their desire to get in on the plunder of Sudan. Notably, the government of Canada (on behalf of Canadian oil and mining companies already in Sudan) announced an additional \$48 million dollars for the hybrid UN-AU force only two days after the resolution was passed. The EU, France and other countries made similar

announcements in the days just prior to the ratification of the resolution.

With the rich imperialist countries offering to foot large portions of the bill, the hunt is on for countries that can contribute the actual soldiers on the ground. The wording of Resolution 1769 calls for the military force to be made up primarily of soldiers from other African countries. But, as things stand, the outlook for assembling such a large army of African soldiers is bleak. The AU already has 7,000 soldiers on the ground in Darfur, and the AU's most recent



Aug. 30th 2006 Khartoum, Sudan

"peacekeeping" mission, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) "is on the verge of folding because of a lack of financial and logistical support, as well as trained troops ...", according to Dr. Wafula Okumu, head of the Security Analysis Programme at the Institute for Strategic Studies in Pretoria. So far, the AU has been able to muster only 1,500 troops for a force that was supposed to number 8,000 and was meant to relieve the 15,000 Ethiopian soldiers, backed by the US, that invaded Somalia in December of last year.

The AU isn't the only group of countries unlikely to be willing or able to scrounge up enough soldiers to make the dreams of Resolution 1769 a reality. While the US continues to sink deeper into the quagmire of Iraq, NATO countries are stretched to the breaking point trying to hold their ground against an increasingly effective and widespread resistance in Afghanistan. And with anti-war sentiment on the rise in North America and Europe, significant troop contributions from the imperialist countries become more politically

dangerous everyday.

Private Army!

With their armies weakened by the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the imperialist countries are already discussing the use of private military contractors to make the occupation of Sudan a reality. According to Secretary Lute, the UN is looking "at commercial contractors for certain aspects of support in the area." With the annual budget for UNAMID expected to surpass \$2 billion per year, no

one is forecasting a shortage in available contractors.

But while the UN embarks on this unprecedented mission, the precedents being set in some of its other missions are a grim indication of what will happen in Darfur if the UN is able to implement the newest plans of its imperial puppeteers.

On July 21st, the UN announced they were beginning an internal investigation into new allegations of child sexual abuse by as many as 800 UN "peacekeepers" in the Ivory Coast. This investigation is

only the newest in a long string of sexual exploitation scandals that have marred almost every UN "peacekeeping" mission around the world, including the ongoing UN mission in southern Sudan.

Two days later, Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a letter that they had written to Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, regarding an investigation into gold and weapons smuggling involving UN "peacekeepers" in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the letter, HRW criticized the UN for the "lack of transparency in the process, the

slow progress of the investigation, and most important, the continuing lack of accountability." The original charges were filed with the UN in December of 2005 and implicated several members of the UN force. On July 13th 2007, Guéhenno told the BBC that the case was "now closed" with no charges laid, despite the fact that the UN's own investigation showed that at least one officer had committed the crimes.

What's Next?

Whether or not the UN's newest mission becomes reality, the passing of this newest resolution is yet another step in the long run plans of imperialism to isolate, weaken,



Feb. 2006 Southern Darfur, Sudan

invade and plunder Sudan. Over the last few months, increasing US sanctions against Sudan have begun to hurt Chinese investments in the country to the point that China has reversed its previous stance of "non-interference" in Khartoum's affairs. On April 11, Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Zhai Jun, after meeting with Sudanese President Omar al Bashir, told reporters, "My main task during the visit [was]...urging the Sudanese side to show flexibility toward" UN Resolution 1706. Shortly after this statement, the Sudanese government agreed to accept the UN's "Heavy Support Package", an additional 3,000 foreign troops as well as an increase in the amount of military hardware and

aircraft allowed in Darfur.

In addition to the sanctions and threats of invasion, the recent Arusha Summit held in Tanzania on August 3rd saw the AU and UN meet with different rebel groups from Darfur. Although two of the largest rebel organizations, the Sudan Liberation Movement and Sudan Liberation Army-Unity, were absent from the talks, on August 6 Jan Eliasson, Special UN Envoy to Darfur, claimed that the rebel factions had reached a "common platform" and were ready for "final negotiations" with Khartoum.

With a new, larger military force given legitimacy by the UN and economic sanctions beginning to take effect, the imperialists have now succeeded in grouping different rebel factions

on the side of "peace" in order to increase the political and diplomatic pressure on Khartoum, all the while preparing for war while they manipulate the honest and human compassion of millions of well-intentioned people across the world.

Whether under the UN or AU, separately or combined in a "hybrid force", we must continue to oppose any military intervention in Sudan and join with our Sudanese brothers and sisters in demanding:

- No to Invasion of Sudan!**
- US/UN Hands of Sudan!**
- Hands Off Africa!**

CAPITALIST BOSSES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA FORESTRY ON OFFENSIVE!



Striking workers on Vancouver Island.



USW 1-80 preparing signs for the picket lines.

Forestry Workers Fight Back with Militant Strike!

By Sophie Ziner

The United Steelworkers - a union representing 7000 forestry workers in BC - began shutting down operations on July 20th. Striking workers are demanding that employers stop contracting out jobs and stop mandating unfair, unsafe shifts which sometimes require forestry workers to be on the job up to 12 hours a day without overtime pay.

profitable to export raw logs, and with them jobs, across the border to the United States and to other provinces. Sawmills that could be profitable can't manage to keep running because all the logs get sold out of the province or country and there is no raw material to mill.

In my hometown of the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island, the sawmill was a dominant feature in the economy- many people I knew growing up worked at



Loggers sign up for picket duty.

In November 2004 the Government of British Columbia imposed a collective agreement in response to a three-week-long strike by forestry workers. Following that, most workers took a 18 to 35 percent cut in wages, about 5000 loggers and sawmill workers lost their jobs and 26 forest industry companies went out of business.

Fields Sawmill or had some sort of job connected to it. Last year, the mill was closed because it was more profitable for the company to export raw logs across the border to the US where they could be processed more cheaply. 235 people lost their jobs, and one of the major employers left town. But this trend is not unique to the Comox Valley. It has been seen in small towns and cities all over British Columbia.

So when the Forest Products Association of Canada says that the industry is recovering and is expanding its markets, where are these benefits being seen? In the hands of forestry workers? Definitely not. The profits are all going to the big corporations, who are looking always to cut back rights of workers to increase their bottom line. The government of British Columbia is fully complicit in this increase in exploitation.

The forestry industry makes up around 25% of British Columbia's economy, and is one of the major employers in many small towns and cities in BC. The practices of the big companies of the forestry industry have run loggers and sawmill workers into a dead end. These companies are trying to find ways to salvage profits in a market that is floundering because of a low US housing market by attacking the gains that forestry workers have fought for and won over the years. The impact on employment in all other sectors in a small town is heavily affected when an industry like forestry is in decline.

What does forestry mean to British Columbia? For decades, the forestry industry has been a central feature of the economy of this province. Loggers and forestry workers have had to fight for job security and safer working conditions for over a century now, and attacks on the rights of forestry workers are still ongoing as part of an overall systematic theft of the rights of workers and the sidelining of unions in British Columbia. Over the last decade, the forestry industry especially has gone through a major shift and decline. Why? Mostly because the big corporations that run the industry have completely exploited the most easily accessible stands of timber, used unsustainable forestry practices and have used short term methods to maximise profit. As well, it has become more

The 7000 forestry workers on strike represent working people in small-town BC, in communities that see almost none of the benefits brought by the short term economic boom of the Olympics and that are suffering the huge weight of a provincial economy that increasingly must exploit land and people to sustain itself. Working people must demand: Capitalists open the books and let us see their books. All working people in BC need to support the striking forestry workers!



Striking workers on Haida Gwaii Island.

FREE THE CUBAN 5

Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González

FiveHeroes Freedom Fund

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

To make a donation or to find out more about the "Five Heroes Freedom Fund" please check out

www.freethethefive.org or

www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca



Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba Exposes the inhuman and criminal US blockade on Cuba

Interview with 3 Pastors for Peace Caravan 2007 Participants from Vancouver

By Alison Bodine

“There are 20Million children sleeping in streets everyday, not one of them is in Cuba!”

Since 1992 the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba has worked to end the US Blockade on Cuba by bringing people and humanitarian aid from the US to Cuba in defiance of this unjust and immoral law. Over the last 18 Caravans thousands of people have had the opportunity to learn more about Cuba and the US Blockade through the outreach and education campaign by Pastors for Peace. The 2007 Pastors for Peace Caravan left Vancouver on June 30th and continued through the Western US, until meeting with 140 other Caravanistas in McAllen, Texas, and continued on to Cuba. On board were three young Caravanistas from among other participants from Vancouver: Sophie Ziner, on her third Caravan was a Route Speaker and Coordinator. For both Nita Palmer and Max Tennant this was their first time on the Caravan.

FTT: Sophie you have been on the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba three years in a row, can you tell us about the impact of the Caravan on people from the US you met along the route, and overall its role in Cuba solidarity work in the US?

Sophie: The caravan is an interesting project because it takes Cuba to all parts of the United States. Truly the Pastors for Peace Caravan is the only Cuba solidarity action that happens in the US that brings such a huge number of people and goes such a vast amount of places. A lot of people in the US are very frustrated with the US war drive in Iraq and other political issues and bringing the ideas of Cuba and the Cuban Revolution has a profound impact on ordinary and working people in the US.

FTT: Crossing the border this year from the US to Mexico was very easy compared to other years, can you describe the feeling you had going through the border and also the reasons

can you tell us what you were thinking about as the plane first landed and your first impressions of being in Cuba?

Max: I'm really scared of airplanes and people may know that because of the blockade Cuba doesn't necessarily have the ability to obtain the same airplanes that there are in North America. But the airplane we were in and the fact that they made sure everything was so safe, I have never felt so comfortable. When I got off the plane I went through immigration, the attendant said something about how I have the same birthday as Fidel Castro, when he looked at my passport, this was my very first impression.

On the way from the airport to where we were staying I didn't see any homelessness, I saw everyone was well dressed and well fed; I didn't see any billboards advertising anything except about the gains of the Cuban revolution. Instead of big mansions I saw large homes broken into apartments. Actually I remember coming from the airport and I was just flabbergasted like,

whoa, I don't believe it. That first night I was not thinking about it straight like, I kept having to say to myself, wait Cuba DOES prioritize for humanity.

FTT: You all also had the opportunity to visit a “Home for the Third Age” in Cuba, Nita can you tell us about your experiences there?

Nita: I didn't really know what to expect going into the visit. The thing that really struck me was the amazing difference I saw in quality of life for the residents of this home compared to the quality of life for most seniors in Canada. Nursing homes in Canada that I have been to are really more like storage for people rather than homes. In San Vicente all 12 women were over 37 when the Cuban revolution triumphed in 1959. Which means that they were women that had families and jobs, if they were able to, at the time

Continued on page 9

Fire This Time sat down with all three Carvanistas to discuss their experiences on the Caravan both in the US and in Cuba and to find out more about what they learned to use in the struggle for social justice here in Canada. For more information on the Caravan, please see www.ifconews.org or attend the full report back taking place Mon. Aug 13th at Trout Lake Park in East Vancouver at 7pm, organized by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba.

why the US essentially gave you the thumbs up?

Sophie: Diane Baker, a reverend on the Caravan, likes to say that this project is like water dripping on a rock. It might seem that the rock is impenetrable but we just keep on dripping in a consistent way and eventually the rock will break down, because water always wins. This is the 18th Caravan, 17 other caravans have crossed the US border and successfully brought thousands of tons of aid to Cuba. This year when we crossed the border homeland security and US customs met us and 12 computers were symbolically detained, not confiscated. Our idea of why the US chose this course of action is that they really needed to make a symbolic gesture against the caravan.

Nita: As a first time Carvanista, the feeling going into the border crossing both going from the US into Mexico with aid for Cuba and the reverse challenge on the way back is really a feeling anticipation because you don't really know what is going to happen at the border. Whether it is going to be a struggle and a 93 day hunger strike, like on previous Caravans, or whether it will be a breeze, like this year. Within the whole caravan people felt like this year it was a big victory, as it would have been if there would have been a big struggle with the US government.

FTT: Max, this was the first time you ever set foot on Cuban soil,



Magia, Hip-hop MC and director of the Cuban Agency of Rap

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

OR “How I Learned to Love Cuba!”

Available for \$1 ea.
To Order Contact:
Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC)
778-882-5223
or
cubacommunities@yahoo.ca

Back-to-Back in Spanish AND English!



of the revolution and so they had a very good chunk of time to live under the conditions in Cuba before the revolution. Every one of them was so dynamic and so excited about life at 85 and 90 and nearly 100 years old, I found it really inspiring and I think it really is the most human reflection of the gains of the Cuban revolution.

One woman we met who used to be a professional singer. She got up for us and sang a beautiful song called "Cuba Que Linda Es Cuba." After she finished singing somebody asked her to compare her life now to how it was before the revolution and she kind of laughed and said, "I can't do that, there is so much to say." But she did say, "the fact that we are able to live so well and for so long is completely



with the group Obsescion, also the director of the L'Agencia Cubana del Rap, she explained how people who are involved

can be housing for everyone. That there can be food for everyone. All this when Cuba generates much less wealth and capital than North America. In Canada people should have the right to housing, to education, to healthcare. Cuba is something that gives people hope. In Cuba for the first time in my life I felt like people had the opportunity to progress as a human beings. If we don't fight for change here in Canada when we return then we have let Cuba down.

Nita: We were in Cuba on the 26th of July, the celebration of the beginning of the Cuban Revolution, and I got up early in the morning to watch



due to Fidel and to the revolution and anybody who doesn't like it should leave Cuba." I think that this sums up very well the gains of Cuba for seniors, women and all people.

FTT: Sophie, throughout this years Caravan you had the opportunity to meet with young people involved in the Hip Hop community in Cuba, can you tell us more about those experiences?

Sophie: Hip Hop is a form of art and expression that all over the world is coming out of, and has a history of coming from, young people who are marginalized, whether they are in Palestine or the Bronx in NYC. Hip Hop truly has always been a voice of people fighting for social change. Hip Hop artists and people involved in the hip hop community in Cuba are in a very unique situation. No Cuban you meet would tell you that just under 50 years of revolutionary change in Cuba has wiped out all of the contradictions and all of the problems that centuries of colonization brought to Cuba. In the mid-90's during the special period in Cuba, Hip Hop began to gain a lot of momentum in Cuba, especially in Havana and the eastern part of the island, amongst young people, especially Afro-Cuban young people. In the presentation that we had in Havana province by a woman named Magia, an MC

in the Hip Hop community, youth that are involved in Cuba, are in a really unique position because Cuban hip hop artists are able to say push the gains of the revolution further instead of saying we are completely oppressed and marginalized under the government of the country where we live, like in the US and Canada. What other country has a Ministry of Hip Hop? Why does the Cuban government have a Ministry of Hip Hop? Because the Cuban government knows that hip hop is a tool for advancing the gains of the Cuban revolution. It recognizes that to push issues like those for LGBTI in Cuba, for women's rights, for the rights of Afro-Cubans there need to be tools like Hip Hop.

FTT: All three of you spent eight days in Cuba experiencing the revolution, can each of you tell us what are the lessons and experiences you have brought back with you that will contribute to your fight for justice here in Canada?

Max: It is just amazing to see that even though there is a blockade, that Cuba represents the Battle of Ideas that can spread into other countries. That there





SUBSCRIBE TO

CubaNews

Keep informed about issues and news related to Cuba through this listserv which provides "a wide range of news and information about the island, the Cuban community abroad, Cuba's international relations, and related topics." The Editor-in-Chief of CubaNews is prominent Cuba solidarity activist Walter Lippman (<http://www.walterlippmann.com/>)

To join the list, visit:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CubaNews>

What We Have Seen and Learned in Cuba

Report back from the 18th Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba

Vancouver activists report on their journey with the 18th Pastors for Peace Friendship Caravan to Cuba and their experience in revolutionary Cuba!



Visiting the Home for the 3rd Age

Since 1992, Pastors for Peace Friendship Caravans to Cuba have called international attention to the cruel and immoral US Blockade of Cuba by traveling from the US to deliver humanitarian aid to the Cuban people, despite the US governments opposition. The Blockade causes shortages of food, medicine and other important supplies for over eleven million people in Cuba. It is an immoral policy that uses hunger and disease as political weapons.

Monday Aug. 13th
7:00pm

Trout Lake Park
3300 Victoria Dr.
Multimedia Presentation and Discussion
Refreshments Provided!

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC)
cubacommunities@yahoo.ca | 604.812.2964
www.vancubasolidarity.com

the celebration on TV. At the end Raul Castro was speaking and you could hundreds of thousands of Cubans all waving little Cuban flags chanting "El Pueblo Unido Jamas Sera Vencido!", that was a moment of really believing it for me, of saying this is true!

Looking at the example of Cuba and the people coming together, it is really true that united we won't be defeated. We need to bring that back for our struggle for Cuba and social justice here in Canada.

FTT: Thank you.

A Written Record

Many events important events take place around the world. Some are related to Cuba. Sometimes, the news reaching our country are much more interesting than a simple reflection I can offer with the purpose of raising the public's awareness.

The BBC interview of Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, one of our Five Heroes, which was televised yesterday, had a profound impact on me. What human content, profundity and brilliance characterized it, qualities that only a mind that has endured 9 years of unjust psychological torture can have. We urge the Round Table to continue to inform us on the historic process surrounding the fate of these, our heroic fellow Cubans.

Meanwhile, in Brazil, the press continues to dig up stories and to report on the activities of the two boxers who, breaking the rules, disappeared from the accommodations where the Cuban delegation was lodged.

An EFE cable published in Rio de Janeiro on August 3 reports:

"After being caught in a resort near Rio, where they spent

to miss us', one of the women declared, admitting to having received nearly one hundred dollars a day, in her statements for O Globo".



These are uncomfortable but essential details and I cannot use terms different from those chosen by the press agency in its article. I imagine the boxers informed their closest, adult relatives about these facts.

Yesterday, August 6, a cable from the same agency reported:

The Brazilian police stated it believed the story of the events recounted by the two Cuban boxers who were deported to their country after they disappeared during the Pan-American Games of Rio de Janeiro. They claimed they had been drugged and deceived by two promoters who sought to take them with them to Germany.

We believe what they told us and we consider their story feasible and probable, Federal Police captain Felicio Latera, who headed the investigation, told EFE today

The Brazilian police is not investigating the alleged desertion of the two Cubans, it is investigating the two promoters who attempted to snatch them, the captain declared.

friendships with the boxers who were bribed in Venezuela had on their behavior, and they likely did not predict the indiscrete verbiage with which the owner of the mafia-like company was to speak after they failed to attend the weight-in.

The two athletes were reluctant to speak to the press. Miguel Hernández, a Granma journalist, greeted them at the airport and conversed with them about the matter. The answers were disappointing for him, who attempted to write a convincing article proving the sincerity of the boxers.

Julita Osendi, a television reporter who was well informed about the Pan-American Games held in Rio, arranged a meeting with them and made efforts to persuade them to speak with absolute frankness. They were more forthcoming and shared with her a number of additional details about their unusual adventure, but the final outcome of the interview was the same.

I asked comrade Fernández, the Vice-President of the Council of Ministers responsible for the National Institute for Sports and

employment in accordance with their experience. We have also diligently cared for their health, as we do with all citizens.

It was essential, as an elementary act of justice, to listen to them, to find out to what extent they regretted their involvement in so painful an incident.

We have made the facts we were able to gather available to our people. The athletes wish to return to their families. As part of a Cuban delegation of that sport discipline, they have reached a point of no return.

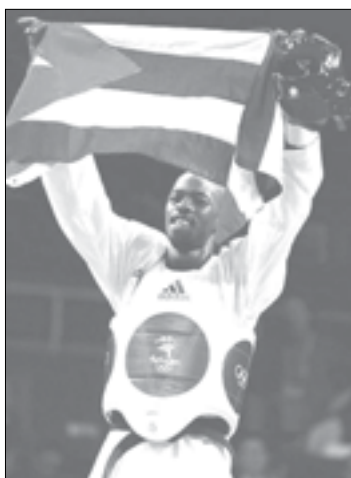
We, on the other hand, must continue the struggle. The time has come to put together the list of Cuban boxers who will participate in the Beijing Olympics, about one year before this event. First, they must travel to the United States to participate in the World Championship, one of the three qualifying events of the Olympic Games. Just picture the mafia sharks lurking about in search of fresh meat.

They should be warned of one thing: we are not eager to make home deliveries. Cuba will not sacrifice one bit of honor, nor any of its ideas, for Olympic gold medals; the morale and patriotism of its athletes shall prevail above all else. We know that, in the world of boxing, the size of the ring and gloves have been modified to strike at our country, which wins so

some days with a Cuban and a German businessman, and three prostitutes, the boxers were taken to a hotel in the night; they are under custody by the Federal Police.

"Ringodeaux and Lara were arrested at Araruama last Thursday. According to the police, the boxers regretted what had happened, they want to return to Cuba" and alleged to have been the victims of a planned strike, for which they were drugged by the promoters before being taken out of the Pan-American complex. The athletes turned down the offer of two lawyers who approached them at Federal Police headquarters and insisted on representing them.

"The Cuban athletes, however, had been seen in different resorts in the north coast of Rio de Janeiro, enjoying the resorts and partying full of alcohol and women". According to the owners of inns located in the Squarema resort who were interviewed by O Globo, the two boxers, accompanied by a Cuban and German businessmen, spent several days in that city before traveling to Araruama, accompanied by three prostitutes hired in Rio de Janeiro. "They are good people, they treated us as if we were their girlfriends and they even told us they were going



That same day, EFE reported in that same cable that:

During an interview with a Brazilian newspaper, German businessman Ahmet Öner, the promoter of four Cuban boxers who have already secured asylum in Germany, admitted that he organized Rigondeaux's and Lara's escape, for which he claims to have paid nearly half a million dollars".

We do not doubt that the Federal Police thought the athletes' regret sincere. That institution was tasked with securing, from the Cuban consulate, the documentation that the boxers were urgently requesting and with giving an account of what had occurred to them in their 12-day absence.

For the immense majority of our people, who educate and train the athletes with so much sacrifice, what is essential is their moral behavior.

The person, who is most to blame, in my opinion, is Erislandy Lara, who as captain of the boxing team broke the rules and played directly into the hands of the mercenaries. He is a 24 years old student of physical education and sports at the university. The two boxers are unaware of the negative influence which their close

Recreation (INDER), among other institutions, to send me a transcription of Osendi's interview with Erislandy Lara and Guillermo Rigondeaux. The images were not enough for me; I wanted to analyze each question and answer. The text is twice as long as this reflection.

I will ask Granma to publish it in the sports or another section, for there to be a written record of the conversation.

Many poor countries face no problems with their professional athletes but, in those countries, many people also die prematurely or suffer incapacitating illnesses due to a lack of exercise. Rich developed countries also endure this tragic state of affairs as a result of the shortcomings of their rotten system and the commercial spirit of their medical services.

The athlete who abandons his delegation is not unlike the soldier who abandons his fellow men in the midst of combat. Cuba has many talented athletes but it has not stolen them from anyone. The people, what's more, are the ones who enjoy their marvelous performances. It is already a part of their culture, their wellbeing and their spiritual wealth.

The Revolution has kept its word. It promised to treat the two athletes in a humane fashion, to reunite them with their families immediately, offer them access to the press if they so requested it and provide them with decent

many medals in this sport, so as to finally include professional boxing in the Olympic Games as well.

Sport authorities are analyzing all possible alternatives, including the option of changing the list of boxers or of not sending any delegation whatsoever, in spite of the penalties that may be in store for us. They are also analyzing strategies and tactics we could follow.

We will maintain our principled policy, even if the world heads more and more resolutely towards professionalism, and as in the times of Kid Chocolate, a true genius, even when there are no medals for healthy sports and the only conceivable disciplines are those which put a price tag on pitching balls that are impossible to bat, batting homeruns and throwing and enduring punches with no protection whatsoever. We will never return to such a time.

Healthy sport practices are incompatible with consumerism and wastefulness, phenomena which are at the root of the irreversible economic and social crisis facing the globalized world.

Fidel Castro Ruz
August 7, 2007
8:25 p.m.

La Constancia Escrita

Sucedan muchos acontecimientos en el mundo de gran importancia. Algunos se relacionan con Cuba. A nuestro país llegan a veces noticias de mucho más interés que una sencilla reflexión mía con el propósito de crear conciencia.

La entrevista de Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, uno de nuestros Cinco Héroes, con la BBC divulgada ayer por la televisión, qué tremendo impacto me produjo, qué contenido humano, profundidad, brillantez, algo que solo puede surgir de una mente que ha sufrido 9 años de injusta tortura psíquica. Por favor rogamus que la Mesa Redonda nos siga informando sobre el histórico proceso relacionado con el destino de los heroicos compatriotas.

En Brasil, mientras tanto, la prensa sigue buscando noticias e informando sobre las actividades realizadas por los dos boxeadores después que, rompiendo el rigor de las normas, se ausentaron del alojamiento de la delegación cubana.

Un cable de EFE fechado en Río de Janeiro el 3 de agosto, informa:

“Tras ser sorprendidos el jueves en un balneario en el norte del litoral de Río de Janeiro, en donde pasaron varios días al lado de un empresario cubano y de otro alemán, así como de tres prostitutas, los boxeadores fueron conducidos en la madrugada de hoy a un hotel, en donde han sido custodiados por agentes de la Policía Federal.

“Rigondeaux y Lara fueron retenidos

“La policía brasileña dijo confiar en la versión de los dos boxeadores cubanos deportados a su país tras haber desaparecido durante los Juegos Panamericanos de Río de Janeiro en el sentido de que fueron dopados y engañados por dos empresarios que querían llevarlos a Alemania.

“Confiamos en lo que nos dijeron y consideramos su versión factible y probable”, declaró hoy a EFE el comisario de Policía Federal Felicio Latera, responsable de la investigación.”

“La Policía Federal brasileña no está investigando la supuesta deserción de los dos cubanos, está investigando a los empresarios que intentaron llevárselos”, afirmó el comisario.”

Con esa misma fecha y en el mismo cable la agencia EFE informó:

“En una entrevista con un diario brasileño, el empresario alemán Ahmet Öner, promotor de cuatro boxeadores cubanos ya refugiados en Alemania, admitió que organizó la fuga de Rigondeaux y de Lara, por la que dijo haber pagado cerca de medio millón de dólares.”

No dudamos, por nuestra parte, que la Policía Federal creyó en el arrepentimiento de los dos atletas. La misión de dicha institución era gestionar con el consulado cubano la documentación que le solicitaban con apremio los boxeadores y explicar lo sucedido con ellos después de 12 días de ausencia.

el jueves en el balneario de Araruama por agentes de la Policía Militar de Río de Janeiro. En sus declaraciones ante la Policía Federal, los dos boxeadores dijeron que, arrepentidos, desean regresar a Cuba, y que supuestamente fueron víctimas de un golpe, para lo cual fueron dopados por los empresarios antes de ser retirados de la Villa Panamericana. Los atletas rechazaron la ayuda de dos abogados que se presentaron en la sede de la Policía Federal y que insistieron en representarlos.

“Los dos cubanos, sin embargo, fueron vistos en diferentes balnearios en el litoral norte de Río de Janeiro en total libertad y disfrutando de las comodidades de posadas, fiestas regadas con bebidas alcohólicas y mujeres. Según dueños de posadas en el balneario de Saquarema consultados por O Globo, los dos boxeadores, junto a los empresarios cubano y alemán, pasaron varios días en esa ciudad antes de viajar a Araruama en la compañía de tres prostitutas contratadas en Río de Janeiro. ‘Ellos son buenas personas, nos trataron como si fuésemos sus novias y hasta dijeron que van a sentir nuestra falta’, dijo una de las mujeres, que admitió haber recibido cerca de 100 dólares por día, en declaraciones a O Globo.”

Son detalles desagradables pero esenciales y no puedo usar términos diferentes a los incluidos por la agencia cablegráfica en su despacho. Imagino que los propios boxeadores informaron sobre esto a los familiares adultos más cercanos.

Ayer lunes 6 otro cable de la misma agencia afirmaba:

Para la inmensa mayoría de nuestro pueblo lo esencial es conocer cuál fue el comportamiento moral de los atletas, que con tanto sacrificio los educa y forma.

La mayor responsabilidad, a mi juicio, corresponde a Erislandy Lara, quien era el capitán del Equipo de Boxeo, y aun así incumple normas y va a parar directamente a las manos de los mercenarios. Tiene 24 años y es estudiante universitario de Educación Física y Deportes. Los dos boxeadores ignoran la influencia en sus conductas de las estrechas relaciones de amistad que sostenían con los tres boxeadores sobornados en Venezuela, aunque seguramente desconocían la indiscreción verborreica con que el dueño de la empresa mafiosa hablaría después que ellos dejaron de asistir al pesaje.

Los dos atletas se mostraron reacios a conversar con la prensa. Un periodista de Granma, Miguel Hernández, los esperó



en el aeropuerto y habló con ellos sobre el tema. Estaba luego decepcionado con las respuestas cuando trató de escribir un artículo convincente de la sinceridad de los boxeadores.

Julita Osendi, reportera de televisión y bien informada de los Juegos Panamericanos de Río, solicitó visitarlos y se esforzó por persuadirlos de que conversaran con toda franqueza. Fueron más abiertos y le contaron algunos detalles adicionales sobre su insólita aventura, pero el resultado final fue igual.

Al compañero Fernández, Vicepresidente del Consejo de Ministros que atiende entre otros organismos al INDER, le pedí me

los ciudadanos.

Era indispensable, por elemental justicia, escucharlos, conocer el grado de arrepentimiento que alegaban al verse envueltos en tan doloroso episodio.

Hemos puesto a disposición de nuestro pueblo los elementos de juicio que pudimos reunir. Ya ellos desean marcharse con sus familiares. Llegaron a un punto sin retorno como parte de una delegación cubana en ese deporte.

Nosotros, en cambio, debemos continuar la lucha. Ha llegado nada menos que el momento de constituir la lista de boxeadores cubanos que participarán

enviase una transcripción de la entrevista de Osendi con Erislandy Lara y Guillermo Rigondeaux. No bastaba la imagen, deseaba analizar cada pregunta y cada respuesta. Lo escrito ocupa dos veces el espacio de esta reflexión.

Le pediré a Granma que la publique en la página deportiva o en otro espacio, para dejar constancia escrita de la conversación.

Muchos países pobres no tienen problemas con el profesionalismo, pero también en ellos numerosas personas mueren prematuramente o sufren enfermedades invalidantes por falta de ejercicios. Esa tragedia la padecen también los países ricos desarrollados por insuficiencias en su podrido sistema y el espíritu mercantilista de sus servicios médicos.

El atleta que abandona su delegación es como el soldado que abandona a sus compañeros en medio del combate. Cuba dispone de muchos buenos deportistas pero no se los ha robado a nadie. El pueblo disfruta además de sus maravillosas actuaciones. Es ya parte de su cultura, su bienestar y su riqueza espiritual.

La Revolución ha cumplido su palabra. Prometió darles un trato humano a los dos atletas, reunirlos de inmediato con sus familiares, brindarles acceso a la prensa si lo deseaban, y asignarles un trabajo decoroso de acuerdo con sus conocimientos. Hemos atendido igualmente con esmero su estado de salud, como hacemos con todos

en las Olimpiadas de Beijing, con casi un año de anticipación. Primero deben viajar a Estados Unidos para participar en el Campeonato Mundial, uno de los tres eventos clasificatorios a los Juegos Olímpicos. Imagínense a los tiburones de la mafia demandando carne fresca.

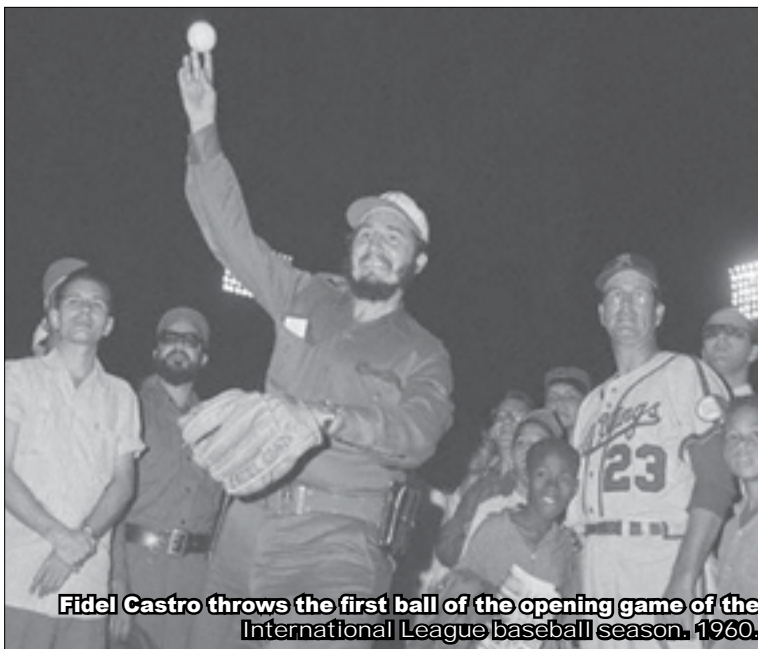
Algo debemos advertirles: no estamos ansiosos de suministrarla a domicilio. Cuba no sacrificará un ápice de su honor y sus ideas por medallas de oro olímpicas; prevalecerán por encima de todo la moral y el patriotismo de sus atletas. Sabemos que en el boxeo el tamaño del ring y los guantes se han modificado para afectar a nuestro país que tantas medallas obtiene en ese deporte, hasta lograr que el boxeo profesional se incluya también en las Olimpiadas.

Las autoridades deportivas están analizando todas las variantes posibles, incluyendo cambiar la lista de boxeadores o no enviar delegación alguna, a pesar de los castigos que nos esperen. Estudian igualmente estrategias y tácticas a seguir.

Mantendremos nuestra política de principios, aunque el mundo se adentre cada vez más en el profesionalismo, y como en los tiempos de Kid Chocolate —un verdadero genio—, no exista una medalla para el deporte sano y sólo se conciba un deporte que ponga precio a lanzar pelotas imbateables, conectar jonrones y repartir y recibir piñazos sin protección alguna. A una época como aquella jamás volveremos.

El deporte sano es incompatible con el consumismo y el derroche, que está en la raíz de la actual e irreversible crisis económica y social del mundo globalizado.

Fidel Castro Ruz
7 de agosto del 2007
8:25 p.m.



Fidel Castro throws the first ball of the opening game of the International League baseball season, 1960.

"We are Realists, We Dream the Impossible"
"Seamos Realistas, Soñemos lo Imposible"

-Che

-Che



Jose Angel and Naty Rosales at the July 25th action.

25 de JULIO LA LUCHA DEL MOVIMIENTO SOCIAL EN EL SALVADOR CONTINUA

medidas sustitutivas:

- Obligación de presentarse cada 15 días ante la Jueza de Instrucción Especializada que lleva el caso.
- Prohibición de salir del país sin autorización judicial
- Prohibición de cambiar de residencia sin autorización judicial, para lo cual se deberá informar a la autoridad competente

Por otra parte, el tribunal mantiene los cargos de terrorismo contra los/as trece compañeras liberadas y mantiene además la competencia sobre el caso. Ello supone que el proceso judicial sigue su curso hasta la realización de una audiencia preliminar en el mes de octubre durante la que se decidirá la situación jurídica de los/as compañeras, es decir, si se rechazan los cargos o si continúan procesados/as.

La Coalición de Solidaridad por Latino America Unida rechaza la represión neoliberal en Latino America

Para la Coalición de Solidaridad por Latino America Unida esta marcha de protesta ante

Por José Angel*

Los días 24 y 25 de Julio organizaciones de solidaridad en Canadá desarrollaron protestas de forma simultánea en las embajadas y consulados de El Salvador en las ciudades de Vancouver, Ottawa y Toronto con el fin de sumarse al rechazo de las capturas y represión en Suchitoto ocurridas el pasado 2 de julio.

En Vancouver representantes de diferentes organizaciones exigieron la libertad inmediata

nueve presos políticos que guardaban prisión desde el pasado dos de Julio, fecha en que fueron capturados durante la manifestación contra la política de Descentralización del Agua anunciada por ARENA

La Ley Antiterrorista aplicada a los capturados es cuestionada por organizaciones nacionales e internacionales ya que es una Ley que coarta la libertad de las personas a organizarse y protestar.

Agradecimientos a todas las

de los nueve presos políticos de El Salvador. También hicieron alusión a las detenciones de 4 líderes comunitarios en Tacuba, Ahuachapán, el 28 de Junio, considerando que es una clara violación a los derechos humanos. Además, exigieron la derogación inmediata de la Ley Antiterrorista por "contravenir" la Constitución Política de El Salvador y convenios internacionales sobre Derechos Humanos, los cuales ha suscrito el Estado salvadoreño. Representantes de más de 7 organizaciones presentaron cartas de protesta y rechazo en contra de la represión y el rompimiento de los acuerdos de paz a la señora consul de esta ciudad a simismo, recordaron ala funcionaria salvadoreña sobre la grave crisis social y económica que El Salvador atraviesa por las políticas neoliberales impuestas por el imperialismo yankee.

Dan orden de libertad para 9 presos políticos

La presión internacional y las marchas de protesta en el interior finalmente dieron frutos y después de 7 horas, de el día 26 de Julio el Juzgado Especializado de San Salvador, dictó orden de libertad para

personas y organizaciones que expresaron solidaridad

La organización comunal CRIPDES enviamos nuestros más profundos y sinceros agradecimientos a todas aquellas organizaciones y personas tanto a nivel nacional como internacional, que, desde el lugar en que se encuentran e indistintamente de la tarea que les tocó desempeñar en esta dura prueba, nos acompañaron en todo momento, dando sus más nobles muestras de solidaridad militante para lograr la libertad de todos



Banner of the Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America at the protest on July 25.

y todas nuestras compañeras. Gracias ala solidaridad de todos/as, ahora ellos/as se han reencontrado con su familia, con sus amigos/as, con su gente, con su pueblo, y con la plena certeza de que nunca estuvieron solos/as.

También de esta forma queremos informar que el resto de personas que han recobrado su libertad deberá observar las siguientes

el consulado salvadoreño se realizo bajo la presente campaña !!! Campaña en contra de la represión neoliberal en Latino America !!! Con la cual seguiremos desarrollando diferentes actividades por el respeto a los derechos humanos y en contra de la represión, por que consideramos que la aplicación de leyes antiterroristas contra las protestas sociales revela la debilidad democrática y la campaña de intimidación en contra de las organizaciones sociales. Así también El Comité Ejecutivo de la Coalición de Solidaridad por Latino America Unida quiere extender a todos los compañeros@s y amigos@s de todas las organizaciones el más profundo agradecimiento por haber hecho posible la marcha de protesta realizada en el consulado de El Salvador el día 25 de Julio 2007 a las 10:30 am.

Unidad, Lucha, Solidaridad
El Movimiento Social Crece la Lucha Continua

*Jose Angel
Miembro fundador de el grupo musical Cutumay Camones de El Salvador
Activista y miembro organizador de la Coalición de Solidaridad por Latino America Unida



Members of the FMLN-Vancouver protest. July 25, 2007.

JULY 25TH THE STRUGGLE OF THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT CONTINUES

IN EL SALVADOR

By José Angel*

On July 24th and 25th, solidarity organizations in Canada joined together to condemn the repression and jailing of activists that occurred in Suchito, El Salvador on July 2nd. In Canada, activists protested in front of the El Salvadorian embassy and consulates in Toronto, Ottawa, and Vancouver. In Vancouver, representatives of different organizations demanded the immediate release of nine political prisoners held in El Salvador. They also protested the June 28th arrests of four community leaders in Tacuba, Ahuachapán, noting that this was a clear violation of human rights. In addition, they demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Antiterrorist Law which is used for the purpose of "contravening" the political constitution of El Salvador

their friends, with their people, and with their town, and with the total certainty that they were never alone.

Also, we want to inform you that the people who have regained their freedom will now have to observe the following measures:

- They must appear every 15 days before a Judge of Special Training who will review their case.
- They are prohibited from leaving the country without judicial authorization.
- They are prohibited from changing their residence without prior judicial notification and authorization.

On the other hand, the court maintains the charges of terrorism against the thirteen released compañeros and maintains also that their case was handled competently.

and international treaties on human rights of which the Salvadoran state is a signatory party. Representatives of more than seven organizations presented letters of protest and condemnation of the repression and the breaking of the peace accords to the consul general, to remind her of the serious social and economic crisis that El Salvador faces because of the neoliberal policies imposed by Yankee imperialism.

Freedom of the Nine Political Prisoners Ordered

The international pressure and protest rallies in El Salvador finally bore fruit and, after seven hours, on July 26th, the Specialized Court of San Salvador issued the order for freedom of the nine political prisoners. The prisoners had been detained since July 2nd, when they were arrested during a rally against the policy of Water Decentralization announced by ARENA.

The Antiterrorist Law applied to the detainees is questioned by national and international organizations, since it is a law that limits the freedom of people to organize and protest.

Thank-you to all the people and organizations who expressed their solidarity

The community organization CRIPDES sends our most profound and sincere thanks to all those organizations and people at the national and international level, who, from wherever they were, carried out this hard task that they were called to do, accompanied us at every moment and gave noble examples of militant solidarity to obtain the freedom of all of our compañeros. Thanks to all for your solidarity. Now, our compañeros have been reunited with their families, with

The judicial process will continue until the completion of a preliminary hearing in October. During that hearing, it will be decided whether the charges against our compañeros will be dropped or will continue to be processed.

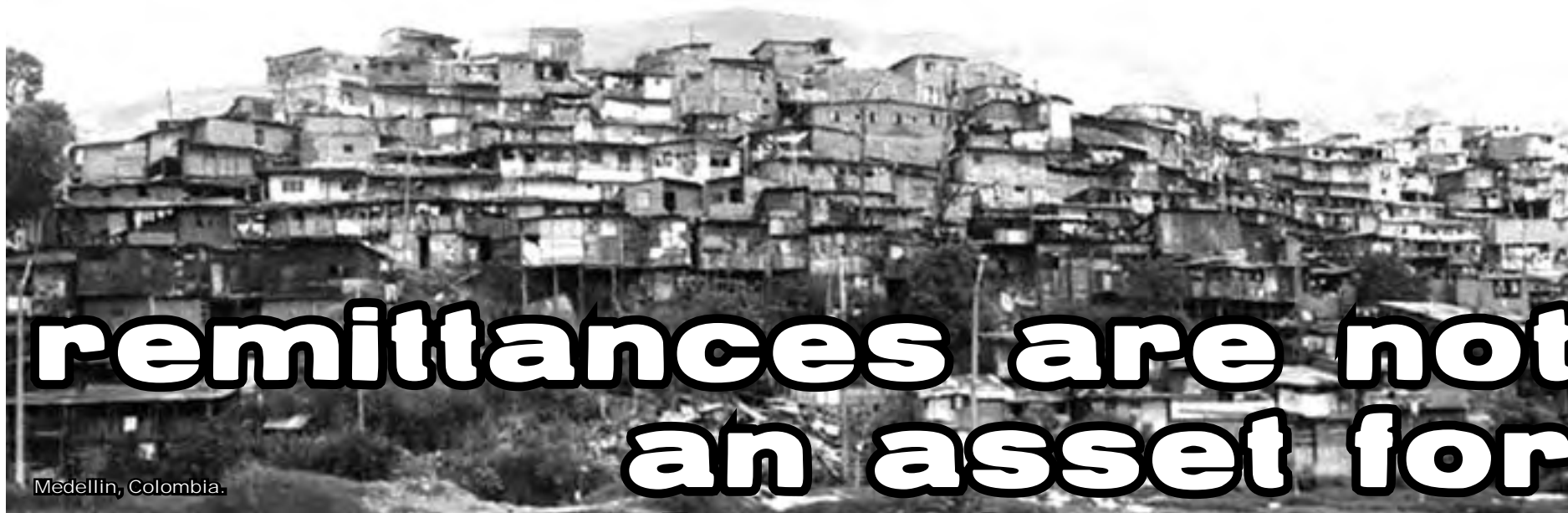
The Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America Rejects Neoliberal Repression in Latin America

The protest in front of the Salvadoran Consulate in Vancouver, organized by the Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America, was carried out under our present campaign: the campaign against neoliberal repression in Latin America. We will continue organizing different activities in defense of human rights and against repression, because we believe that the use of the antiterrorist laws against social protests reveals the crumbling of democracy and a campaign of intimidation against social organizations. Also, the Executive Committee of the Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America wants to extend a profound thanks to all the compañeros, friends, and organizations who made the protest in front of the Salvadoran consulate on July 25 possible.

Unity, Struggle, Solidarity
The Social Movement Grows and the Struggle Continues

*Jose Angel
Founding member of the musical group "Cutumay Camones de El Salvador"

Activist, member, and organizer with the Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America



Medellin, Colombia.

remittances are not an asset for development

By Manuel Yepe*

What the industrialized countries actually intend when they refer to the remittances that immigrants send to their relatives as “development assistance” is to disguise a cruel form of exploitation of the South by the North.

Emigration is said to be a factor of social tension decompression, remittances a source of financial income for the émigré’s home country.

Truth be told, these fresh money transfers have come to be a significant chunk of their native land’s GDP and a major boost for their balance of payments.

However, in the longer term, the exodus of young hands and their family’s reliance on the money they get from them become an

National Liberation Front’s presidential candidate, would have scored a landslide victory in El Salvador, the President warned he would prohibit U.S.-based Salvadorians from sending any money back home, should Handal win.

Depending on remittances turned that country into a hostage of the empire, which thus succeeded in imposing the candidate of the right-wing ARENA (Alianza Republicana Nacionalista).

Data issued by BID (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo) and CEPAL (U.N.).

Economic Commission for Latin America), the money that these Latin American immigrants send to their countries has grown fiftyfold -- from one billion to more than 50 billion a year -- in the last

its agricultural exports, an amount that surpasses its income from tourism and is close to its total oil exports.

Also from the U.S. comes 43% of El Salvador’s hard currency, and this figure reaches 35% and 21% in Nicaragua and Ecuador, respectively, not including the money sent by émigrés from those countries elsewhere.

Concealed by these numbers, the tragedy lies in the fact that the supposed economic growth is directly proportional to the increasing emigration.

Remittances received in Latin America are estimated to grow at an annual rate of 7 to 10%.

Judging from this rate of growth, and the amount of money sent, the opulent



American sweatshop.

obstacle to development in the emigrant’s country.

Better put: the economic crisis fuels mass exodus, and the remittances sent by those who leave ease the burden of its immediate impact, but crises tend to worsen in the medium or long run because their root cause, far from changing, has gotten worse, precisely as a result of the nonstop exodus.

In 2001, when the U.S. president threatened to order a mass expulsion of illegal immigrants, many Latin American governments had to beg him for mercy, because such measure would have brought with it insurmountable crises of governance and the collapse of their economies, unable as they were to take in so much people and do without their remittances.

When all indications were that Schafik Jorge Handal, the leftist Farabundo Martí

25 years.

In six of those countries, remittances exceed 10% of their GDP: Haiti (17%), Nicaragua (14%), El Salvador (13%), Jamaica (12%), the Dominican Republic (10%) and Ecuador (10%).

According to official sources, 169 billion dollars in remittances made it to Third World countries in 2005.

There are 25 million Latin American immigrants in the United States and the European Union, and half of them send money to their home countries.

In 2006, the abovementioned remittances added up to 60 billion, and 45 billion were sent from the United States alone by around 12.5 million Latin Americans, BID assured.

The Mexican immigrants in the U.S. send to their country four times the value of

North would seem to be finally starting to compensate the South for so many years of plundering.

Not by a long shot. For centuries, global capitalism has cruelly stripped the underdeveloped world of its wealth, sacking its natural resources, subjecting those countries to unfair trade practices and mercilessly exploiting their labor.

That the remittances sent by their émigrés end up as a form of sustenance of the Third World’s increasingly impoverished nations is a denunciation of a crime rather than a cause for satisfaction.

Given the current terms of exchange, if no real assistance is provided to development, if the foreign debt now choking the continent’s developing countries is not cancelled, if neocolonialist “integration” mechanisms such as the FTAA continue to be forced upon them, if the rich countries

keep imposing agricultural and commercial protectionist practices inconsistent with their own neoliberal claims, no benefit is to be derived by the poor nations from their émigrés’ remittances.

As long as the developing countries fail to find ways to encourage their exports or measures are not implemented to keep the big transnational corporations from exploiting labor, preying upon and speculating with national assets in order to stop undercapitalization in and brain drain from those poor nations; if investments are not fostered that expand labor markets and curb popular emigration, remittances will be but a palliative to sooth an ever unbearable act of injustice.

Manuel E. Yepe Menéndez is an attorney, economist and political scientist who works as a Professor for Havana’s Higher Institute of International Relations.



Climbing the fence in Tijuana, Mexico to cross to the US.



Migrant workers from South of the USA-Mexico border pick crops near Del Mar.

LAS REMESAS NO SON AYUDA AL DESARROLLO

Por Manuel Yepe*

Cuando los países industrializados afirman que las remesas de los inmigrantes de los países subdesarrollados a sus familias constituyen "ayuda al desarrollo" están en verdad enmascarando una cruel forma de explotación del Sur por el Norte.

Se asegura que la emigración es un factor de descompresión de las tensiones sociales y que las remesas son una fuente de ingreso de recursos pecuniarios para los países de origen. En verdad, las transferencias de dinero fresco de los emigrantes hacia sus familiares han llegado a representar una parte significativa del producto bruto de sus países de origen y contribuyen a mejorar sus balanzas de pagos.

Pero, a más largo plazo, el éxodo de trabajadores jóvenes y la dependencia que surge de las transferencias de dinero, se convierten en inconvenientes para el desarrollo del país emisor de migrantes.

Más claro: la crisis económica suscita el éxodo, las remesas de los emigrantes atenúan durante cierto tiempo sus efectos económicos inmediatos, pero, a mediano o largo plazo, la crisis tiende a profundi-

zarse, porque las condiciones que la provocaron no han cambiado sino que se han agravado precisamente a causa del éxodo que sigue aumentando.

zarse, porque las condiciones que la provocaron no han cambiado sino que se han agravado precisamente a causa del éxodo que sigue aumentando.

Cuando en 2001 el Presidente de los Estados Unidos amenazó con disponer una expulsión masiva de inmigrantes indocumentados, fueron muchos los gobiernos latinoamericanos que tuvieron que acudir a él en demanda de clemencia porque ello habría significado el surgimiento de

insalvables crisis de gobernabilidad y el desplome de las economías de sus países, incapaces de asimilar a los expulsados y prescindir de sus remesas. Cuando parecía que el candidato del izquierdista Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional, Schafik Jorge Handal, habría de ser electo Presidente de El Salvador por un margen muy amplio, el Presidente de Estados Unidos formuló la amenaza de prohibir las remesas de sus emigrados establecidos en Estados Unidos si ello ocurría. La dependencia en las remesas convirtió a ese país en rehén del imperio, que así impuso al candidato de la derechista Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA).

Según datos del Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID) y la Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL) de las Naciones Unidas, el dinero que envían los inmigrantes latinoamericanos a sus países de origen ha crecido cincuenta veces -de mil millones de dólares a más de 50 mil millones anuales- en los últimos 25 años.

En seis países americanos, las remesas

sobrepasan el 10% del producto bruto interno: Haití (17%), Nicaragua (14%), El Salvador (13%), Jamaica (12%), la República Dominicana (10%) y Ecuador (10%).

Según fuentes oficiales, en 2005, 169 mil millones de dólares por concepto de remesas llegaron a los países del tercer mundo.

Hay 25 millones de inmigrantes latino-



Frontera de los E.E.U.U. y México

americanos en Estados Unidos y la Unión Europea, de los cuales la mitad envía remesas a sus países de origen.

Durante el año 2006, las remesas que los emigrados latinoamericanos enviaron a sus países sumaron unos 60 mil millones de dólares y 45 mil de esos 60 mil millones de dólares fueron remesados desde los Estados Unidos, por alrededor de 12.5 millones de latinoamericanos, según el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID).

Las remesas familiares de los inmigrantes mexicanos residentes en Estados Unidos aportan a México cuatro veces el valor de sus exportaciones agrícolas, superan sus ingresos por concepto de turismo y se

acercan al valor de sus exportaciones de petróleo.

El 43% de las divisas que ingresa El Salvador, el 35% de las que recibe Nicaragua y el 21% de las de Ecuador provienen de sus emigrantes que trabajan en los Estados Unidos, sin incluir las remitidas por los emigrados que se encuentran en otros países.

La tragedia que encubren estas cifras está

en el hecho de que estos crecimientos son directamente proporcionales al aumento de la emigración.

Se estima que las remesas de migrantes que recibe Latinoamérica se incrementan en una tasa anual del 7 al 10%.

Por este ritmo de crecimiento de las remesas y su monto tan elevado, parecería que se está logrando que el Norte opulento empiece a compensar al Sur por los daños de la histórica explotación.

Pero ni remotamente es esto así. Durante siglos, el sistema capitalista global ha despojado a los países del mundo subdesarrollado de manera cruel. Les han saqueado sus recursos naturales, sometido a un intercambio injusto de sus mercancías y

explotado de manera inmisericorde su mano de obra.

El hecho de que las remesas de los emigrantes lleguen a ser base de sustentación de las economías de cada vez más países depauperados del Tercer Mundo, es más la denuncia de un crimen que motivo de satisfacción.

Con los actuales términos del intercambio; si no se incrementa la ayuda verdadera al desarrollo; si no se conmuta la deuda externa que ahoga las economías de los países subdesarrollados del continente; si se insiste en forzar la creación de mecanismos neocolonizadores de "integración" como el ALCA; si no se renuncia a la práctica del proteccionismo agrícola y comercial que los países ricos imponen en acto de inconsecuencia con sus propios reclamos neoliberales, las remesas nada bueno significan para las naciones pobres.

Si no se crean mecanismos de estímulo a las exportaciones de los países subdesarrollados; si no se apoyan sistemas que obliguen a que las empresas transnacionales se sometan a medidas de control contra la explotación laboral, el traslado de beneficios y la especulación, para evitar la descapitalización y la fuga de cerebros de los países pobres que ellas generan; si no se promueven inversiones que expandan el mercado laboral para contribuir al arraigo de la población, las remesas no serán más que un paliativo aplicado a una injusticia que se hará cada vez más insostenible.

Manuel E. Yepe Menéndez es abogado, economista y politólogo. Se desempeña como Profesor en el Instituto Superior de Relaciones Internacionales de La Habana.



Fábrica de explotación de los E.E.U.U.

BBC interview with GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ one of the Cuban 5

Published for the first time in the Cuban News Agency (CAN)

Transcription by Steve Patt and Gloria La Riva, National Committee to Free the Cuban Five

This transcript is the full interview given by Gerardo Hernández, a part of which was transmitted by BBC

Claire Bolderson introduction

Well next month, a court in Florida is going to hear an appeal in a case that sums up much about the relationship between the United States and Cuba. Gerardo Hernández and four other Cubans were convicted in Florida in December, 2001 [sic: June, 2001] on a range of charges including trying to obtain U.S. military secrets, spying on Cuban exile groups, and, in Mr. Hernández' case,

say that the worst part of my treatment has not to do with the prison but with the government of the US. I would say that the worst part of my imprisonment is that I haven't been able to see my wife for the last ten years, because the US government doesn't grant a visa to her to come to visit me. That's one of the things, and I would say that for the rest of the things, you know, it's a prison and I am an inmate like every other and it's not easy to be an inmate, but I'm doing alright.

Claire Bolderson: Are you saying then that you have had no family visits at all?

Gerardo Hernández: Well, I have received some family visits - my mother and sister have been able to come, but in the case of

conspiracy in the deaths of four Cuban-Americans whose planes were shot down by the Cuban government in 1996.

Gerardo Hernández is serving a double life sentence, but he argues that all he was trying to do was protect Cuba from what he calls "terrorist groups," anti-Castro organizations based in the U.S. He and his fellow defendants also argue that their trial was unfair because of the anti-Castro mood in Florida where it was held.

In the first-ever media interview given by any of the five prisoners, I spoke to Mr. Hernández on the telephone from his maximum security prison in Victorville, California, and asked him to explain his story from the beginning.

Claire Bolderson: Mr Hernandez, I know there has been a lot of concern about your treatment in prison and the time you spent a while ago in solitary confinement. Can you describe for me how you are being treated now, what the conditions are for you in prison?

Gerardo Hernández: Well, I'm a regular inmate in a US penitentiary and I would

my wife, my wife of nineteen years, she hasn't been able to come to visit me because she has been constantly denied a visa to come. So I haven't been able to see her for the last ten years.

CB: You were convicted on a number of counts, including one of them was trying to obtain US military secrets, by trying to infiltrate a base, and for acting as an unregistered agent for a foreign government. Can you explain to us what you were doing in Florida in the first place?

Gerardo Hernández: Well in the first place, I was gathering information on terrorist groups that used to operate in Florida with total impunity. They are people that have got training camps there and paramilitary organisations and they go to Cuba and commit sabotage, bombs and all kinds of aggressions. And as I told you, they have had impunity. So at a certain point Cuba decided to send some people to gather information on those groups and send it back to Cuba to prevent those actions. And in 1998, Cuba passed to the FBI some information regarding those groups, hoping that the FBI would do something against them. And unfortunately, what they did was arrest the people that had gathered that information. As for the military part, I was charged with conspiracy to commit espionage, and that was because there wasn't espionage at all. In our trial that lasted seven months, there were three or four retired generals from the US army who testified that there was nothing related to espionage in this case, but since the trial was in Miami and we couldn't have a fair trial. We were found guilty, but I reiterate that it was a conspiracy because the government said, "Wait a minute - they didn't commit espionage, but



exploded in a Cuban airplane and killed 73 people. And that's only two examples of terrorist acts committed against Cuba. Anybody who lives in Miami, who see the TV, the local TV station or radio station] they know what Comandos F-4 is, and they know what Alpha 66 is [and they know what Brothers to the Rescue is.

they would have tried to commit it sometime," so that's the conspiracy to commit espionage, but not a single piece of secret information, nothing related to the national security of the US was gathered or transmitted.

CB: But you do acknowledge that you were working as an agent for a foreign government, and in one of your defense statements you do say that you were working with false documents, false identity documents?

GH: Yes, I do acknowledge that.

CB: But that's quite a serious thing to have been doing then, isn't it?

GH: [Yes, it is,] but there is something called "necessity defense," that says that if [in order to prevent a wrongdoing], in order to prevent crime you have to violate a law, you can understand that. In my case, yes I had fake I.D., I was working for foreign government, but not to affect the U.S. interests, but to defend Cuban interests, to defend the Cuban people from terrorism.

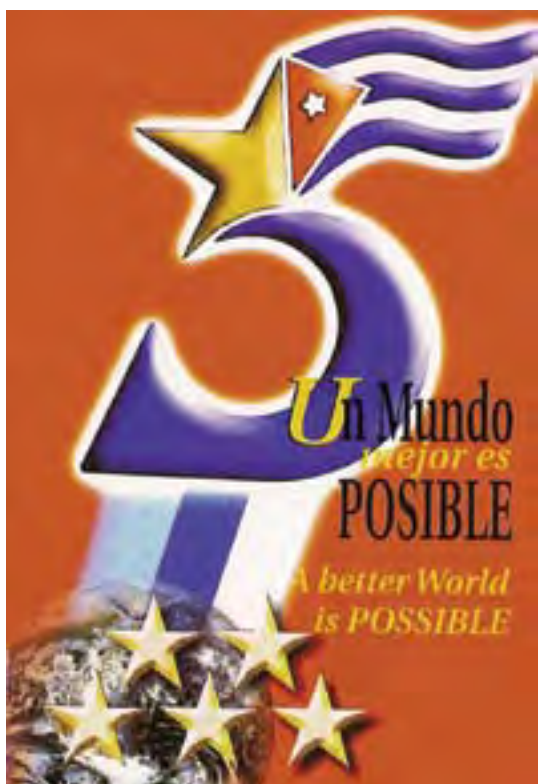
CB: And the crimes you were trying to stop, what exactly were they, the crimes?

GH: Well, for example, in 1997, a bomb exploded in a Cuban hotel and killed [Fabio Di Celmo], an Italian tourist. And in 1976, as you know, a bomb

CB: And what are those, can you explain to me, what are those names?

GH: Yes, they used to be called paramilitary groups. I call them terrorist groups. They have got training camps in the Everglades, they dress in camouflage, and have weapons, and they train for the day they're going to "liberate Cuba." They used to go to Cuba in boats and fire at Cuban buildings and they tried to organize an internal sabotage and all kind of actions. [That is public record - you check the Miami newspapers, you can see that. You can see that they get involved and go to Cuba and do some shootings and they go back and are received like heroes and, for example, in our trial, we presented some witnesses, we subpoenaed the Coast Guard and we subpoenaed the FBI and we presented the evidence of the impunity that these people have. We asked, for example, to a Coast Guard official, "Is it true that this day you intercepted a group that was heading to Cuba with some weapons and explosives?" "Yes, it is true." "Is it true that you just took the weapons and freed the guys?" "Yes." "Why?" "Well, because they said that they were fishing for lobsters." Something like that happened in our trial and it's not a single case - there's a long record of terrorist aggressions against my country.

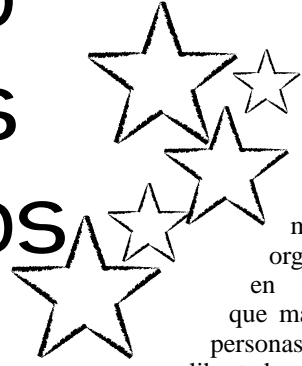
Continued on page 18





Gerardo Hernández

Entrevista la BBC a GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ uno de los Cinco cubanos presos en Estados Unidos



El lunes 2 de Julio el programa Newshour de BBC World Service entrevistó a Gerardo Hernández, uno de los Cinco prisioneros políticos cubanos, desde la cárcel de alta seguridad Victorville en California. Esta es la primera entrevista que da uno de los Cinco cubanos presos en Estados Unidos por monitorear las actividades terroristas que se organizan en la Florida con la anuencia de las autoridades norteamericanas.

En esta transcripción aparece la entrevista completa, incluida la parte que no transmitió la BBC.

Transcripción de la entrevista

Claire Bolderson: Sr. Hernández, sé que ha habido mucha preocupación acerca del tratamiento que usted recibe en prisión y del tiempo que usted permaneció en confinamiento solitario. ¿Puede usted describirme cómo está

[Estas son personas que han logrado tener campos de entrenamiento en organizaciones paramilitares y que van a Cuba a realizar sabotajes, poner bombas y todo tipo de agresiones. Y ellos tienen impunidad, entonces.] en un cierto momento, Cuba decidió enviar algunas personas para reunir información acerca de esos grupos y enviarla a Cuba para prevenir esas acciones, y en el año 1998 Cuba le pasó al FBI algunas informaciones relativas a esos grupos, esperando que el FBI hiciera algo contra ellos, y, desafortunadamente, lo que hicieron fue arrestar a las personas que habían reunido esa información. Yo fui acusado de conspiración para cometer espionaje. En nuestro juicio, que duró siete meses, estuvieron tres o cuatro generales retirados del Ejército de los EE.UU., quienes testificaron que no había nada relacionado con espionaje en este caso, pero el juicio fue en Miami y nosotros no podíamos tener un juicio justo. Nosotros

CB: Pero es una cuestión bastante seria haber estado haciéndolo, ¿no?

GH: [Sí, lo es,] pero existe algo llamado “defensa de necesidad”, que dice que si [con el fin de prevenir una acción errónea,] con el fin de evitar un delito, usted puede violar la ley, y eso es algo que uno puede entender. En mi caso, sí, yo había falsificado el documento de identidad, yo estaba trabajando para un gobierno extranjero, pero no para afectar los intereses de los EE.UU., sino para defender al pueblo cubano del terrorismo.

CB: Y los delitos que usted estaba tratando de detener, ¿cuáles eran exactamente esos delitos?

GH: Bueno, por ejemplo, en 1997 una bomba explotó en un hotel de Cuba y mató [a Fabio Di Celmo], un turista

estaban pescando langostas”. Algo parecido sucedió en nuestro juicio. Y este no es un caso aislado. Existe una larga relación de agresiones terroristas contra nuestro país. Entonces el pueblo cubano tiene el derecho de defenderse contra las acciones terroristas. Esperamos que el gobierno de los EE.UU. hará algo, pues ellos dicen que tienen una guerra contra los terroristas, pero, ¿cómo es que ellos van a permitirles a estos terroristas operar libremente en Miami? Recientemente, solo hace un mes., el hombre que organizó la explosión en el avión cubano, que mató a setenta y tres personas, fue puesto en libertad y ahora está libre en Miami.

Miami.

CB: Existe un cargo muy polémico por el cual usted fue sentenciado, y es la razón por la cual está cumpliendo una condena tan larga: el derribo de dos aviones civiles de los EEUU, por parte de Cuba, en 1996. ¿Jugó usted algún papel relacionado con estos hechos?

GH: ¡No, absolutamente no! Pero usted tiene que comprender lo que realmente sucedió: la persona que lideraba esos aviones se llama José Basulto. Él fue operativo de la CIA en los años 60, estuvo infiltrado en Cuba para hacer sabotaje. Después de eso, en 1962, él regresó a Cuba desde la Florida y disparó con un cañón contra un hotel cubano, regresó a Miami y fue recibido como un héroe. Ya él tenía una larga historia de terrorismo

siendo usted tratado actualmente, qué condiciones tiene usted en prisión?

Gerardo Hernández: Bueno, yo soy un recluso normal en una penitenciaría de los EE.UU., y pudiera decir que la peor parte de mi tratamiento no tiene que ver con la prisión, sino con el gobierno de los EE.UU. Yo diría que la peor parte de mi encarcelamiento es que no he tenido la posibilidad de ver a mi esposa en los últimos diez años, porque el gobierno de los EE.UU. no le garantiza una visa para venir a visitarme. Esta es una de las cosas, y yo diría que el resto, ... usted sabe, ... esto es una prisión y yo soy un recluso como otro y no es fácil ser un recluso, pero yo lo estoy haciendo bien.

Claire Bolderson: Entonces, ¿usted está planteando que usted no ha tenido visitas familiares?

Gerardo Hernández: Bueno, yo he recibido a algunos familiares recientemente, mi madre y mi hermana han podido venir, pero en el caso de mi esposa, mi esposa por diecinueve años, ella no ha podido venir a visitarme porque constantemente se le ha negado una visa para venir. Por eso no he podido verla en los últimos diez años.

CB: Usted fue condenado por varias causas, una de ellas el tratar de obtener secretos militares de los EE.UU. tratando de infiltrarse en una base, y por actuar como un agente no registrado para un gobierno extranjero. ¿Puede usted explicarnos qué estaba usted haciendo en primer lugar en la Florida?

Gerardo Hernández: Bueno, en primer lugar yo estaba reuniendo información acerca de los grupos terroristas que acostumbraban a operar en la Florida.

fuiamos declarados culpables, pero hubo una conspiración porque el gobierno dijo: “Espera un minuto, ellos no cometieron espionaje, pero tratarán de hacerlo alguna vez”, es decir, en esto consiste



Adriana Perez.

la conspiración para cometer espionaje, pero ninguna información secreta, nada relativo a la seguridad nacional de los EE.UU., fue recopilado o transmitido.

CB: Pero, ¿usted reconoce que estaba trabajando como un agente para un gobierno extranjero y en una de las declaraciones de su defensa usted dice que usted estaba trabajando con documentos falsos, documentos de identidad falsos?

GH: Sí, yo lo reconocí, sí.

italiano, y en el año 1976, como usted conoce, una bomba explotó en un avión cubano y setenta y tres personas fueron asesinadas. Y estos son solo dos ejemplos de ataques terroristas cometidos contra Cuba. Cualquier persona que viva en Miami, [que vea la TV u oiga las estaciones de radio locales] sabe qué es Comandos F-4, y sabe qué es Alpha 66 [y sabe qué son los Hermanos al Rescate.]

CB: ¿Y puede usted explicarme qué son esos nombres?

Sí, ellos son los que acostumbraban a ser llamados grupos paramilitares. Yo los llamo grupos terroristas. Algunos de los grupos que mencioné tienen campos de entrenamiento en Everglades, visten ropa de camuflaje y poseen armas y entrenan para el día que ellos vayan a “liberar a Cuba”, y ellos acostumbraban a ir a Cuba e incendiar edificios e intentar organizar un sabotaje interno, y todo tipo de acciones. Esta es una información pública, cheque los periódicos de Miami y podrá verlo. Usted podrá ver que ellos han estado involucrados y

van a Cuba y hacen algunos disparos y al regresar son recibidos como héroes, y, por ejemplo, en nuestro juicio, nosotros presentamos varios testigos, nosotros citamos a los guardacostas y citamos al FBI y presentamos evidencia sobre la impunidad que tienen estas personas. Nosotros, por ejemplo, le preguntamos al oficial de guardacostas, “¿Es verdad que ese día usted interceptó un grupo que estaba dirigiéndose a Cuba con varias armas y explosivos?” “Sí, es verdad” “¿Es verdad que usted solo recogió las armas y dejó libres a los hombres?” “Sí” “¿Por qué?” “Bueno, porque nos dijeron que

contra Cuba, y en un momento de su vida, él dijo “Está bien, ahora yo voy a ser un humanitario, yo quiero tomar ese pequeño avión y volar hasta el territorio cubano sin ninguna autorización y tirar volantes y propaganda”, y lo hizo como dieciséis veces. Y Cuba envió a los EE.UU. dieciséis notas diplomáticas, que fueron presentadas en nuestro juicio, planteando una queja a los EE.UU. y diciendo, “Esa gente está violando las leyes internacionales, las leyes de los EE.UU., las leyes de Cuba”. Y Cuba acostumbraba a decir “No lo hagan más, están poniendo en peligro a nuestra propia aviación, a nuestra población, todo”.

CB: Esto puede haber sido un error, y estoy seguro que ha habido muchas discusiones diplomáticas acerca de ello, pero en lo que yo estoy interesado es en saber qué hizo usted relacionado con estos hechos.

GH: [¡Nada!] Yo estaba en Miami y el avión fue derribado en aguas cubanas, a mucha distancia de donde yo me encontraba.

CB: Entonces, ¿usted no envió ninguna información que habría ayudado al gobierno cubano a derribar los aviones?

GH: No, claro que no. Si usted revisa las informaciones sobre esos días usted verá que José Basulto lo anunció mucho antes del viaje, él dijo: “Nosotros estaremos allá el 24 de Febrero”, todos lo sabían. Nosotros presentamos en nuestro juicio un memorando de una agencia del gobierno de los EE.UU., diciéndoles a su gente: “Estamos preocupados en relación con lo que va a haber allá el 24 de Febrero,

continuado en la página 18

Entrevista con Gerardo

continuado de la página 17

algo va a suceder, porque ya Cuba planteó que si ellos lo hacen otra vez, van a ser derribados, entonces sería mejor que nosotros estemos preparados para tal situación. Eso era lo que decía el memo. Yo estaba esperando que algo ocurriría, incluso en nuestro juicio, Richard Nuccio, ex-consejero del presidente Clinton, estuvo en el juicio y dijo: "Sí, aquella organización estaba fuera de control." Existe una gran disputa acerca de este tema y Cuba dice que le dispararon a los aviones en las aguas territoriales cubanas, los EE.UU. dice que un avión estaba en las aguas territoriales cubanas, pero que los dos que fueron derribados, estaban dirigiéndose hacia allí, pero estaban en aguas internacionales. Y el gobierno me acusó a mí de conspiración, y ellos dicen que porque yo sabía que el avión sería derribado en aguas internacionales, lo cual no tenía sentido alguno, era una locura. Pero ellos necesitaban culpar a alguien y me escogieron a mí.

CB: Usted tiene pronto una apelación. ¿Cuáles serán las bases de su apelación?

GH: Bueno, nosotros tenemos diferentes puntos en nuestra apelación. El punto principal, el que nosotros realmente queremos y desafortunadamente fue rechazado, es el punto de la sede - Nosotros argumentamos que el juicio en Miami fue injusto. Nuestro juicio se prolongó casi siete meses y hubo más

Miami, retirado de las escuelas, solo porque en la cubierta aparecen algunos niños cubanos sonriendo y con una mirada feliz. Es un libro para niños titulado "Vamos a Cuba" y ellos lo sacaron simplemente porque hay una frase en el libro que dice "Los niños cubanos estudian y viven igual que tú", algo más o menos así, solamente por eso, y todos los que conocen la historia de Miami saben que han sido asesinadas personas solamente porque quieren una relación mejor con Cuba. Yo puedo contarle que en la revista La Réplica pusieron bombas como siete veces porque abogaban por mejores relaciones con Cuba. La gente de Miami...usted tiene que vivir allí para entender. La mayor parte de los americanos no tienen idea de lo que está pasando en Miami, es como otro país.

CB: El líder cubano Fidel Castro en el pasado ha tomado gran interés en su caso y ha hablado en su favor. ¿Lo ha oído usted directamente de él?

GH: Bueno, tuve la oportunidad de hablar directamente con él por teléfono, el día de su cumpleaños, hace dos



de 100 testigos y el jurado deliberó unas pocas horas y no hizo ni una sola pregunta. Ellos simplemente nos declararon culpables de cada una de las causas, y entonces el juez nos otorgó las sentencias más altas posibles por cada causa.

CB: ¿Y usted dice que es por la influencia de la comunidad exiliada cubana en la Florida?

GH: Sí, claro. Durante el juicio, ocurrieron toda clase de irregularidades. Hay personas que filmaban a los jurados y la prensa fue siguiendo a los jurados a sus carros y hubo disturbios, o algunos tipos de protestas, frente a la corte, todo tipo de cosas. También la prensa fue realmente hostil hacia nosotros.

CB: Entonces, ¿usted piensa que el jurado fue intimidado, o incluso manipulado, fue tan serio como eso?

GH: Yo pienso que el jurado fue intimidado. Cualquier persona que viva en Miami, o sepa lo que sucede allí, podría entender que nada relacionado con Cuba es normal en Miami. Ahora mismo, por ejemplo, ha sido retirado un libro de las estanterías en

años. Fue algo inesperado para mí. Yo sencillamente llamé a mi esposa aquel día porque era también el cumpleaños de mi amigo René González. Entonces, cuando yo me di cuenta, le dije a mi esposa, "Felicitálo de mi parte", y entonces él dijo, "Oh, espera un segundo, yo quiero que él me lo diga", entonces tuve la oportunidad de hablar con él por unos minutos, lo cual significó una gran experiencia para mí, desde luego.

CB: ¿Y qué le dijo él?

GH: Bueno, él dijo que tenía confianza en que la justicia prevalecería, porque él ha estado siempre confiado, que cuando el pueblo americano descubra lo que ha pasado en nuestro caso, cuando el pueblo americano descubra la verdad acerca de nuestro caso, la justicia prevalecerá... todos están confiados acerca de esto.



Gerardo Interview

Continued from page 16

So the Cuban people have the right to defend themselves against terrorist actions.] Hopefully the U.S. government and the U.S. authorities will do something, because they say they have a war against terrorists, but why are you going to allow those terrorists to operate freely in Miami? Recently, just a month ago, the guy who masterminded the bomb on the Cuban airplane that killed 73 people, he was set free and he's free now in Miami.

CB: There is one very contentious charge on which you were convicted and the reason why you are serving such a long sentence - the shooting down by Cuba of two civilian planes from the United States in 1996. Did you have any role connected to that?

GH: No, absolutely not. [But you have to understand what really happened. The person leading those planes is called José Basulto, he was a CIA operative in the '60s, he was infiltrated into Cuba to do sabotage. After that, in 1962, he went back to Cuba from Florida in a boat and he fired a cannon against a Cuban hotel, went back to Miami and was received like a hero. And he has a long history of terrorism against Cuba, and at some point in his life he said "Alright, I'm going to be a humanitarian now, I want to get this small plane and fly inside Cuba with no permission at all and drop leaflets and propaganda," and he did it, like, sixteen times. And Cuba sent to the US sixteen diplomatic notes, which were presented in our trial, complaining to the U.S. and saying, "Hey, these people are violating international laws, U.S. laws, Cuban laws." The Cuban MIGs used to take off and escort those people out and Cuba

that the plane would be shot down over international waters, which has no sense at all. It's something crazy, but they need to blame somebody and they chose me.

CB: You have an appeal coming up. What will be the grounds for your appeal?

GH: Well, we have different issues in our appeal. The main issue, which we really wanted and unfortunately was reversed, is a venue issue -] We argued that the trial wasn't fair in Miami. Our trial lasted over seven months and there were over 100 witnesses. The jury deliberated a few hours and they didn't ask a single question. They just found us guilty on every single count, and then the judge gave us the highest sentence possible on every count.

CB: And you say that that is because of the influence of the Cuban exile community in Florida?

GH: Yes, of course. During the trial there were all kind of irregularities, to call it like that. People were filming the jurors, and following the jurors, the press was following the jurors to their cars, and there were riots or some kind of protest in front of the courts, all kind of things. Also the press was really rough with us.

CB: So you think the jury was intimidated, or even tampered with? Was it as serious as that?

GH: I believe the jury was intimidated. Anybody who lives in Miami or who knows what is going on there would understand that nothing related to Cuba is normal in Miami. Right now, for example, a book has been taken off the shelves in Miami, taken out of schools, just because on the cover there are some Cuban kids

used to say "Hey, don't do it anymore, you are putting in danger our own aviation, our population, everything.]"

CB: That may have been wrong, and I'm sure there have been many diplomatic arguments about it, but what I'm interested in is what you did about it?

GH: [Nothing!] I was in Miami and the plane was shot down in Cuban waters, a long way away [from me].

CB: So you didn't pass any information that would have helped the Cuban government to shoot down the planes?

GH: No, of course not. If you go to the records of those times, you will see that José Basulto announced way before the trip, he said "we are going there on February 24." Everybody knew that. We presented in our trial a memorandum from the U.S. government, one agency, the Federal Aviation Agency, telling their people "Hey, he's going to do that on February 24th, we are concerned that something is going to happen, because Cuba already said if they do it again, they're going to be shot down, so we'd better have all the ducks in a row," that's actually what the memo said. So everybody was expecting that something would happen, we even in our trial, Richard Nuccio, the former advisor to President Clinton, he was at the trial and said, "Yeah, that organisation was out of control." There is a long dispute over the incident and Cuba says they shot the planes inside Cuban waters according to Cuban radar, the U.S. says that one plane was in Cuban waters but the two that were shot down were heading there but in international waters. And the government charged me for conspiracy, and they said that is because I knew that the plane would be shot down, and because I knew

smiling and looking happy. It's a book for kids named "Let's Go to Cuba" and they just pulled it out because of that, because there is a phrase in the book that says, "Cuban kids study and live like you," something like that, and just because of that - and everybody that knows the history of Miami knows that people have been killed just because they want a better relation with Cuba. I mean, I can tell you about the Replica magazine that was bombed like seven times because they advocate for better relations with Cuba. People in Miami - you have to live there to understand. Most American people don't even have an idea of what is going on in Miami, it's like another country.

CB: Cuban leader Fidel Castro in the past has taken quite an interest in your case and he's spoken on your behalf. Have you heard from him directly at all?

GH: Well I had the opportunity to talk to him by phone on his birthday two years ago. It was something I didn't expect, I just called my wife that day because it was also my friend René González's birthday. And our families happened to be with him. So when I found out I told my wife, "Please, tell him happy birthday from me," and then he said, "Oh, hold on one second, I want him to tell me," so I had the chance to talk to him for a few minutes, which was a great experience for me, of course.

CB: And what did he say?

GH: Well he said that he's confident that justice will prevail because he has always been confident that when the American people find out about what has been done in our case, when the American people find out the truth about our case, justice will prevail. Everybody is confident on that.

By Kira Koshelanyk

Protesting the recent death of six more Canadian soldiers and uncounted scores of Afghan civilians, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) once again set up picket lines in front of the Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment Center in Vancouver. More than 35 protesters marched on July 10th, demanding "Canada Out of Afghanistan Now!" and called for an Independent Public Inquiry into the Canadian war drive in Afghanistan.

"The death toll for Canada is now at 66 because of the occupation. At the same time, criticism from people in Canada and around the world is rising against the deadly NATO air strikes on Afghan villages and towns, as more and more people call on Canada to bring the troops home," read the MAWO Statement to the Press for the action.

The program of speakers against the occupation included Luciano Sanchez, a member of the Global Justice & Peace Committee of the Hospital Employees Union of BC; Nicole Burton, a student activist and organizer with Mobilization Against War and Occupation; and Thomas Davies, a unionist and organizer with Mobilization Against War and Occupation. The speakers denounced Canada's expanding war budget, the shrinking public and social services budgets and the depth of destruction and death that has been brought to the people of Afghanistan since the 2001 invasion.

Between speakers, picketers rallied and marched across the sidewalk in front of the recruiting office, carrying colorful signs and chanting "Canada Out of Afghanistan NOW! Bring the Troops



Canada Out of Afghanistan Now!

MAWO PICKET ACTIONS PROTESTING OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN CONTINUE AS OCCUPATION CRISIS DEEPENS

Home! Independent Public Inquiry into the Canadian War Drive!" Supporters honked as they drove by on the busy Downtown streets.

Since the July 2005 infamous announcement by Chief of Defense Staff Gen. Rick Hillier that "We are the Canadian forces and our job is to be able to kill people" and that Afghan people are "detestable murderers and scumbags," MAWO has organized more than 30 picket actions at the Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment Centre in Vancouver. These

consistent actions taking place on at least a monthly basis have become an institution in Vancouver, giving a constant voice and presence to Afghan resistance to the occupation that resonates through the streets of this city. The pickets will continue, alongside monthly protest rallies, forums, workshops and cultural festivals, until the occupation of Afghanistan is ended and Afghanistan has unconditional self-determination, free from any foreign intervention and occupation.

Wear Your Opposition to War & Occupation!



TShirts \$15 each



Buttons: 50 cents each

**Contact Vancouver's Antiwar Coalition
Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)
for your order of buttons or t-shirts:
P. 604 322 1764
F. 604 322 1763
E. info@mawovancouver.org
Check Out Antiwar Events in the Lower Mainland at
MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG**

FREE PUBLIC FORUM

CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN!



**Thursday
Aug. 31st
6:30pm**

**Burnaby Public Library
Metrotown Branch (near Metrotown Skytrain Station)**

**Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)
WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG
info@mawovancouver.org | 604.322.1764**

US/UK OUT OF IRAQ!



Free Public Forum



**Friday August 17th
6:30PM
Whalley Library
10347 - 135th St Surrey
(Beside Surrey Central Skytrain)**

Join us to discuss what Iraqi people face because of the brutal US/UK occupation which has killed over 600,000 Iraqi people, and how the antiwar movement can organize for an end to war and occupation in Iraq!



**Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO)
604.322.1764 | info@mawovancouver.org
www.mawovancouver.org**

VANCOUVER CELEBRATES JULY 26 MOVEMENT



Ideas Cannot be Killed: the Spirit of the July 26th Movement and the Gains of the Cuban Revolution Live on in Vancouver Celebration!



By Kira Koschelanyk

“Ideas cannot be killed.” These words were spoken by Sarria, a black lieutenant and patrol leader in Fulgencio Batista’s army who saved Fidel Castro from being killed at the time of his arrest in 1953.

On July 26th 1953, a young Fidel Castro and 150 other revolutionaries made the first strike against the US-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista with an armed attack on the Moncada Army Barracks. Their hopeful and determined minds sought to take Cuba back from the corruption of rich American pocketbooks, with most of

celebration in Vancouver for the July 26th movement.

The evening’s program included; a delicious Latin American dinner, film and multimedia presentation of Cuba’s revolutionary struggle and the struggle against the US blockade, speakers, music and a dance lesson with Cuban dance instructor Carlos Reyes. There was also a special gallery of OSPAAAL posters (OSPAAAL is the Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America) collected and kept by Nigel Page, who explained the solidarity and internationalism represented by



Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) July 26th Celebration, 2007.

how Cuba influenced the rest of Latin America in standing up to US imperialism, and in working against discrimination against women and advancing women’s leadership in society. He said “The gains of the Cuban revolution are huge, only comparable to a universe ignited by a sky full of stars.”

inspiration and hope that the July 26th fighters of 1953, and the fighters of today, give to us all in our struggle for a better world!”

German Altamiro read an amusing poetic reflection on the Cuban revolution and the program was closed with an excited recorded message of solidarity by Tamara Hansen, VCSC coordinator, calling direct from Cuba.

The festivities began with Ramon Flores and Pablo Oyarzo who filled the air with Latin American music of celebration! The group Salsa dancing lesson followed as

everyone got to their feet and danced the night away!

This celebration for the anniversary of the July 26th movement and the celebrations on every anniversary show that the ideas of the July 26th movement live on. These ideas are alive and thriving today in the people of Cuba and the fighting spirit of oppressed people all over the world, against injustice, imperialism, exploitation and for dignity and a society built on true human values of equality for all people.

**Hasta la Victoria Siempre!
Viva la Revolucion Cubana!
Siempre en el 26!**

Cuba’s land and resources owned and exploited by US businesses. This attack failed and most of the revolutionaries were killed or jailed and tortured by Batista’s army. Six years later, the remaining forces, including Fidel, regrouped and grew to triumph over Batista and US imperialism on New Year’s Eve 1958. (For more on the July 26th movement in Cuba, please see the article in Volume 4 Number 7 of Fire This Time Newspaper). This spirit of determination to fight for justice and humanity is celebrated every year in Cuba. On July 27th 2007, 54 years later, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) organized once again an annual

these Cuban political art posters.

The evening was hosted by VCSC organizer April Desilets who introduced the evening and the exciting elements of the program. The crowd assembled heard from Jenn Jay from the Free the Cuban 5 Committee – Vancouver who talked about the case of the 5 Cuban heroes held in US jails. These 5 men collected incriminating information about anti-Cuban terrorists operating out of Miami, in order to defend Cuba and the gains of the July 26th Movement and Cuban Revolution. Jose Angel, with the translation from Rosa Arteaga, both from the Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America also spoke. Jose explained

Giving the main presentation of the evening, VCSC organizer Janine Solanki said “Cuba’s ongoing revolutionary process was not killed when the US began its blockade that keeps medicines, machinery and resources from Cuba. It was not killed during the “Special Period” after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Cuba lost most of its trade overnight. We are celebrating July 26th tonight. We are celebrating it because July 26th was the beginning of the end of US domination. It was the beginning of a movement that doesn’t end with the gains of the last 54 years, but pushes onwards. As people in Cuba celebrate, we must also celebrate for the



Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) July 26th Celebration, 2007.

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

¿Quiénes son VCSC?

es llevar a Cuba, un país haciendo importantes avances sociales, a jóvenes, estudiantes,

mujeres, personas de América Latina, personas del tercer mundo y a otras personas trabajadoras y oprimidas en Canadá, como un ejemplo de la construcción de un mundo mejor.

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

Para conseguir mas información contacta:
cubacommunities@yahoo.ca
778-882-5223
www.vancubasolidarity.com

Además apoyamos 3 campañas de peticiones:

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

A través de las campañas de peticiones en toda la lower mainland, en eventos, festivales, secundarias, y universidades, podemos conversar con miles de personas sobre Cuba. El objetivo de este trabajo

Who is VCSC?

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

We also support 3 petition campaigns:

- 1- Against the US Blockade on Cuba
- 2- To Free the Cuban 5 held in US Jails
- 3- To Extradite anti-Cuban

Terrorist Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela

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

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

For more information contact:
cubacommunities@yahoo.ca
778-882-5223
vancubasolidarity.com

terrorismo a discreción

Por Manuel Yepe*

Las definiciones que brindan casi todos los diccionarios del término "terrorismo" coinciden en que se trata del "uso real o la amenaza de recurrir a la violencia con fines políticos...".

Corrientemente, se emplea el término "terrorismo" en casos de acciones llevadas a cabo por unidades secretas o irregulares que, dada su inferioridad militar evidente para enfrentar a las instituciones armadas gubernamentales, operan fuera de los parámetros de las guerras.

Aunque el término se ha aplicado históricamente por las potencias coloniales y por los gobiernos tiránicos a una buena parte de los métodos de lucha que escogen los revolucionarios y patriotas para sus enfrentamientos emancipadores, los pueblos distinguen tales métodos revolucionarios de lucha de los métodos terroristas.

Los primeros se identifican con las aspiraciones del pueblo, los segundos, los terroristas, son fuertemente rechazados por la población.

Los métodos revolucionarios buscan transformar el escenario y las asimétricas condiciones

propósito de propagar el pánico sino el de promover la adhesión de la ciudadanía.

Los métodos terroristas, propios de bandas de delincuentes, narcotraficantes y organizaciones paramilitares de extrema derecha al servicio de poderosos intereses económicos, buscan imponer su autoridad sobre la base del temor de la población por la crueldad de sus acciones, que pueden tener carácter de amenazas, advertencias o ser directamente punitivas. No aspiran a atraer al pueblo a su causa sino a imponer su autoridad sobre la base del temor.

De ahí que sea posible identificar la diferencia entre el terrorismo y los métodos irregulares de lucha revolucionaria que, de manera oportunista, los regímenes opresores tratan siempre de equiparar con los primeros.

El terrorismo, que provoca temor y muerte de personas inocentes, nunca podría ser el método de lucha de una causa popular que convoque a las masas progresistas, porque es intrínsecamente contrario a los intereses y aspiraciones de los pueblos.

Por eso es recomendable desconfiar de las informaciones que vinculan a los movimientos

métodos de lucha que enajenan el apoyo de los ciudadanos en vez de convocarlo y por ello los revolucionarios y patriotas no son jamás quienes apelan al terrorismo.

El actual mandatario estadounidense, George W. Bush, por ejemplo, tiene una manera muy peculiar de conducir su guerra contra el terrorismo cuando protege —por medio de la actuación de la Fiscalía de la Nación o utilizando las facultades presidenciales de perdonar reos— a criminales de origen cubano como Orlando Bosch y Luis Posada Carriles, quienes han sido calificados por autoridades judiciales estadounidenses como dos de los más connotados terroristas del hemisferio occidental.

Paradójicamente, en cinco cárceles de Estados Unidos, bien distantes unas de otras, cumplen largas condenas cinco jóvenes cubanos —dos de ellos ciudadanos estadounidenses por adopción— por el delito de monitorear las actividades de organizaciones y grupos terroristas en Miami, alertando al gobierno cubano de los planes y acciones programadas por estos contra Cuba que, entre 1959 y el 2002 habían ejecutado 360 hechos de terror, no solo en territorio



de la lucha para elevar la moral combativa de las masas, atraer nuevas huestes a la lucha, ridiculizar a las fuerzas represivas del régimen tiránico, llamar la atención del mundo a la guerra revolucionaria que se está librando y denunciar el carácter impopular del gobierno opresor.

Las formas revolucionarias de lucha clandestina pretenden incrementar el apoyo del pueblo a su causa y por ello no tienen el

populares de resistencia en cualquier parte del mundo con el terrorismo y examinar cada caso a la luz de las motivaciones y los objetivos de sus combatientes, así como de las circunstancias en que se libra la lucha.

Tampoco es lícito hablar de terroristas buenos y terroristas malos, según actúen a favor o en contra de quien los califica. Es siempre contrario a los intereses populares el uso de

cubano, sino también dentro de los propios Estados Unidos.

Arrestados por el FBI en Miami les ofrecieron que si se declaraban culpables de conspirar contra Estados Unidos y pretender lograr información de seguridad nacional de ese país, recibirían leves sentencias.

Como no lo hicieron así, porque habría sido deshonesto hacerlo, fueron acusados de estos dos cargos y confinados en celdas

de castigo durante 17 meses. Posteriormente fueron juzgados en el ambiente hostil de Miami y condenados a largas penas de prisión, con numerosas violaciones legales por la actuación de la Fiscalía que, entre otras cuestiones, clasificó como secreta la mayor parte de la documentación del caso, por lo cual no tuvieron acceso a ella, ni los acusados, ni sus abogados defensores.

Ellos fueron detenidos el 14 de

septiembre de 1998 y, aunque el 9 de agosto de 2005 la Corte de Apelaciones sentenció nulo el juicio celebrado en Miami. Previamente, su encarcelamiento había sido declarado ilegal por el Grupo de Trabajo sobre Detenciones Arbitrarias de la Comisión de Derechos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas, pero la acción de la Fiscalía los ha mantenido en cárceles de máxima seguridad, han sufrido incomunicación en celdas de castigo por largos períodos y en ocasiones se les ha privado del derecho a recibir visitas de sus familiares.

Con estos luchadores contra el terrorismo entre rejas y los más peligrosos terroristas paseándose por las calles de Miami, el vocablo "terrorismo" permanece secuestrado, sirviendo de expediente para las muchas perfidias del imperio.

**Manuel E. Yepe Menéndez es periodista y se desempeña como Profesor adjunto en el Instituto Superior de Relaciones Internacionales de La Habana.*

Agosto de 2007



Buttons in Defence of the 5 Heroes

1.5" - Available for \$1

To Order Contact:

Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver
604.719.6947 or
cuban5_van@yahoo.com

Buttons Against the Blockade on Cuba

1.5" - Available for \$1

To Order Contact:

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



Report Back from the... VANCOUVER HIP HOP FESTIVAL AGAINST WAR + OCCUPATION 3

Project pumps up the crowd at Sunrise Pavilion Surrey July 21st 2007



Vancouver, British Columbia: Hundreds Participate in MAWO's Third Annual International Hip Hop Festival Against War & Occupation

By Shakeel Lochan

Saturday Event

Hip hop culture is both a mirror and a hammer, created by people fighting oppression and evolving into a powerful means of expression. 2007 saw the Lower Mainland host the third Vancouver International Hip Hop Festival Against War and Occupation, organized by Lower Mainland-based anti-war coalition Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO). This year's festival was the most diverse and expansive to date. It

The first day of the festival touched down at the Sunrise Pavilion in North Surrey and was opened with a workshop called "Hip Hop: Roots of Resistance". Sunrise Pavilion filled to capacity within minutes, with over a hundred participants from a wide collection of backgrounds taking part in the workshop. Speaking on "The Rise and Role of Women in Hip Hop" was Invincible, a female Jewish

events. He also treated the crowd to a film screening of Venezuela's 2006 national hip hop festival in which he participated. Next was the "Hip Hop Academy Class of 2007". The first component was an MC'ing and beatboxing tutorial facilitated by Genetics, a powerhouse female duo based in East Vancouver, and SOS, an MC with the mighty Influents crew based in Langley. Following the fiery MC'ing component was the DJ tutorial orchestrated by DJ C-Lo - festival DJ, part of the Influents crew, and label head of Lo Down Records. Participants got to scratch and master the decks in no time. Lastly, all the participants joined with Yutang of the Floorfillahz crew and Marcus of the Filthyfeet crew for the widely anticipated breakdancing tutorial.

showcased a huge international and local roster of MCs, DJs, breakdancers, graffiti artists, spoken word artists and political speakers representing struggles of oppressed people from the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, Indigenous nations in Canada, southern Asia and beyond! Oppressed people face a growing era of imperialist war and occupation spawned by the

MC from Detroit. The workshop concluded with a multimedia presentation about the situation currently facing people living in Palestine and how dedicated and courageous youth are using hip hop to express themselves under the Israeli occupation. Discreet Da Chosen 1, a part African, part Squamish Nation MC spoke next about the ongoing oppression of Indigenous people by the ruling class of Canada.



Hip Hop: Roots of Resistance Workshop with panel speakers and MC's Spin, Discreet Da Chosen 1 and Invincible at Sunrise Pavilion Surrey July 21st 2007

intensifying competition between advanced capitalist countries like the US, Canada, the UK and France. In response, youth across the world are innovating hip hop as a form of cultural resistance. In this spirit, hundreds of youth, parents, grandparents and toddlers united in Surrey and Vancouver on July 21st and 22nd for a one-of-a-kind gathering.

He talked about how Indigenous youth are crafting their own forms of hip hop straight from the reserves and blasting powerful messages of hope and struggle to the masses.

The final speaker of the workshop was Spin, a Guatemalan-born spoken word artist and political activist who spoke on the international explosion of conscious and radical hip hop. Spin shared his own experiences growing up as political refugee and connected those with his current travels across Latin America as a participant in progressive hip hop



RAW Talent Breakdancing Crew at Strathcona Park Vancouver July 22nd 2007

As a finale, participants were treated to the evening showcase "Music as the Means" - an unprecedented collection of talent and politics! Artists included South Asian Bhangra-Hop crew A-Slam Productions and Indigenous hip hop vocalist, Lady Sincere, who gave the crowd a special treat with a heart-warming Aboriginal prayer song. El Salvadorian-born Memo brought his own brand of seething spoken word. Not to be outdone was Manu, a young Somali-born female poet currently living in Victoria, BC. Throughout the evening, several MAWO organizers took to the stage to spread education on their major campaigns: Canada Out of Afghanistan, US/UK

Out of Iraq, US/UN Hands Off Africa, Hands Off Iran, Israel Out of Palestine and US Hands Off Latin America. Organizers also spoke about the case of the Cuban 5 - five innocent Cuban men who are currently held as political prisoners in US prisons for gathering information on terrorist activities against Cuba perpetrated by right-wing terrorists supported by the US government.

Sunday Event

On Sunday, the festival was at Strathcona Park in East Vancouver for an Ol' School Block Party. The energy in the air was electric as the park was transformed into an outdoor gallery of fresh, conscious grassroots political hip hop! The women owned the stage, being represented by the likes of Kia Kadiri & Bridgee, Ndidi Cascade & Deanna, to name a few. The day was punctuated by presentations by MAWO organizers, including Aaron Mercredi, a Métis youth, journalist and political organizer



Kia Kadiri with Bridgee MC'ing with festival guests at Strathcona Park Vancouver July 22nd 2007

with their aerosol cache hit up community canvas walls to put down their demands for an end to war and occupation. The rain came halfway through the show, but the 300-strong crowd didn't miss a beat and only intensified their fist pumping and echoing back of the demand of "Self Determination for all Oppressed Nations!" The show blew up with a string of well-respected and seasoned Indigenous acts, including Manik Inderful, 7th Generation, Gold

and Rye-optics. Edmonton MC crew and labour activists also took the stage, bringing politically conscious lyrics inspired by the struggles of Latin America. The city's unofficial anti-war hip hop representatives, Influents, also rocked the mics, bringing their signature uplifting beats and verses so that the crowd forgot about their soggy shoes.

speaking about the apartheid system that Indigenous people in Canada face today. The breakdancers came out in full force again, joined by RAW Talent, a youth crew and section of the Vancouver Eastside Rhythm and Action Arts society. Graffiti soldiers laden

If one was to choose the most significant aspect of the entire festival, it was the air of possibilities created. The only event of its kind across the entire world, the 3rd Annual Vancouver International Hip Hop Festival Against War and Occupation organized by MAWO brought concrete anti-war, anti-imperialist politics and creative, raw hip hop to hundreds of youth from a multitude of communities - and will only continue to expand from here!

2007 Hip Hop Festival CD
With Tracks from Festival Artists - Limited Copies left
So order yours now!



Contact Vancouver's Antiwar Coalition
Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)
P. 604 322 1764 | F. 604 322 1763 | E. info@mawovancouver.org
WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG

FREE THE CUBAN 5

International Day of Action!



Monday August 20th
US Consulate 1075 West Pender
12NOON to 1PM

www.vancubasolidarity.com/freethefivevan.html

On Monday, August 20, the next round of appeals hearings for the Cuban Five will be held in Atlanta. These 5 Cubans have been imprisoned in U.S. jails for 9 years for simply investigating U.S.-backed terrorist groups which continue to attack Cuba to this day. Join Free The Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver and hundreds of thousands of people across the world demanding -

FREEDOM FOR THE FIVE NOW!

PICKET ACTION

Distribute Revolutionary Change in Your Area!

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

Mike Chimenti
Publicity and Distribution
Coordinator
Phone: (604) 518-5009
Email: distro@firethistime.net



Also Available from FIRE THIS TIME



For more pamphlets available from Fire This Time Contact:
Mike Chimenti (604) 518-5009 distro@firethistime.net
Or view all available titles at www.firethistime.net



Essential Readings on the Case of the Cuban 5

Available for \$1 ea.
To Order Contact:
Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver
604.719.6947 or
cuban5_van@yahoo.com

Subscribe to Fire This Time!

NAME

ADDRESS

EMAIL

PHONE

For a one year subscription, make cheques payable to "Shannon Bundock"

Send along with form to:
PO Box 21607
Vancouver BC
V5L 5G3

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

EVENTS and ACTIONS



AUGUST 20TH

International Day of Action to Free the Cuban 5!

Picket Action
12pm-1pm
US Consulate (1075 W. Pender St)
Org'd by: Free the Cuban 5 Committee – Vancouver

Vancouver

AUGUST 11TH

Do you know about the Security and Prosperity Partnership?
Free public forum

2pm

Fireside Café, 13593 King George Hwy, Surrey
King George and 108 (Right next to Gateway Skytrain).
Org'd by:
No One Is Illegal-Vancouver
Info: noi-van@resist.ca



AUGUST 13

What We Have Seen and Learned in Cuba Report back from the 18th IFCO/Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba

7pm

Trout Lake Park – 3300 Victoria Dr
Multimedia Presentation & Discussion
Refreshments Provided!
Org'd by:
Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC)
Info: www.vancouvercommunitiesinsolidarity.com | 604-812-2964

AUGUST 20TH

International Day of Action to Free the Cuban 5!

Picket Action
12pm-1pm
US Consulate (1075 W. Pender St)
Org'd by: Free the Cuban 5 Committee – Vancouver

Info: www.vancubasolidarity.com/freethfive.html | 604-780-7604

AUGUST 20TH

End the Occupations of Iraq and Afghanisani!

Stop the Accelerating Destruction of Earth!

No Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America!

Rally
5pm
Vancouver Art Gallery (Robson & Hornby)
Org'd by: StopWar.ca
Info: www.stopwar.ca



AUGUST 31ST

Café Rebelde Presents: Bolivia: Life, Land and Dignity Transforming Society. Speakers, discussion, music and more on Bolivian popular movements.

7pm
Rhizome Café – 317 E. Broadway

Ottawa

AUGUST 19TH

Rally to Stop The SPP!

- End War and Privatization

- Protect our Environment

- Reclaim Democracy

1pm

March from Ottawa City Hall
Org'd by: Outaouais-Ottawa Stop the SPP Committee

Montréal

AUGUST 14TH

Picket and Demonstration Against CN Rail and the SPP

Support indigenous struggles for sovereignty, dignity and self determination on Turtle Island. Protest Bush, Harper, Calderon and the "Security and Prosperity Partnership" (SPP).
12pm

Montréal Central Train Station (metro Bonaventure)
Info: noi-montreal@resist.ca | 514-848-7583

AUGUST 23RD TO 26TH

Forum Social Québécois Another Québec is on the March!

Workshops, Conferences, and Artistic Protests.

Info:
www.forumsocialquebeois.org
514-982-0533
info@forumsocialquebec.org

Montebello

AUGUST 20TH

Mobilize and Protest

Against George Bush,

Stephen Harper and Felipe

Calderon at the meeting of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP)

Day of Action Against the SPP

3pm

Chaetau Montebello (or as close as possible)

Info: www.psp-spp.com
info@psp-spp.com | 518-848-7583

