

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

Page 22

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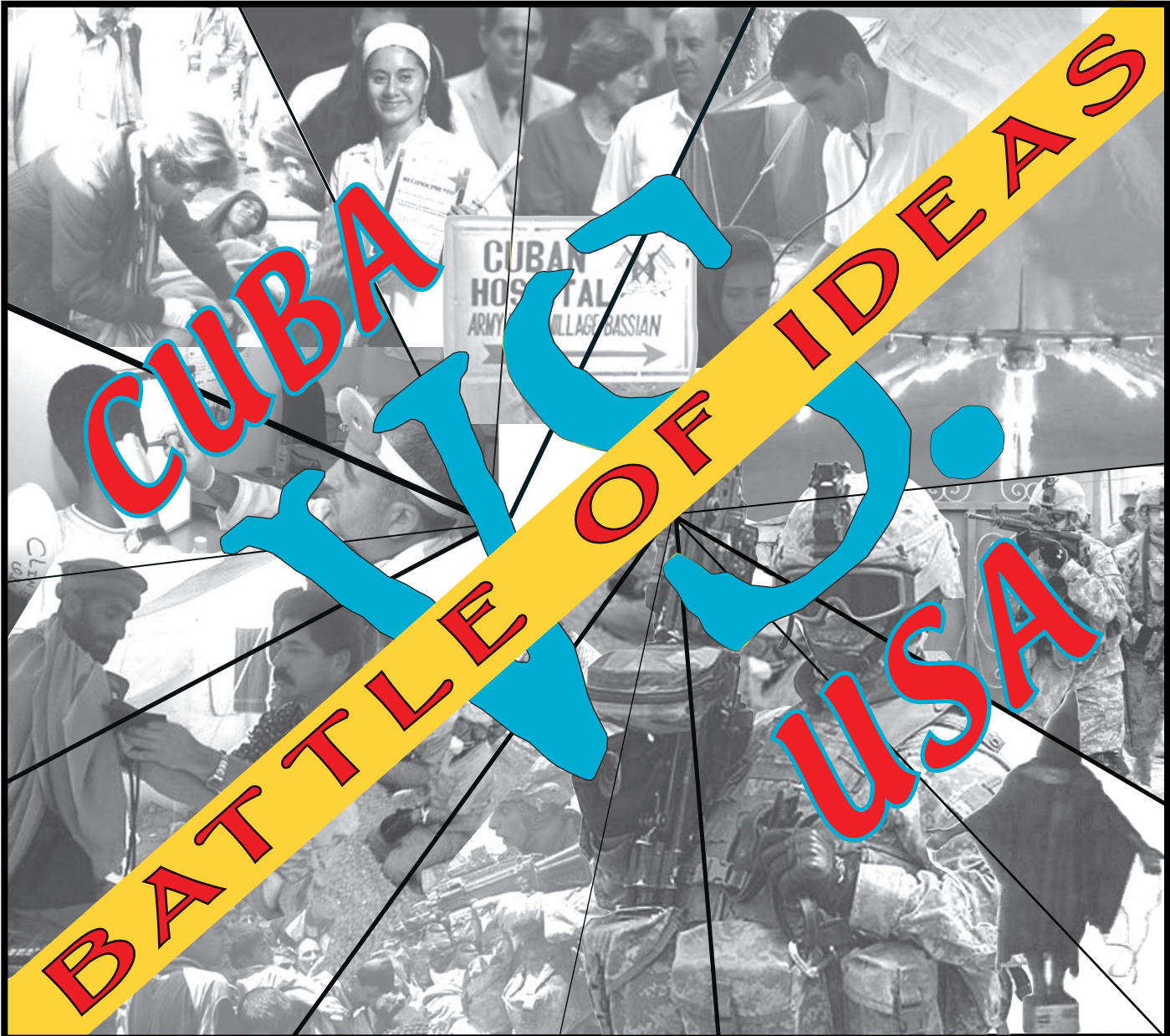
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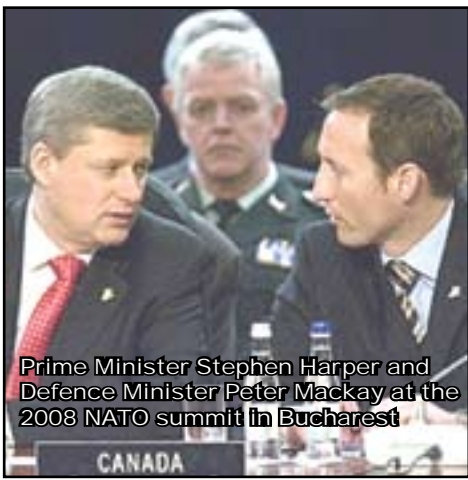


## Fighting for the Freedom of the 5 Cuban Heroes Held in U.S. Jails



### FREE THE CUBAN 5 NOW!





Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Defence Minister Peter Mackay at the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest

# “Canada First” Defence Strategy: Government of Canada Accelerates Drive for War & Occupation

By Nita Palmer

On May 12, 2008, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper unveiled the new strategy to further the government of Canada’s drive for war: the so-called ‘Canada First’ Defence Strategy. This new strategy will give at least \$30 Billion in additional funding to Canada’s military over the next 20 years in order to buy new equipment and increase the size of the Canadian Forces. Explaining the reason the new defence strategy was released, Stephen Harper said: “If you want to be taken seriously in the world, you need the capacity to act - it’s that simple. The Canada First Defence Strategy will strengthen our sovereignty and security at home and bolster our ability to defend our values and interests abroad.”

other oppressed nations. From the beginning, Canada has been fully part of this new drive for war and occupation. The Government of Canada confirmed their commitment to carrying out this war drive in 2005, when they released a new defence policy statement: “A Role of Pride and Influence in the World”. This defence strategy outlined the government of Canada’s strategy to become a major economic and military power through war and occupation. It came along with the announcement that Canada would be sending more troops to Afghanistan and doubling the military budget to \$25 Billion.

### Canada in Afghanistan: A Balance Sheet of Seven Years of Occupation

daily shootings and bombings is huge and so drastic that the occupation forces have kept it secret from the world news media. Increasing the size and funding of the Canadian military will only bring more of this chaos to the people of Afghanistan. The occupation of Afghanistan has also taken its toll on the soldiers sent to Afghanistan to carry out the government of Canada’s war drive. 85 Canadian soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan so far, and the suicide rate among soldiers has doubled between 2006 and 2007, now sitting at a rate three times higher than the general Canadian population, according to a report by CBC News. To date, Canada has achieved

### The War Drive Doesn’t End in Afghanistan

So, if the government of Canada wants to play a “role of pride and influence in the world”, why are they destroying the lives of people in Afghanistan? Surely this is not a role to be proud of. But the questions of human lives and human dignity were not factored into the equation when the government of Canada decided to go to war in Afghanistan, nor was it when they decided to further their drive for war with the new “Canada First” Defence Strategy. In fact, the new defence strategy is a bid to become a major economic and military power

expansion of war, occupation and destruction to countries beyond Afghanistan.

### Unite Against the ‘Canada First’ Defence Strategy!

Whose “values and interests” is Stephen Harper referring to? Surely not the values and interests of poor and working people in Canada. We have already seen \$7 Billion in taxpayer dollars go to funding a brutal, unjust, illegal and criminal war and occupation in Afghanistan. This latest move by the government of Canada to pour \$30 Billion or more into the military will only take more of our money away from jobs, health care and social programs and funnel it into an increased ruling class war drive in Afghanistan and beyond, namely by having just extended Canada’s participation in the NATO mission in Afghanistan by three more years, to December 2011.

However, this increased drive for war and occupation is really nothing new. It is a war drive which began after September 11, 2001, when Canada fully supported the US invasion of Afghanistan, sending 2000 Canadian Forces troops to Afghanistan in early 2002. The invasion of Afghanistan marked the beginning of a new era of war and occupation being waged by imperialist countries like Canada, the US, and the UK against Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, and

When the invasion of Afghanistan was launched in 2001, the Government of Canada claimed that troops were being sent there to “liberate” the Afghan people, and bring them freedom, democracy, and women’s rights. But the last seven years of the Canada/NATO-led occupation of Afghanistan have brought anything but freedom, democracy, and women’s rights to Afghans. Instead, the occupation has brought a lower life expectancy and a rate of violence against women which has increased by 40% in the last year alone (United Nations). Afghanistan today produces 93% of the world’s opium, in comparison to less than 10% before war and occupation in Afghanistan began seven years ago (UN Office on Drugs and Crime). The United Nations also estimates that 30% of children aged 5-14 must work just so that their families can survive. On top of this, the human toll by

none of their supposed objectives of bringing “freedom”, “democracy”, and “women’s rights” to Afghanistan. In fact, they have brought only death and destruction to people there. Today, they are facing a growing popular resistance movement of people in Afghanistan who have come together to fight against the chief enemy and block to liberation that the people of Afghanistan face: the occupation forces. The government of Canada attempts to blame the worsening situation and increased violence in Afghanistan on this resistance, labeling resistance fighters as terrorists and “Taliban extremists”. In fact, the blame for the destruction of Afghanistan lies squarely on the shoulders of the occupation forces, not on the people who are simply fighting to defend their basic human rights and right of their country to self-determination and sovereignty.

by plundering the resources and trade markets of third world countries. Canada’s bid is to become a major imperialist player in the world market through war and occupation.

The 20-year-long perspective and funding for the ‘Canada First’ defence strategy means that the government of Canada has no intention of ending their war drive in Afghanistan at its current end date of December 2011. According to the Canadian Forces website, “The Canada First Defence Strategy represents an unprecedented long-term commitment to the Canadian Forces (CF) and the Department of National Defence (DND). This strategy sets long-term objectives, provides a vision for future operations as well as consistent, committed long-term funding.” The 20-year-long commitment means the government of Canada has a long-term perspective for war and occupation, including unspecified “future operations” – in other words, an

The new ‘Canada First’ Defence Strategy will not bring any benefit to ordinary poor and working people in Canada or anywhere else in the world, least of all in Afghanistan. Increased funding for war and occupation only means decreased funding for essential social programs here. Furthermore, it means the murder of our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan and in other countries which Canada may occupy in the unspecified “future operations”. All peace-loving people and all peace and antiwar organizations must unite against the ‘Canada First’ Defence Strategy and Canada’s war drive in Afghanistan and beyond. We must also call for an independent public inquiry into why the government of Canada has participated in the war and occupation in Afghanistan.

### No to War & Occupation!

### Canada Out of Afghanistan Now!



Anti-occupation protest May 26 2008 Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan



Anti-occupation protest May 26 2008 Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan

# To Kill the Indian in the Child:

## Canada's Genocidal Residential Schools and the Dilemma of an Apology



By Aaron Mercredi

The time has finally come for Native people in this country. After so long, the government of Canada has announced that it is going to apologize for the abuse that was inflicted in its residential schools. On June 11th, Stephen Harper is set to walk in to the House of Commons, stand at the podium, look out to its members and guests, and say sorry to the victims of the government and church-run institutions. Broadcastings at Native Friendship Centres are being organized around the country for what Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl says is "going to be a very meaningful and respectful apology."

But, we don't have to look too deeply to see that this government apology doesn't fundamentally count for anything, and is only Canada's attempt to sew up an infected wound. From when these schools began until today, there is no evidence that the government of Canada is interested in serving

in the policy of this Department which is geared towards a final solution of our Indian Problem."

-Duncan Campbell Scott, Head of Indian Affairs (1920)

Apologists for the residential schools have said that they were begun with good intentions, but ended in tragedy. Others have blamed the abuse on a 'poorly supervised system' where perpetrators were able to operate invisibly. But, much like those 'renegade' US soldiers in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, the US occupation as a whole is the problem. And here at home, Canada is the problem. The residential schools were meant to annihilate a people.

In 1874, the federal government started working with the Christian churches to set up the residential school system, which was an extension of the missionary boarding schools that already existed in different parts of Canada. By 1920, it was compulsory for Native children between the ages of 7 and 15 years to attend residential schools. Those who resisted sending their children away had them forcibly taken away from them by priests, Indian agents and the RCMP. At its peak in 1931, there were 80 residential schools operating in Canada.

At these schools, Native children were thrown in to the gears of a colonial machine whose purpose was to destroy their Indigenous identity and produce a model Canadian citizen, complete with European colonial values and trained in the capitalist mode of production. However, by 1910, the policy shifted from integration and assimilation to isolation and segregation of Native people. Through this, Native children received a Christian education with an emphasis on

and 50,000 disappeared or never returned home.

### A Policy of Genocide

Duncan Campbell Scott knew what he was doing with the residential schools in 1920. There should be no question that the people who he passed down his position to as Head of Indian Affairs knew what their job was. As a colonial country, Canada needed to deal with the 'Indian problem,' since it was their land that Canada wrapped its borders around and wanted to settle on.

Although many Indigenous people died from the colonial wars and disease, Indigenous people still existed from coast to coast. Canada's racist Indian Act of 1876 was meant to deal with the surviving Indigenous population by legally separating them in to an inferior class of citizenship under the control of the Department of Indian Affairs. Through this, Indigenous people became legal wards of the Crown, sharing the same status as children or the mentally incompetent. The reservation system further isolated Native people on to small pockets of land. In order to save itself from a potentially rising Indigenous population, the residential schools were funded to sever Native identity and culture. Someone without an identity, culture or connection to their people is a person without a hope of fighting back.

### What about accountability?

No one can calculate the damage that this genocidal program inflicted on Native people in this country. There are too many stories and so much pain that has been sewn in to generations of Indigenous life from what the government and churches did. Statistics will show the tragically high rates of sui-

had been received. In 2003, there were about 12,000. The survivors of these schools are demanding accountability and compensation.

The government has tried to stall all such cases by putting cases on the backburner, hoping for many of the survivors to die off so they will not need to pay them compensation. But, because of the number of people filing claims against the residential school abuse has jumped up incredibly, with as many as 90,000 claims, the government was under pressure not only to deal with this financial burden, but also to be held accountable for its actions.

### What kind of apology?

Indigenous people have every right to be fighting mad over Canada's refusal to be held accountable for the residential school system. For many survivors, a simple apology is all they were asking for. But, the fact that Stephen Harper is going to apologize means nothing when Canada is still attacking Native people and taking their land today. Canada is simply trying to defuse a big part of Native people's anger, not deal with it morally. A colonial government cannot show remorse for its crimes against Indigenous people. It will cover-up, it will deny and it will stall.

What is 'respectful and meaningful' about an apology for a crime against Native people when these crimes continue today? The UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People has to ring a bell. Canada voted against it. Canada knows very well it violates these rights every day.

The residential schools may be closed their doors, but they served their purpose. Today, Canada is trying to take away what little Native people have left. Whether it is the gov-

the justice for the survivors of the residential schools.

### The 'Indian Problem'

"I want to get rid of the Indian problem. Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed. They are a weird and waning race...ready to break out at any moment in savage dances."

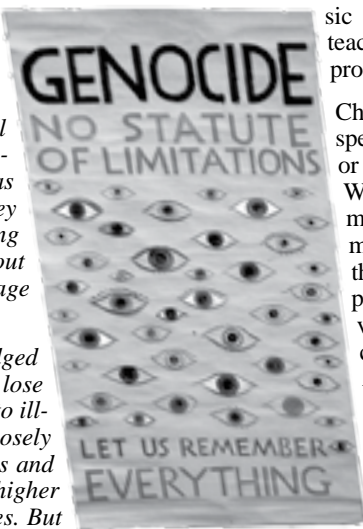
"It is readily acknowledged that Indian children lose their natural resistance to illness by habituating so closely in the residential schools and that they die at a much higher rate than in their villages. But this does not justify a change

agricultural work, in order for the children to return to their reserves with minimal basic skills. Over 40 percent of the teachers at these schools had no professional training.

Children were forbidden from speaking their own languages, or practicing their own culture. When caught, public punishments were often severe and humiliating. Abuse ran rampant through the schools as teachers, priests and nuns had no supervision and could deal with the children however they saw fit. Along with being exposed to diseases, physical, emotional and sexual abuse was a day-to-day occurrence for many children. It is estimated that around 150,000 children went through this system

side, high rates of alcoholism and drug addiction, the rampant poverty and the homelessness that have affected Indigenous people.

The last residential school shut down in 1996 in Saskatchewan. The first claim against the federal government and the churches for abuse in residential schools was filed in 1990. By 1996, 200 such claims



Indigenous residential school students with nuns. Location unknown, circa 1890

ernment of Ontario and Platineux trying to extract resources out of the small Ojibwe community of Kitchenu-mahykoosib Inniuwug in Ontario, or the ongoing desecration of Secwepemc land by Sun Peaks

Ski Resort in partnership with the government of BC; consolidating Native land and resources is still a priority for these colonial governments. Robert Lovelace, of the Ardoch Algonquin Nation, still sits in prison for defending his land from resource theft in Ontario.

Justice will not be served only with arresting those bishops and officials who abused Native children. Or when politicians acknowledge a 'historical crime' that we need to move beyond. Justice cannot be served until this whole colonial apparatus is turned upside down; when the Indian Act, which helped create the residential schools, is abolished; when Indigenous people can have control over their own land, resources and destiny without government interference, and deal with the rest of the people in this country on an equal basis. Only then can real healing and reconciliation begin.

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By Manuel Yepe\*

A CubaNews translation by Ana Portela

Edited by Walter Lippmann

www.walterlippmann.com

According to historical evidence, the slave trade was responsible for the alarming underdevelopment of Africa today.

Slavery caused ethnic fractionation and undermined states constituted as such.

During the 19th century, the majority of slaves were taken from the most politically-developed areas and that are now the most fragmented ethnically.

Recent investigations have been conducted by Nathan Nunn, assistant professor of economy at British Columbia University in Canada until July of 2007, and now at Harvard where he published his

book "Long Term Effects of the Slave Trade in Africa". His recently released book suggests that, had it not been for slave trade, the difference today between the average economic development of countries given the title as developing and those of Africa would not exist.

The differential would be approximately 72% less between African incomes and those of today's

developed countries.

Much has been written trying to explain the tragedy of the poor economic achievement of Africa, one of the most disconcerting questions for scholars of the economics of growth and development.

# WHY

Historical evidence demonstrates how the slave trade caused political instability, weakened states, caused political and social fragmentation and the deterioration of local legal institutions in Africa.

Between the years 1400 and 1900 the African continent suffered four simultaneous routes of slaves.

The largest and best-known was the Atlantic crossing during the early 15th century when

# AFRICA

slaves were taken from Western, Central and Eastern possessions to the European colonies in the new world. The other three were the trans-Saharan, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

In the first, slaves were taken from the southern desert of Sahara to Northern Africa. During the second, slaves were led across land to the Red Sea and sent, aboard ships, to the Middle East and India. In the third slaves were taken from Eastern Africa to the coasts of the Indian Ocean where they were placed in ships to the Middle East, to India or to work in plantations of the islands of the Indian Ocean.

Studies made by professor Nathan Nunn entitled "The Historical Origins of African underdevelopment" that has been digitally pub-

lished (VoxEU.org) in London demonstrate that the African areas which are the poorest today are those where, proportionally, the most slaves were taken in the past.

Some argue that the reason could be that the slaves were taken from areas which were poor in natural resources and continue to be so today, but investigations have shown the contrary. In other words, the largest number of slaves were taken from areas that enjoyed, at the time, the best economic conditions. Now they are in the worst condition, confirming that the growing extraction of slaves by European slave traders has been the main reason for African economic and social underdevelopment.

The areas where most slaves were taken are equally the most fragmented ethnically today.

In the African continent, the outbreaks of inter-ethnic and religious conflicts as well as conflicts

between states which are the result of a worsening of the consequences of underdevelopment, paradoxically, are where the policies of development in the region are of relative and ephemeral value.

In Africa, more than anywhere else on the planet, evidence of constant threats of hunger, disease, repression and varied crises or sudden problems of daily life are of lesser value than the problems of growth and economic and social development.

Two decades ago African life expectancy at birth was 24 years less than in a person born in a rich country and the breach was shortening. However, now the breach is 33 years and on the rise.

According to the United Nations World Food Program, Africans of 33 from 50 nations are the poorest in the world; in other words, more than two-thirds of the nations of the world are in this situation. One of every three persons live in a world where conditions of extreme poverty exist in sub-Saharan Africa.

If between 1980 and 1990 only four African countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Rwanda and Zambia experienced a reversal of human development, between 1990 and 2003 thirteen countries jumped back (Botswana, Cameroon; Rwanda, Republic of the Congo; Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

What is most serious is that Africa's situation is worsening. In 2001 there were 313 million poor; in 2005 345 million people were poor and in 2015 it has been estimated that poverty would affect 431 million persons on the continent if the unfair economic order and current tendencies are maintained.

Weighing on the conscience of the world are the 600 years of suffering caused by the hunting down and trading in human beings which generated the enormous wealth plundered by the colonial powers at the time, leaving behind

# ROARS

underdevelopment and extreme poverty of a martyred continent.

The slave trade has been for the African continent what now constitutes, for all the countries of the third world, the evils of unequal exchange, brain theft, foreign debt and other neo colonial modalities of capitalist slavery.

\* Manuel E. Yepe Menéndez is a professor at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana, Cuba.

# PORQUÉ RUGE ÁFRICA

Por Manuel Yepe\*

Según evidencia histórica, la trata de esclavos es responsable del alarmante subdesarrollo africano actual.

La esclavitud promovió el fraccionalismo étnico y socavó a los estados efectivamente constituidos.

El mayor número de esclavos habían sido tomados de áreas que a fines del siglo XIX eran las más desarrolladas políticamente, y que son ahora las más fragmentadas étnicamente.

Investigaciones recientes reflejadas por Nathan Nunn, profesor asistente de economía en la Universidad canadiense de Columbia Británica, hasta julio de 2007, y de la estadounidense de Harvard desde entonces, en su libro "Efectos a largo plazo de la trata de esclavos de África", de reciente aparición, sugieren que, de no haber existido el comercio de esclavos, la brecha que hoy existe entre el desarrollo económico promedio de los países actualmente llamados en vías de desarrollo y los de África, prácticamente no existiría.

También sería aproximadamente un 72% menor la brecha entre los ingresos de África y los de los países desarrollados actuales.

Mucho se ha escrito tratando de explicar la razón de la tragedia del pobre desempeño económico de África, una de las cuestiones que más desconcierta a los estudiosos de la economía del crecimiento y el desarrollo.

Evidencias históricas a partir del estudio del asunto, muestran cómo la trata de esclavos causó inestabilidad política, debilitó estados, promovió la fragmentación política y social, y resultó en el deterioro de las instituciones legales locales en África.

Entre 1400 y 1900, el continente africano experimentó cuatro rutas simultáneas de trata de esclavos. La mayor y más conocida fue la transatlántica, por la que a inicios del siglo XV se embarcaron esclavos de África Occidental, central y oriental a las colonias europeas en el nuevo mundo. Las otras tres fueron la transahariana, la ruta del Mar Rojo y la del Océano Índico.

En la primera, los esclavos eran llevados del sur del desierto de Sahara a África del Norte. En la segunda, los esclavos eran conducidos de tierra adentro hasta el Mar Rojo y transportados en embarcaciones al Medio Oriente y la India. En la tercera, los esclavos se llevaban de África Oriental a las costas del Índico y de allí embarcados al Medio Oriente, a la India o a trabajar en las plantaciones de las islas del Océano Índico.

Estudios realizados por el profesor Nathan Nunn en un trabajo titulado "Los orígenes históricos del subdesarrollo de África" que reprodujo la publicación digital VoxEU.org de Londres, indican que las áreas africanas que son hoy las más pobres son aquellas de donde se extrajeron proporcionalmente más esclavos en el pasado.

Se ha argumentado que la razón pudiera ser que los esclavos se extrajeron de las áreas más pobres en recursos naturales que ahora siguen siéndolo, pero las investigaciones realizadas prueban exactamente lo contrario. Es decir, el mayor número de esclavos fueron tomados de la áreas que entonces disfrutaban de mejores condiciones económicas y ellas son ahora las que peor están, lo que confirma que la creciente extracción de esclavos por los traficantes europeos ha sido la razón principal del subdesarrollo económico y social africano.

Las áreas de donde se extrajeron más esclavos son igualmente aquellas más fragmentadas étnicamente en la actualidad.

En el continente africano, la concurrencia de conflictos interétnicos, religiosos o entre estados, que resultan de la agudización de las consecuencias del subdesarrollo, hacen que, paradójicamente, las políticas de desarrollo en la región tengan apenas un valor relativo y efímero.

En África es mas evidente que en cualquiera otra parte del planeta el hecho de que las amenazas crónicas como el hambre, las enfermedades, la represión y diversas crisis o problemas repentinos de la vida cotidiana tienen un valor cuando menos equivalente a los problemas del crecimiento y el desarrollo económico y social.

Hace dos décadas, la esperanza de vida al nacer de un africano era 24 años menor que la de una persona nacida en un país rico y la brecha se estaba acortando. Sin embargo, hoy la brecha es de 33 años y va en aumento.

Según el Programa Mundial de Alimentos de Naciones Unidas, son africanos 33 de los 50 países más pobres del mundo, es decir, más de dos tercios del total de los países que en el mundo ostentan esa situación. Una de cada tres personas que viven en el mundo en condiciones de pobreza extrema radica en África Subsahariana.

Si entre 1980 y 1990 sólo cuatro países africanos: República Democrática del Congo, Níger, Rwanda y Zambia experimentaron retrocesos en materia de desarrollo humano, entre 1990 y 2003,

trece países (Botswana, Camerún; Rwanda, República del Congo; República Democrática del Congo, Costa de Marfil, Kenya, Lesotho, Sudáfrica, Swazilandia, Tanzania, Zambia y Zimbabwe) tuvieron salto atrás.

Lo más grave es que África empeora. En el 2001 había 313 millones de pobres; en 2005 había 345 millones de pobres, y en 2015 se calcula que la pobreza podría alcanzar a 431 millones de personas en el continente, de mantenerse el orden económico injusto y las tendencias actuales.

Pesan sobre la conciencia mundial los 600 años de sufrimiento que dejaron la cacería y comercio de seres humanos que generó las cuantiosas riquezas de que se apropiaron las potencias coloniales de entonces, dejándole apenas subdesarrollo y miseria extrema a un continente mártir.

La trata de esclavos ha sido para el continente africano lo que hoy constituyen para todos los países del tercer mundo los males del intercambio desigual, el robo de cerebros, el cobro de la deuda externa y otras modalidades neocoloniales de esclavitud capitalista.

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



By Nita Palmer

On June 2, 2008, the Government of Canada passed a motion in Parliament in support of Budget Implementation Bill C-50. Within this bill were a number of proposed changes to the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) which would make it more difficult for immigrants to come to Canada.



The Conservative government has touted the proposed changes to the IRPA, saying they will reduce wait times for immigrants applying for visas. In reality, however, the changes are aimed at closing the doors to many of those applying to immigrate to Canada, 'fast-tracking' only the applications of those immigrants who are deemed to have skills that are 'needed in Canada'.

The proposed changes to the IRPA will also limit the number of applications for immigration that are reviewed in a year, limiting the number of immigrants - particularly those whose skills are considered less 'needed' - coming to

Canada in the first place. The bill also limits those who can come to Canada by changing key wording in the legislation. Under current legislation, if a visa applicant meets the requirements set out in the IRPA, an immigration officer "shall" grant the applicant a visa. With the implementation of Bill C-50, the IRPA would read that an applicant "may" be granted a visa - leaving the decision on whether to grant a visa up to the discretion and whim of the immigration official. Also under the new legislation, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (currently Diane Finley) is not required to review applications for refugee status on the basis of humanitarian and compassionate grounds if the person who is applying currently lives outside of Canada.

#### Immigrant Labour Equals Cheap Labour

The rate of population growth in Canada is slowing down, and the bosses need to import more labour, preferably at a cheap price. Immigrants are being used to create this lower-paid labour force. The ironically-named Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act contains many provisions which make it difficult for immi-

grants to come to Canada - such as the proposed changes in Bill C-50 which will state that a visa applicant "may" be granted a visa if they meet the requirements in the IRPA. This creates an atmosphere of constant and real fear for immigrants that they may be deported or have their visas revoked at any time if they dare to demand higher wages and better working conditions. As a result, immigrants are for the ruling class of Canada a second-class worker, a worker who can be forced to work longer and harder for less pay and in poorer conditions. Bill C-50 aims to make it even more difficult for immigrants to get in to Canada - and therefore easier to exploit when they are here.

At the same time, immigrant workers in Canada are constantly being pitted against their brothers and sisters who hold Canadian citizenship. Wherever they can get away with it, the bosses fill jobs that were once held by better-paid, and especially unionized workers, with low-paid immigrant workers. In this way, they attempt to divide the workers from each other and prevent immigrant workers from joining unions and organizing with their "Canadian" brothers and sisters for their rights as fellow workers.

#### Immigration in the New Era of War & Occupation

Even as the government of Canada is closing the doors to immigrants and refugees, Canada is

the government of Canada has 2,500 troops carrying out a brutal and criminal war against people there. In 2007 alone, there were nearly 3,000 air strikes on villages and communities in Afghanistan, killing innocent people and destroying homes. Many farmers have had their crops and animals - their only form of livelihood - destroyed.

The increasingly deplorable conditions of life under the occupation continue to force people out of Afghanistan. There are over seven million Afghan refugees around the world, on top of one million internally displaced people. This makes the Afghan diaspora outnumber even the Palestinian diaspora. The government of Canada is now shutting its doors in the faces of the same people to whom they have, directly or indirectly, caused misery and forced out of their homes in the first place - especially by imposing war and occupation.

#### Unite Against Bill C-50! Open the Doors to All Immigrants and Refugees!

It is the very war and occupation as well as colonial and imperialist domination that is being waged by Canada, the US, the UK and other imperialist countries that is forcing many people around the world to be displaced and leave their own countries. Therefore, all poor and working people must unite against Bill C-50 and demand that the government of Canada open the doors to all immigrants and refugees

-especially Afghan immigrants and refugees, who are being forced to leave their homes due to the destruction of their country at the hands of the imperialist government of Canada. But the proposed changes to the IRPA in Bill C-50 do not only affect those of us from third-world countries or those of us without Canadian citizenship. They affect us all, citizens or not, because they make it more difficult for us to join together to organize to defend our rights and our quality of life as workers. Therefore, we must unite as poor and working people to demand:

Open the Doors to All Immigrants and Refugees!  
No to War and Occupation!

Open the Doors to All Immigrants and Refugees!

No to War and Occupation!

# BILL C-50

## Government of Canada Proposes New Anti-Immigrant Legislation



increasing its drive for war abroad, along with the US, UK, and other imperialist countries. The majority of immigrants coming to Canada are from third world countries, and many are escaping war and occupation being waged by imperialist countries in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and elsewhere. The destruction of the environment, unemployment, lack of health care and any sort of social security - in simple terms, the domination of colonial and imperialist powers over poor countries - is increasingly forcing people living in occupied countries to leave their homes. In Afghanistan, for example,



Rally for Frank Paul, May 8 2008

# JUSTICE FOR

and welcome from Kat Norris, who is a long time social justice activist and organizer with the Indigenous Action Movement in Vancouver. Kat MC'd the this powerful event.

beat of the drum filled the heart of the people as they tied their memories of their lost ones with the ribbon. Henry shared heart-filled stories about the man that he once knew. He said, "Frank Paul was a man of dreams. He wanted to move to the West Coast... I never thought he would end up like this."

After Henry's powerful words, more speakers from the Indigenous community shared their thoughts as well. The rally

ended by gathering in the Downtown Eastside, where the Indigenous Action Movement served a delicious meal to people on the streets of the Downtown Eastside.

The Indigenous Rights and Action Project (IRAP) and Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) stand in solidarity for the fight for self-determination for Indigenous Nations and for justice for Frank Paul.

By Kerri Goodwin

On May 8, 2008 over 90 people joined the Indigenous Action Movement, which organized a rally for the late Frank Paul at the Vancouver Detox center in the back alley where they found his lifeless frozen body. Frank Paul was a 47-year old Mikmaq man from New Brunswick who was living on the streets of the Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, the poorest postal code in Canada. He was left to die in the alley by the Vancouver Police on the cold winter night of December 6, 1998.

The event started with opening words

The first to speak was the Grand Chief of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Stuart Philip. He spoke generally about the issues that Indigenous nations face and that they are constantly under attack by the government of Canada.

Guest speaker Henry Augustine, a Mikmaq elder from New Brunswick, conducted the cross over ceremony, starting with a powerful drum song. He spoke fiercely about violence and often even death that is constantly underway against Indigenous people. He instructed the crowd to place a yellow ribbon that represented the memory of a loved one during this ceremony. The



Rally for Frank Paul, January 2008

# FRANK PAUL!

# MAWO Organize & International ANSWER Antiwar Successful Cross-Border War & Occupation Conference

By Nita Palmer

## March 16 Conference

On March 16, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) and International ANSWER marked the 5th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq with an historic antiwar conference. Antiwar activists from both sides of the Canada-US border gathered in Seattle, Washington, to discuss the most pressing issues facing antiwar organizers in the US and Canada today. The conference opened with a presentation on "The Battle of Ideas in the New Era of War and Occupation" by Ali Yerevani, political editor of the Fire This Time newspaper. This was followed by a presentation on the occupation of Iraq by Jane Cutter, coordinator of International ANSWER-Seattle, and a presentation on Canada's occupation of Afghanistan by Kira Koshelanyk, executive member of MAWO and member of the Fire This Time Newspaper Editorial Board. Both presentations emphasized the importance of the demand: "Self-Determination for Oppressed Nations!"

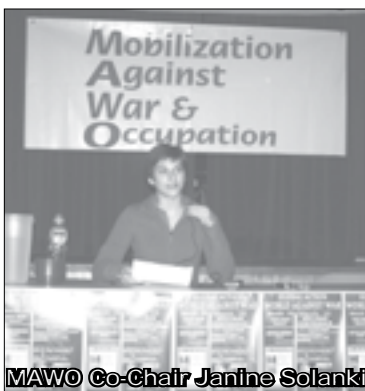
Port Militarization Resistance (PMR) organizers Brendan Funtek and Drew Hendricks from Olympia, WA then talked about the PMR actions at ports in Washington that have successfully stopped and slowed down military shipments to occupied Iraq.

The conference closed with a presentation titled "The Central Challenge to Human-

ity Today: Building a Broad and Effective Antiwar Movement" by MAWO Co-Chair Alison Bodine, who was

banned from Canada this fall after being politically targeted by the Canada Border Services Agency (<http://alisonbodine.blogspot.com>).

This international conference was the first of its kind organized by MAWO working together with many partners across the border, including ANSWER Seattle, Alliance for a Just and



MAWO Co-Chair Janine Solanki



Lasting Peace in the Philippines, Olympia Port Militarization Resistance, Seattle/Cuba Friendship Committee, and World Can't Wait - Drive Out the Bush Regime. The conference marked the beginning of what must be many more of such cross-border conferences by antiwar groups all along the US-Canada border in order to strengthen our work and common interests.

## March 20 Picket

On Thursday, March 20 2008, MAWO held their 40th picket action in front of the Canadian

Armed Forces Recruitment Center in Vancouver calling for "Canada/NATO Out of Afghanistan Now!" The picket also came just a week after the decision by parliament to extend Canada's brutal occupation of Afghanistan from 2009 to 2011.

Kira Koshelanyk, MAWO executive member, opened the picket by reading a statement to the press which condemned the decision in parliament to extend the occupation of Afghanistan. An energetic round of picketing followed the press statement, encouraged by passing cars that honked in support. Picketers paused to hear Mike Larson, a Capilano College student and MAWO organizer speak on how young people and students

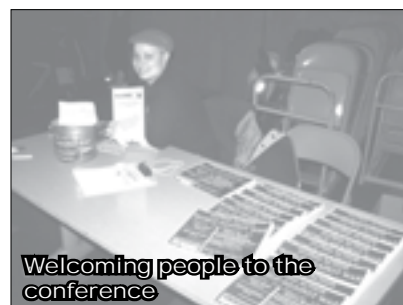
feel the effects of this war drive at home and abroad. He emphasized the necessity for youth in Canada to get involved in the



Co-ordinator of ANSWER Seattle Jane Cutter

antiwar movement. The picket ended with a speech by Thomas Davies, a member of the Fire This Time Newspaper Editorial Board and trade unionist, and a declaration by the organizers that these pickets and other antiwar actions will continue until all Canadian, NATO and foreign troops leave Afghanistan.

For more information or to get involved in MAWO's upcoming events, please visit: [www.mawovancouver.org](http://www.mawovancouver.org).



Welcoming people to the conference

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT BIOFUELS?

### Why Working and Poor People Should Oppose it

By Thomas Davies

George W. Bush stepped to the podium in his 2006 State of the Union address as the Head of State of a state in crisis. Among the many disastrous policies he put forward, his focus on developing the production of fuels created from crop sources has forced the Western world's energy crisis onto the shoulders of the already starving people of the third world. As Fidel Castro wrote as part of a larger series of articles on the issue last year, "The dilemma is not in the reduction of energy costs, but in the idea of turning foodstuffs into fuel". The reality of this idea could literally mean the deaths of billions of people as crops are fed to cars over humans.

Bush said it plainly enough: America is "addicted to oil," and this poses a "national security problem" because it is "often imported from unstable parts of the world". The U.S. had therefore already spent nearly 10 billion

dollars developing the technology to turn crops such as corn and sugar cane into fuel sources, and would continue to prioritize this technology. Agcapita Farmland Investment Partnership research shows in the next 15 years approximately 240 million acres of farmland are committed to biofuel production.

The U.S alone would have to dedicate its en-

tire corn production to fuel to fit its 2017 target, and still come up 40 million tons short annually. They aren't the only country with these skewed priorities. The Canadian government has a 5 percent biofuel target for transport fuel by 2010, and the European Union is planning on 20% by 2020.

Again, it was Fidel Castro who pushed forward the most simple and important question when he asked, "What will happen when hundreds of millions of tons of corn are directed to biofuel?"

#### Supply and Demand

According to the World Bank, global food prices have increased by over 83% since February 2005. While climate change resulting from large corporations' largely unchecked pollution of our environment has also wreaked havoc on crops and heightened food prices, the

continued diversion of food crops into energy sources has been the most important reason.

As the U.S. prioritizes

corn consumption for fuel purposes, prices for tortillas, the staple food in Mexico, grew over 100%. Even Brazil's bio-fuel championing President Lula was forced to admit that corn

prices had risen 85%. Additionally, the price of other crops increased as their supply diminishes as farmers switch over to exclusive corn cultivation.

Here's where it all adds up to very real potential genocide of billions of people. 2.6 billion people around the world live on less than US\$2 a day and spend 60% to 80% of their incomes on food. There is simply no room for an 85% increase that shows no sign of slowing down.

As Mark Lynas wrote in a New Statesman article entitled, "How the Rich Starved the World," U.S. vehicles already burn enough corn to cover the entire import needs of the poorest 82 countries."

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Jean Ziegler, cited UN Food and Agriculture Organization data which shows that the world already produces enough food to feed the double of the current world population. Those who die from malnutrition, he said, were being murdered. In this same speech, Mr. Ziegler singled out the transformation of agricultural land into land of the production of bio-fuels for America as a huge contributing factor.

#### World Crisis

How have people responded to this crisis? Food riots have flooded the streets around the world. From two day General Strikes in Burkina Faso to the tens of thousands people on the streets in Egypt and Bangladesh, the riots have resulted with the dismissal of the Prime Minister in Haiti, and forced countries like Brazil, India,



and Vietnam to institute bans or limitations on rice exports. The calls of the protesters are the same in every language, "We are hungry!" Officials around the world are scrambling to contain a crisis which directly threatens their governments and exposes how close people around the world are to the edge of starvation, and to massive mobilization.

#### The Bottom Line

The bottom line is that in a world which is capable of feeding every single human being, the lives of 2.6 billion people are in direct jeopardy because of the food policies of countries like the U.S. and Canada. The promotion of biofuels by these imperialist countries is an extension of their wars in Iraq and Afghanistan - for control of resources at any human cost. This is what Fidel warned the world of at the June 12 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, when he demanded, "Let hunger disappear, and not mankind" For all of these reasons, poor and working people should demand an end to biofuel production and for the creation of real solutions to the questions of hunger, energy, and environment.



Billboard, Cuba: "That absurd 1st world consumes 3/4 of the energy produced in the whole world"

# UNITED STATES "SOLIDARITY" WITH THE CUBAN PEOPLE

## Blockade, Lies, Guantanamo Bay and Continuation of Abuse

By Tamara Hansen

On May 21st the United States declared a fake "Day in Solidarity with Cuba". Officials with the US Government, and supposedly non-governmental organizations in Miami, Florida made this deceptive call claiming this day is to remind the world of political prisoners in Cuba. However, we must ask how the United States has any legitimacy to claim "solidarity" with any "political prisoners" in Cuba, when they are the ones responsible for over a million deaths in Iraq, torture in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Gharib. Progressive and human loving people in the Canada, the US and all around the world proclaimed their disgust at this two-faced manoeuvre by the US government, as an obvious attempt to take a "left" word and use it for their own right-wing agenda.

### May 21st Day of Shame for US

First, it must be said that May 21st is an interesting day chosen by the White House and its small group of allies to celebrate their so-called solidarity with Cuba. After the Cuban people heroically kicked the Spanish colonizers out of their country in 1898, the US ruled over Cuba officially for about 4 years. May 20th 1902 was the day the United States gave Cuba its independence. This 'sovereignty', much like the 'sovereignty' and 'freedom' we see in Iraq today, it came with so



right wing newspapers. The article was written by none other than the US ambassador to Canada, David Wilkins. This article accuses Cuba of many different things and tries to paint the United States as a benevolent hand reaching out to the people of Cuba. Cuba's response was clear; on May 27th the Cuban Embassy in Canada wrote a press statement exposing the hypocrisy of the United States in stealing the word 'Solidarity'. "The Cuban people wonder what kind of solidarity President Bush is referring to. Solidarity is what the free and sovereign Cuba offers to other nations worldwide as a modest but sensitive contribution to kill ignorance and diseases. Solidarity is the friendly hand the Cuban people tried to extend to the victims of Katrina hurricane in New Orleans which was refused by the government responsible for the abandonment they suffered in spite of living in such a wealthy country. [...] Solidarity is to share the light of literacy with other people in the remotest places of the world, reaching the homes of so many people in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and wherever requested. Is there any other kind of solidarity? It seems that for President Bush it means the hypocritical position of speaking about changes in Cuba, freedom, democracy and respect for human rights in the way they are practiced by the U.S. government in the illegally occupied Cuban territory of Guantanamo, "

Now we can attack the US government for its hypocrisy and expose all of the acts against freedom and democracy they have committed around the world. However, that still leaves open the question, who are these so-called prisoners of conscious or political prisoners the ruling class media around the world like to hold over Fidel Castro's head and use to point the finger at him as a dictator?

### Reporters Without Borders, or CIA Agents without Borders

Let us take first Look at Reporters Without Borders (RSF), a French "non-governmental

Endowment for Democracy » show that this organization has an important bias? Something not mentioned in either article is the private funding RSF receives (which it acknowledges on its website) from « Center for a Free Cuba ». Interestingly it seems that the Centre for a Free Cuba is also funded by USAID and the NED. So indirectly RSF is receiving more money from the US government than it will let on.

According to Cuban news agency, ACN in May 2008, "The United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) withdrew its sponsorship from the French group Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) for lack of ethics, on the occasion of "Internet Freedom Day" March 12. Diplomatic sources from UNESCO told Prensa Latina that the agency made the decision due to the repeated demonstration of a lack of ethics on the part of RSF in its goal of disqualifying a certain number of countries. [...] the group has once again shown itself to be sensationalist in its eagerness to set itself up as a court of inquisition against developing nations, according to the sources."

### What About "Political Prisoners" in Cuba

There have been many investigations done exposing how these so-called political prisoners or prisoners of conscious are really funded mercenaries and agents for the US government. Their job is to create unrest in Cuba in order to help the United States implement its plan for Cuba. When we look at the amazing amounts of money 'freedom' and 'democracy' building is costing US taxpayers it seems very shameful. Especially when there



President George Bush at the US State Department with families of Cuban "dissidents"



Miami-based anti-Cuba terrorist group "Comandos F-4" in photos from their website training "to capture Fidel & Raul Castro"

revolution. Also, above all this is the fear that Cuba's anti-imperialist, pro-education, pro-healthcare, pro-solidarity and, in essence, pro-humanity outlook will spread. From Venezuela, to Bolivia, to Ecuador and beyond the winds of change can be felt – and they are

many strings attached it was like getting stuck in a giant ball of yarn. Most importantly Cuba's 'independence' of May 20th 1902 meant the imposition of the Platt Amendment, which gave the US government the right to militarily intervene in Cuba whenever they see fit and meant the establishment military bases like Guantanamo Bay, which is today used by the United States as a torture camp for its prisoners in the so-called 'war on terror'.



organization" which has been exposed for receiving funds from the US government's NED (National Endowment for Democracy). In order to help spread their message for "freedom of speech".

According to their website, "The day before the 50th anniversary of the 2 December landing in Cuba of the Castro brothers rebel yacht Granma, Reporters Without Borders publicly demonstrated its solidarity with imprisoned Cuban journalists. [...] Twenty of the 27 journalists arrested and convicted during the March 2003 crackdown on dissidents are still being held, including the Reporters Without Borders correspondent, Ricardo González Alfonso. Most have been accused of being "mercenaries in the pay of a foreign power" and have been given sentences ranging from 14 to 27 years."

In July 2007 an article was published in Le Monde Diplomatique about RSF called, "When a respectable foundation takes money from the CIA". The article outlines why the US government created the NED, which was to undermine and subvert their opponents, and asks why RSF is getting involved in this. The article says that the most consistent and aggressive campaign of the NED has been against Cuba. The journalist, Hernando Calvo Ospina, estimates that over the past 20 years the NED will have invested \$20 Million for a "transition to democracy" in Cuba. This does not count the approximately \$65 Million paid by USAID since 1996. In a response article, the vice President of the French section of RSF defended the United States government's financing through the NED saying that it was only 34 500 euros of RSF's 4 Million euro budget. But doesn't the fact that an organization that claims to be fighting for freedom of speech would take ANY money from an organization called the « National

are so many people homeless in the streets across America, while so many across the US cannot get a post-secondary education, and while hundreds of thousands are fighting to cover the cost of their basic healthcare needs.

On top of this, why is it the business of the US government to decide what the Cuban people want? Shouldn't they worry about the mess they are creating within their own country first? The Cuba Solidarity Day as well as the funding from USAID and the NED towards creating an opposition against the Cuba revolution is crucial for the United States government. Why? This is best explained by the Cuban Embassy in Canada who wrote in their press statement, "The Cuban people chose their own destiny 50 years ago; it is the decision to continue our own path without the interference of any foreign power. The Cuban Revolution is a true and transparent process where Solidarity is a permanent commitment, but in a quite different way from the one President Bush is pretending to offer."

### US Shameful History of Aggression Against Cuban People

The United States government still burns on the inside with a deep humiliation and rage that the Cuban people inflicted against them after the victory of the Cuban revolution. Whether it is the nationalisation of US-owned property within Cuba, Cuba's victory against the US at the Bay of Pigs, or the fact that this small island has stood tall and proud against the millions of dollars flowing in from the US in an attempt to destroy their

beating down on the US government. This year's first US-sponsored "Day in Solidarity with Cuba" is not a sign of the United States strengthening its grip against Cuba. It is a sign of desperation. The winds of change in Latin America make it clear that the United States is no longer number one dominant force, today is the day of oppressed people, especially the people of Latin America and we must stand together and defend the important gains that have been accomplished over the almost 50 years of the Cuban revolution.

### Political Prisoners in the US

As a final comment we cannot forget the real political prisoners who deserve world-wide attention right now. Gerardo, Ramon, Antonio, Fernando and Rene, also known as the Cuban 5, as well as hundreds of other political prisoners being held in US jails, either in the borders of the US or held in secret prisons around the world including US Guantanamo prison in Cuba's soil. We need to come out and protest this deceptive move by the US government that is only trying to restore its hegemony over Cuba and look to those who are truly fighting for a better world for all of humanity.

**"Free the 5 Cuban Heroes, political prisoners held in US jails!"**

**"Free all political Prisoner held in the US jails!"**



Billboard, Havana: "The Bush Plan: ...will take away forever your morning goodbye kiss, the hug at the end of school, as well as the glint in your eye. Thanks, but we already live in a Free Cuba."

# I.L.W.U. Leads the Labour Movement in Antiwar Struggle

**An Interview with Clarence Thomas, Regional Saving Lives Campaign Representative, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10**



Seattle, Washington, May 1 2008

By Alison Bodine

On International Workers' Day, May 1 2008, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union organized a day-long work stoppage at ports all along the West Coast of the United States to protest the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Below is an interview with prominent US labour and antiwar activist Clarence Thomas about these historic an-



Clarence Thomas

swoop so to speak. We have been building for this for a long time. In 2004 we had the Million Worker March.

I think that that is the genesis of all of this because it was a rank and file initiative. In other words, the Million Worker March was a resolution that was written here in Local 10, it was adopted to the longshore division, and its basic principles have to do with rank and file unity and rank and file leadership in action. This thing that we did on Mayday is the same basic principle. Now one of the things that happened during the Million Worker March is that we ran into tremendous opposition from the Democratic Party who wanted no kind of arousal of the working class two weeks before a national election with John Kerry and John Edwards. That was because those two candidates weren't offering any kind of a workers' agenda and so there was no need to build up any unnecessary expectations.

Now, this initiative was also rank and file led. In other words, it was a resolution that came from this local for Mayday, but that goes back to 2005 when Local 10 sent a resolution to the caucus regarding Mayday

tiwar actions.

**Fire This Time:** How did the idea to hold the May 1st actions come about? Shutting down the ports on May 1st was accomplished very well. Did the ILWU have any other goals that were also accomplished?

**Clarence Thomas:** That was the goal and it was a major goal. And anytime that you can get 25,000 workers to do something and trade unions are not monolithic, and the ILWU is no exception. This did not come about with, you know, one fell



Seattle, Washington, May 1 2008

and it basically was putting forward the idea of reclaiming it, you know, so that we could once again get reacquainted with the roots of social justice activism on the part of trade unions, linking that to the 8-hour work day, the Haymarket struggle, the end to child labor, and those sort of issues, as opposed to identifying with Labor Day, September 3, which is devoid of any historical connection whatsoever.

Well, so the caucus did not embrace that. So, Local 10 had a rally at Justin Herman Plaza in 2005, rather small, but we did it. Part of the reason why we put that on is because at the conclusion of the Million Worker March mobilization in Washington, on October 17, 2004, all of the organizers got together from all over the country and there were merely four or five core objectives that we wanted to accomplish. And one of them was to reclaim Mayday.

I was in New York in 2005. There was a very large march and rally in Union Square, thousands of people turned out, but the local media decided to put more focus on a dog show that took place. 2006 we also had a resolution for Mayday, this time in connection with the immigrant rights struggle. And we participated with the immigrant rights mobilization, we marched from Justin Herman Plaza all the way down Market St. to Civic Center, and I spoke. There was also a very important development that took place that day and that development had to do with

the immigrant truckers, who are independent truckers, port drivers. At the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, 90% of the port was basically rendered shut-down because the truckers didn't go to work. Not because Longshoremen didn't go to work, but because the truckers didn't go to work. That was the first of the No Work boycott, I guess that was the name of it, but pretty much that was the one that really attracted all of the attention. The one that they had in the subsequent year 2007, I wrote a resolution. The resolution was very similar to the one that we had this year. The only difference was we were asking our employer in this port to have our day off so that we could have our union meeting. And we were going to be mobilizing around the question of ending the war in Iraq, also around the question that some local ILWU members had lost their jobs to Hornblower. Hornblower is a ferry service that takes people to Alcatraz. Well, the person that owns that business is a long term supporter of the Bush administration, and its now a non-union outfit, it's a non-union outfit now that has the contract. Blue and Gold Fleet services had it before and now this other group, Hornblower, has it. So, we had done a number of demonstrations at I think Pier 33, I think, they are right next to Pier 35, the passenger terminal, in demand of their getting their jobs back. So

these things out, because people need to understand that these things don't just take place mystically. And some people have this idea that, "oh well, this is the ILWU and they have a left tradition anyway, so its really no big deal for them to do this", but I think that that's an incorrect analysis, you know, so this is the culmination of really a lot of work.

The resolution that was written this time around the Mayday and "No Peace, No



Work," getting out of Iraq, getting

part of the resolution in 2007 called for and supported those workers, immigrant rights question, linking immigrant rights to the ILWU. One of the founding members of our union, Harry Bridges, was an immigrant worker, not from South of the border, but from Down Under, from Australia, but the ILWU, and in particular Local 10 is the most racially diverse local on the West Coast. There are more African Americans in this port then there are anywhere else on the West Coast. This is the social conscious of the ILWU in the Longshore division.

So, we had put a request in to the Union to have our meeting date changed and what happened was that our employer disagreed. But, we also had a president who was compliant with the employer. And he went against the union's decision to hold our union meeting on that day and as a result of that, we did not shut down. There was a resolution that was sent into the caucus to get them to recess on May 1st and to get them to participate in the immigrant rights rally in San Francisco. It was a very close vote. I wasn't on the caucus at that time, so what happened was there was a great deal of concern, I think, on the part of members that really wanted to do something around Mayday, and they thought that that vote was so close that they should come up with some sort of compromise, well the compromise that was reached was that people could voluntarily leave the caucus if they wanted to the rally at Civic Center. Now mind you, the immigrant rights really wasn't as large as the one in 2006. Well, we were able to get the International President, Bob McElrat, to participate, at Jack Heymen's urging. So he did speak, and he was the highest ranking union official to speak that day, I think in any part of the country. So these were things that were all part of the build-up. It is important to point

out of Afghanistan was written, not by me, but by Jack Heymen, and one of the things that really swayed the discussion had to do with Veterans of the Vietnam War who were members of the caucus who got up and spoke very passionately about how we had waited, we had voted for the Democrats, they had voted for the Democrats to end the war and that they had not done it. We had adopted a resolution at our convention in 2003 to oppose the war and the occupation. But, as significant as that was with respect to the debate that we had and were able to sway, or should I say that we were able to confront more conservative elements in the union and get that through. There wasn't any kind of action that came out of that, it was just a resolution. Resolutions are important for what they are. But, people were aware of that and they remembered it because I called their attention to it, you know during the course of the caucus. That this was something that we had done in 2003 and in 2005 Local 10 had shut down the port here in the Bay Area, on March 19th commemorating the, I think it must have been the second anniversary of the invasion and occupation. We had a union meeting on that day, so all of these things sort of served as building blocks for this. And it takes time, you know, to make these kind of things happen.

Now, just to show you the importance that the ruling class, the powers that be, how they understood the significance of what it is we are doing - I was in New York the day before the May 1st action. I was talking to some activists on the East Coast and they were telling how there were permits that had been sought in the City of New York, in Manhattan, where truckers were actually going to bring their rigs into Man-

continued on page 9

Por Manuel Yepe\*

Si la prensa occidental se hubiera ocupado de los cambios que ocurren en Cuba desde 1959 hasta hoy de la manera que los están divulgando en la actualidad, los lectores de todo el mundo —y muy especialmente los estadounidenses— entenderían las características de la revolución cubana y comprenderían lo que está pasando.

Esa era la opinión en privado de un periodista extranjero que se está dando gusto reportando sobre la actualidad cubana de una mane-

ra que antes no hubiera encontrado espacio en el medio de prensa para el que trabaja. El presente auge de las informaciones sobre cambios en Cuba parece ser resultado de una combinación de factores.

En primer lugar, a una orientación en tal sentido de la campaña mediática contra la revolución cubana —que origina en Washington y ya dura casi medio siglo— que pretende explotar a su favor la circunstancia de la asunción del cargo presidencial en Cuba por Raúl Castro en reemplazo del líder histórico de la revolución, Fidel Castro, para enfatizar acerca de supuestos errores del proceso.



ceso revolucionario cubano que aporten alguna credi-

bilidad para sus desprestigiados ataques en el futuro.

La revolución cubana, en su actual etapa comenzada en 1959, se ha caracterizado por una incesante búsqueda de nuevas formas y mecanismos innovadores de movilización social que sirvan al propósito esencial de modelar un nuevo tipo de sociedad, más humana y justa, en una patria independiente y libre.

A lo largo de ese desarrollo

rollo, la revolución ha debido rectificar frecuentemente su conducta táctica para esquivar embates del enemigo o cuando ésta no ha servido a los requisitos de la estrategia, por cualquier motivo.

En más de una ocasión, ha tenido que llevar a cabo procesos de enmienda de errores y tendencias incorrectas, y lo ha hecho con la mayor naturalidad, como es propio de una revolución, si es verdadera.

José Martí, héroe nacional de Cuba y principal organizador de la lucha independentista de los cubanos contra el imperio colonial español en su etapa más crucial, defendió la idea de que “La política es el arte de inventar un recurso a cada nuevo recurso de los contrarios, de convertir los reveses en fortuna; de adecuarse al momento presente, sin que la adecuación cueste el sacrificio, o la merma del ideal que se persigue; de cejar para tomar empuje; de caer sobre el enemigo, antes de que tenga sus ejércitos en fila y su batalla preparada”.

Y los revolucionarios cubanos de hoy, empezando por Fidel y Raúl Castro, se precian de ser martianos, y practican estas ideas.

La crisis de la década de los 90 generada para Cuba por el derrumbe de la Unión Soviética y los países socialistas europeos, fue enfrentada por la Isla con la estrategia del “período especial”, que condujo a la introducción de un número de políticas que alteraban significativamente muchos aspectos de su estrategia de desarrollo.

La abrupta caída de los intercambios exteriores a causa del desplome de los hasta entonces seguros socios comerciales en el Este de Europa, obligaron a la dirección de la revo-

lución a introducir soluciones a las que no se hubiera apelado en otras circunstancias. El turismo extranjero, que se vislumbraba como fuente de ingresos importante solo después que se hubiera avanzado lo suficiente en otros sectores y resultara

impopulares y requerirían de rectificaciones o ajustes

dable enfrentar con mayor seguridad los peligros que conlleva para la sociedad esa “industria sin chimeneas”, hubo que desarrollarlo aceleradamente en aras de la obtención de recursos en moneda convertible en breve plazo.

Las inversiones de capital, que apenas se estimulaban cuando ellas eran inevitables o sumamente convenientes y seguras, hubo que promoverlas de manera más activa, por los mismos motivos.

Para paliar el déficit de moneda dura fue necesario estimular los ingresos para el país que significaban las remesas de cubanos en el exterior a sus familiares en la Isla. A tal fin, se abrieron tiendas especiales con una oferta en moneda convertible de mercancías que no estaban incluidas entre las que, subvencionadas por el Estado, se aseguraban para toda la población mediante la libreta de racionamiento. Esa entrega regimentada que garantizaba a todos el consumo mínimo de subsistencia, pudo mantenerse gracias a las ventas en esas tiendas recaudadoras de divisas convertibles.

Estaba claro para la dirigencia de la revolución que, al tomar prestadas estas soluciones de mercado como mecanismos de emergencia para obtener el capital necesario para la supervivencia económica del proceso revolucionario, se incurría en graves riesgos en términos de costo político y social de cada una de ellas.

Era sabido que ellas propiciarían la introducción de inéditas diferencias en los ingresos de la población que habría que enfrentar con disposiciones que llegarían a ser ellas mismas

posteriores. Pero no había alternativas.

La prohibición



del acceso

de cubanos a los hoteles de turismo extranjero, las limitaciones im-

puestas a la tenencia de teléfonos celulares por ciudadanos cubanos y otras que recientemente han sido levantadas —así como algunas que continúan en vigor aún—, han estado guiadas por el propósito de reducir el impacto que esos privilegios tendrían en una sociedad orientada a la igualdad y la solidaridad, en momentos de graves peligros para la nación.

La suspensión temporal de la venta libre de ciertos efectos electrodomésticos importados obedeció a la necesidad de crear antes la capacidad electro energética requerida para su consumo. Llegado el momento de remover o rectificar cualquiera o todas esas disposiciones, se cambian sin más miramientos que los que atañen a la seguridad de la nación y el bienestar de pueblo cubano.

Bienvenidas las informaciones en la prensa de todo el mundo sobre los cambios en Cuba. Como es sabido, revolución es sinónimo de cambios y el proceso revolucionario cubano seguirá sin dudas aportándolos de manera incesante, como lo ha venido haciendo desde 1959, sin perder nunca el rumbo.

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By Manuel Yepe\*

A CubaNews translation by Ana Portela Edited by Walter Lippmann www.walterlippmann.com

If the Western press had paid as much attention to the changes occurring in Cuba since 1959 to date as they are about the current changes, readers around the world — and in particular, those from the United States — would understand the characteristics of the Cuban revolution and understand what is happening.

That was the private opinion of a foreign journalist who is enjoying himself referring to the current changes in Cuba which he would not have had space for in his paper previously.

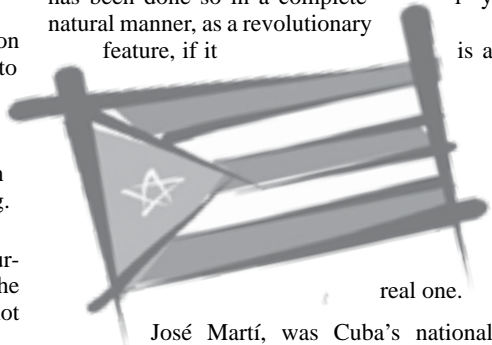
The current surge of information on changes in Cuba seems the result of a combination of factors. In the first place, there are the intentions of the mass media against the Cuban revolution — which originate in Washington and has lasted almost half a century. It tries to exploit in its favor the assumption to the Cuban presidency by Raul Castro in place of the historical leader of the revolution, Fidel Castro, to express certain alleged errors in Cuba's revolutionary process which could lend some credibility to their discredited attacks in the future.

The Cuban revolution of today began in 1959. It has been characterized by a constant search for new forms and innovative mechanisms of social mobilization. The basic purpose of these is modeling a new type of society, one more human and just, in an independent and free homeland.

During the duration of this development, the revolution has often had to correct its conduct

to dodge enemy attacks or when it has not served strategic requirements, whatever the reason.

More than once, a process of correcting mistakes and incorrect tendencies as been conducted. It has been done so in a complete and natural manner, as a revolutionary feature, if it is a



real one.

José Martí, was Cuba's national hero and the main organizer of the independence struggles of the Cubans against the Spanish colonial empire during its most crucial moments. Martí defended the idea that “Politics is the art of inventing a resource for each new resource of the enemy and turning those setbacks into a future; of adapting to the present moment avoiding that the adaptation is a sacrifice, or the whittling down of the ideal followed; of not stepping back to take impulse; of falling on the enemy before it has its armies in order or its battle prepared”.

Cuban revolutionaries of today, beginning with Fidel and Raul Castro are proud of being followers of Martí and putting of his ideas into practice.

After the fall of the Soviet Union and the European socialist countries, Cuba's confronted the crisis of the 90s the strategy of a “special period”. This led to the introduction of a number of policies which significantly altered many factors of its development strategy.

The abrupt collapse of foreign exchange with what had been certain trade partners in East Europe compelled the revolution's leadership to introduce solutions it would not have previously under different circumstances.

Foreign tourism, which was seen as an important source of income only after sufficient advances in other sectors, and which required confronting with greater security the social dangers involved with that “smokeless industry”, had to be speeded-up to obtain convertible currency in the short term. Capital investment which barely stimulated were inevitable or highly convenient and certain, was promoted more actively for the same reasons.

To alleviate the hard currency deficit it became necessary to boost income to the country through remittances by Cubans abroad to their families on the Island. For this reason, special stores were opened to sell merchandise in convertible currency which was not included among the state-subsidized articles guaranteed to the population through rationing. This systematic distribution guaranteed that basic foods for survival could be maintained through sales in the shops selling in convertible currency.

It was clear to the revolution's leadership that relying on these market solutions as emergency mechanisms to obtain the necessary capital for survival led to serious risks in terms of their political and social costs.

It was obvious that these would lead to the

introduction of unprecedented income differences in the population. These had to be confronted with measures which would become unpopular and which would require later rectification or adjustment. But there was no other choice.

The prohibition of access by Cubans to foreign tourist hotels, the limitations on Cubans on having cell phones and others which have recently been lifted — as well as some that are still in effect — have been guided by the goal of reducing the impact that these privileges had in a society based on equality and solidarity, in moments of serious danger for the nation.

The temporary suspension of the free sale of certain imported electrical appliances flowed from the need, first of all, to create the electrical energy required for their use.

When the moment arrived for removing or rectifying any of these regulations, they are changed with no further ado except for those that affect the security of the nation or the welfare of the Cuban people.

All the world press information on the changes in Cuba is welcome. As is well-known, revolution is synonymous with change and the Cuban revolutionary process will undoubtedly continue producing constant changes as it has done since 1959 without ever losing direction.

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Cuban President Raul Castro

# lifting the prohibitions

continued from page 7

hattan on Mayday and they were going to stage a demonstration. Some of them were even going to try to go to Wall Street. 24 hours before Mayday, those permits were pulled by Mayor Blumberg and the chief of police, so, I was poised to read headlines that West Coast port shut-down, Wall-street shut-down because of truckers, but that was going to be based upon the issues of increase in fuel and solidarity with ILWU members. So that didn't happen because they pulled that, but I think that it is important to note that, you know, that we were seeking solidarity action with the truckers. But, the truckers are non-union, they get paid on a piece-meal basis. They're called independent operators, but in fact, here in the Bay Area we have term called "sweat-shop on wheels." Which basically means that the trucks that they drive are like sweatshops - they're old, they're polluting.

**FTT:** I know that the action also got support from other sections of the ILWU and other unions across the United States, can you tell me about this support? Also, can you tell me about the support this action got across the US and internationally, and within the community?

**Clarence:** I guess one of the most important solidarity actions to take place were from the Iraqi workers, the Iraqi Longshore workers, who shut-down

In any event, we have been doing a number of things in order to build solidarity with Iraqi workers, communicating to American workers about what's actually taking place on the ground in Iraq with respect to Iraqi trade unionists. How Bremmer has used a law that was implemented in 1987 by the Baathists that basically re-classified public-sector workers and public-enterprise workers as civil service, and not union members. And how it really creates for an anti-union environment, and how that was being used by the Coalition Provisional Authority and event by the current regime to create the pre-disposition for privatization.

I think that, you know, one has to understand the entire context regarding what it is that we have been doing around the anti-war effort. There was an anti-war conference here at Local 10, I think it was this past October. And one of the things that I talked about was that rallies, marches, resolutions, while they may be vehicles for organizing anti-war activity, it is not going to end the war because on occasions Bush has referred to millions of anti-war activists in the streets as being "focus-groups" and Cheney, when he was asked a question about 80% of the American people being against the war he told the journalists, if you want to call them that, and he said "so?", and there was this long pause and when he kinda like felt like she had had trouble handling that answer and he tried to soften it by telling her that, you know, public

two ports in Basra, for one hour. I have to look at my notes, you may already have that information. But, you know there's, I was in Baghdad in 2003, part of a five-team trade-union delegation that went to Baghdad for the purpose of getting a first-hand account of what was actually happening to Iraqi trade-unionists during the course of the occupation under Paul Bremmer, Coalition Provisional Authority, meeting with trade-unionists there, meeting with oil workers, longshoremen, and so we were able to develop

opinion polls and all of this kind of business, don't drive our thinking. Neo-liberal, global ideology drives it, but that sort of gives you, you know, some idea of how this thing just didn't happen overnight. It has been about years of struggle.

**FTT:** Before when you said that rallies and marches were not going to stop the war in Iraq, what do you think will stop the war in Iraq?

**Clarence:** Some of the most progressive action taken by workers has been the immigrant workers and the action that they have taken, like I mentioned to you about how 90% of Long Beach and LA, ports of LA and Long Beach were shut down. 40% of all imports from Asia comes and goes through those ports, they have the largest container port in the US and 90% of that shut down, non-union workers, I told you the

power of workers.

What I am suggesting is that when Longshoremen, Teamsters, independent truckers, let's not forget Airline Pilots. If we don't work, we really show the power of the working class. That's the message. That's what's going to stop the war. You know, when elected officials, the administration, whatever it may be...Wall Street, they all get the message. Yeah, that's what will stop the war. It is not up to trade unions, although I think that trade unions are in a very unique position because they have an infrastructure. They have an ability to do certain things, but



San Francisco, California.

are they going to do that? And I think that that is the key thing.

You have to understand that this was not something that was embraced by the trade union movement. This was not something that

we're not slaves and we proved that. We can take off, you know, there are certain kinds of contractual obligations that the hall has to open at certain times to take jobs and all of that, but we don't have to work. I always like to say that Longshoremen are some of the most highly skilled workers in the world, with one of the most important jobs in the world because all of the cargo, all of the Maritime cargo which is automobiles, i-Pods, tennis shoes, food-stuffs, most of that is moved by ship. We're the ones that do that. So we are very, very critical to the global economy, to the national economy, local economy, so that

is one of the reasons why the Bush administration intervened in our contract negotiations in 2002, invoked Taft-Hartley against the union on the heels of the employers having a strike and locking us out for 10 days. But we're work-

for workers to be able to earn a living and survive. But I think that we wrote a new chapter with this action and it is still resonating in the community.

It resonated so much in the community that one of the oldest movie theaters in Oakland, the Grand Lake Theater actually had a solidarity message up on the marquee for a whole week leading up to Mayday, and you're talking about thousands of people seeing that marquee from freeways, it's a major thoroughfare.

The foundations of trade union activism I think we told the world that we still understand it, we still embrace it. That is not to say that everybody who is a member of our union is a lefty. That's not the case at all. But, members understand what men have died for in this union. We have had members that died in 1934 here in San Francisco. Nicholas Berry and Howard Bedois, I believe. Those two individuals were shot in the back by the police in the great strike of 1934, the coast-wide strike of all dock workers. The main reason for that was the right to have a union hall where we could have equal distribution of equal-opportunity jobs, that we wouldn't have to engage in the shape-up, where people used to gather around and straw-bosses would pick and choose who could work based on ethnicity and bribery and all that kind of stuff. So, our members understand that about our union. And no matter what your political ideology is, you understand the ILWU way, that's the reason

ers with a consciousness, a political consciousness, and there are so many things that we have done that I am certain you know about. From refusing to unload cargo from South Africa, we took that action in 1984 at the Nedlo in Kimberly, at Pier 80 in San Francisco. The actions that we have taken around the loading of cargo, arms destined for Chile after the assassination and coup against Salvador Allende. The list just goes on and on with things. I am sure you are familiar with Paul Robison, he was an honorary member of the ILWU and that happened six years after the founding of this union and many of our former members who have passed on now were good friends of his. He performed at our caucuses conventions, at our picket lines and so forth. Dr. Martin Luther King was made an honorary member of Local 10 in 1967, one year before he was assassinated, he spoke right here at this hall. We have a long, long history of taking positions on matters of foreign policy. We believe that a peaceful world without war, because it's the working class that fights wars, that that's a cornerstone for international workers' solidarity, and

why we were able to do what we did, 'cuz we still have those core values and we still have that infrastructure in place, bottom-up, not top-down. As a matter of fact,



Portland, Oregon. May 1 2008

it was better that the employer did not grant us the green light to have our stop-work meeting, because through struggle our members, the rank and file, feel something, we've been through something together.

**FTT:** What's next?

**Clarence:** Well, I've been invited to Canada to speak to the Canadian Peace Alliance and the Canadian Labor Congress. That's one of the things that Harry Bridges firmly believed in, that is, rank and filers visiting other rank and filers around the world and developing those relationships. That's something that we really have encouraged here.

**FTT:** Thank you.



San Francisco, California. May 1 2008

a face-to-face relationship. After our visit a few years later Iraqi trade-unionists came here. They made, I think, two visits here to the Bay Area, they were here last year, they made a national tour and we had members of the Iraqi oil workers' union who came here on a delegation speak here at the hall, I meant to bring you a copy of that audio too, maybe I will get it to you some other time.

# THE WORLD OF WORK IN A CHANGING CUBA



Welders in Havana, Cuba

By Steve Ludlam

*\*This article first appeared in "Cuba Si" the quarterly magazine of the British Cuba Solidarity Campaign in January 2008.*

While commentators have been pre-occupied with Fidel's illness and the prospects of change under Raul, there has been less attention to changes already happening in the Cuban economy, especially in employment relations and union rights. These are key indicators of Cuba's socialism as it develops in a world of ruthless capitalism.

The Special Period, of measures to overcome the Soviet collapse and renewed US hostility, is officially not over. However, in spite of the tightened US blockade, the Cuban economy has restored its pre-crisis GNP, based on the success of strategic sectors of the Special Period, notably tourism and Cuba's 'knowledge economy' in health, education and science. But, and it is a big but for Cubans, the pre-crisis distribution of incomes has not recovered. As every visitor to Cuba knows, and as Cuban leaders repeatedly stress, the Special Period, with its 'dollarisation', remittances from relatives in the USA, western tourists, self-

employment and partial marketisation of agricultural produce, has undermined equality in Cuba, both socially, and especially in terms of income distribution. Less measurable has been the impact on everyday ethics, with the population having to boost legal incomes by odd-jobbing and trading in the informal sector, often with material pinched from work.

State workers, for example in health and education, and indeed government ministers, are paid on the modest national peso scales. Most have limited opportunities to earn anything on the side or in Cuba's 'hard' currency, the CUC. The CUCs are needed in the informal sector and in the well-stocked CUC stores, which sell at 'western' prices, enabling Cuba to 'farm' hard currency to pay for vital imports. Those who can afford something in these shops, are those get CUCs in salary bonuses, from tourist tips, self-employment, remittances, or from informal or illegal trading. A few constitute the 'new rich' attacked by Fidel, some of whom have no need to work at all, something most Cubans find shocking and immoral.

Since Fidel's much-cited November 2005 speech lambasting corruption and black markets, Cuba's unions have prioritised the fight against workplace fiddling. But union leaders point out that until legal salaries once again give people a decent income, this is an uphill struggle. It is in this context that Raul, in his 26 July speech, admitted bluntly that ordinary salaries were 'insufficient to satisfy all necessities'. Nor, he said, could inadequate salaries secure the 'socialist principle' of distribution of income based on work. He launched a nationwide debate in workplaces and communities to discuss the problems of everyday life, work and efficiency that preoccupy Cubans and their government.

## Addressing Income Inequalities

So what has been happening in recent years, as the economy has been recovering, to address

inequalities? In the first place, in 2005, the government raised national salaries and benefits. The minimum pension was tripled, and the minimum wage more than doubled. All salaries were then raised modestly. There is no income tax, but higher prices for electricity and food in the non-rationed food markets have eaten into the rises. Productivity bonuses have spread. In the 'company improvement' sector of firms given more autonomy and profit incentives, workers have seen average 30% increases in salaries. More generally by 2004/5 some 1.5 million workers were receiving productivity bonuses, often in CUCs. Such bonuses now count as part of income for calculating pensions, sick pay etc.

Other measures were aimed at reducing income inequality. Cuba 'de-dollarised' in 2004, making the peso and CUC the only legal currencies. In 2005 the CUC was revalued against the dollar by 8%, and a 10% exchange tax imposed, in effect an 18% tax on dollar remittances. And the national peso was also revalued to close the gap a bit with the CUC. In 2004/5 the government acted to cut out unauthorised hard currency activities by companies, and to prevent corruption in dealings with foreign firms. Also

in 2005 the government sent the young social workers into the fuel distribution networks to regularise deliveries. This revealed that half of Cuba's fuel had been going straight in to the black market! Since then other campaigns have targeted cheating consumers in peso shops. And the new progressive electricity tariff in 2006 indirectly taxes wealthy consumers, some running self-employed CUC businesses on highly subsidised peso electricity.

Raul's insistence on 26 July that higher salaries require higher production and productivity, a commonplace of Cuban debate, raises other issues of central importance to Cuban socialism, its workers and their unions. The economy remains state-regulated, politics rules the market. Cuba's 'apertura', its opening to capitalism, has been 'Special' and limited. Cuba did not collapse into Russian-style gangster capitalism. Nor is it 'marketising' along Chinese lines. But working life was changed forever by the crises of the 1990s. Full-time employment for life in a ministry-controlled enterprise has broken down. Over 90 per cent of workers are union members, but often with new types of employer: state firms in the 'company improvement' scheme, mixed enterprises involving foreign capital, worker co-operatives in agriculture, self-employment, and much expanded service and high-tech sectors.

## Reforming Employment Relations

To take all this on board the national Labour Code – Cuba's core employment law since 1985 – is being reformed in an extensive process of consultation, above all with the unions. This is partly to incorporate subsequent legislation, like greatly extended maternity and paternal leave. But it will also formalise the emerging post-crisis world of work. Cuba is modernising and professionalising its whole human relations culture. As Elio Valerino Santiesteban, legal head at the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC), the national

union federation, put it, 'It is a new way of thinking about human relations, and human capital as a central element of the economy.'

All of this is delaying the new Code, but in the meantime important reforms have been introduced. In 2002 health and safety at work law was strengthened, and the law on collective bargaining revised to cover new types of company. Crucially for workers and unions, collective bargaining law requires that local employment relations, and implementation of employment legislation, are negotiated with unions, with workplace assemblies having the final vote on agreements.

In 2005 a major new employment law, Resolution 8/2005, formalised equal rights for workers on part-time and other non-standard contracts. It set down workers rights in the redeployment and redundancy situations in a restructuring economy, notably the right to a new job; income protection; and education and training on full salary. Procedures for promotion and training, and recognising qualifications, were set out, tied to the worker's right to an annual review. In 2006 new regulations covered forms of payment-by-results, shift rates and other plus payments. There is an emphasis on flexibility and productivity that we normally associate with joblessness and

impoverishment. But in Cuba, on top of the protection of the legal right to work and income protection, everything has to be negotiated with the unions and accepted by workers' assemblies, where all workers, unionised or not, vote. The new laws give unions more not less power.

## Cuba is Different

A recent example is new laws on timekeeping and work discipline, erroneously described by the BBC as the new Labour Code, and by Miami sources as having provoked a revolt against Raul! The true story illustrates the strength, not the weakness of Cuban society. Resolutions 187 and 188 were announced in August 2006, for implementation in January 2007. But workers and unions argued that, while it was right to regularise the working day, it was unfair to penalise workers for being late to work, or nipping out of work. The state of public transport often made it impossible to get to work on time. And shops and public service and council offices worked the same hours as everyone else, so workers had to visit them during the working day.

So the implementation was postponed for three months, to give time to fix transport problems and negotiate new opening hours in shops and services. Of course, especially in Havana, transport could not be sorted out quickly enough. But the key point here is that implementation has to be through the collective bargaining agreement, giving unions and workers themselves an effective veto until material conditions make implementation feasible and

fair. As Raul Hodelín Lugo, Secretary General of the CTC in City of Havana told me, 'In the places where these conditions might not have been created, even though the implementation date is reached for these Resolutions, we will not agree to them being enforced. Unless the conditions exist, we cannot apply the Resolutions mechanically. The application is flexible, not mechanical. Like everything else in Cuba, we discuss with the workers.'

This is consistent with Cuba's employment relations culture. US-inspired propaganda insists, for example, that strikes are illegal in Cuba. This is untrue. There is no legislation against strikes. There is simply no legislation on strikes. The Cuban constitution and its employment legislation embody positive rights for unions. But, unlike in most countries like the UK, the law does not regulate how unions conduct their affairs or their industrial activities. Cuba's unions are organisationally and financially independent, but they have a constitutional right to propose, and be consulted on, labour legislation. As Dr Francisco Guillén Landrián, head of the legal section of the Labour Ministry, told me, 'You must remember that we do nothing, absolutely nothing, until we reach agreement with our comrades in the unions. If tripartite co-ordination prevails today in any country in the world it is in

Cuba, according to the International Labour Organisation.' As for Cuba using managerial 'human resources' methods to sideline unions, he laughed heartily and said, 'Whoever does that in Cuba is either suicidal or mad. We are not a society of technocrats or profit seekers. We work to satisfy peoples' needs, and labour is a right of the people.'



Cubans Celebrate International Worker's Day, 2003

Unions know that they have to work hard to make union and worker rights and participation a reality. In recent years the unions have retrained representatives at all levels, right into the workplace, especially in health and safety, and in collective bargaining. And the CTC is restructuring itself to improve its performance. So, as a new world of work emerges in Cuba's expanding economy, Cuba's unions remains at the heart of the political process, with the central role in developing and defending workers' rights, rights that are indeed being strengthened in the new legislation.

*Dr Steve Ludlam, University of Sheffield, has been researching employment relations in Cuba with the support of the Nuffield Foundation.*

# Workers of the World Unite!

## We Will Win the Battle of Ideas!

Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America Organizes Successful Mayday Celebration!



By Sarah Alwell

On Saturday May 3rd, over 70 people gathered at the Chilean Housing Co-op in Vancouver for a celebration of International Workers' Day (May Day) 2008 organized by the Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America (SCULA). The event recognized the challenges to be fought and the rights still to be won by millions of workers in Latin America and throughout the world. Masters of Ceremony Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC), and Jose Angel, organizer with the Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America, welcomed everyone to the event outlining the importance

of International Workers' Day.

The event began with a showing of the film "Zoned for Slavery" about the deplorable conditions for women working in factories in Honduras. The film was opened by Rosa Quiero of the Solidarity Coalition for a United Latin America.

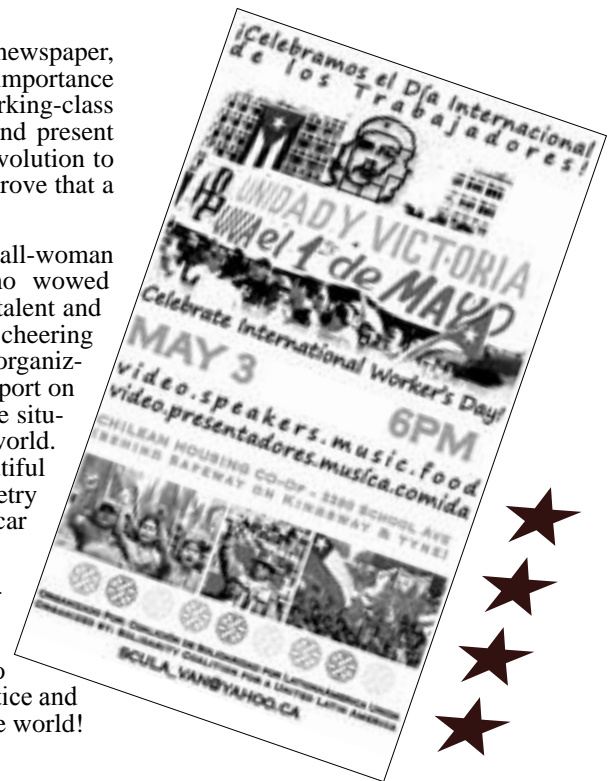
Following the film, Waldemar Mozen, active in revolutionary movement in Guatemala, opened the evening with an inspiring message of struggle and solidarity with workers around the world. The group Viva Chile!, a bundle of young energetic children, then wooed and warmed the crowd with traditional dances from Chile.

Following the wonderful performance, Fred Muzin President of the Hospital Employees' Union spoke about the struggle of workers, the recent wave of strikes in Canada and the importance of unions and the labour movement to defend workers and their right to protest. Ali Yerevani, politi-

cal editor of the Fire This Time newspaper, passionately emphasized the importance of internationalism in the working-class movement and gave historic and present examples from the Russian Revolution to the Cuban Revolution, which prove that a better world is possible!

Next up was the spectacular all-woman bluegrass group Boothill, who wowed the crowd with their excellent talent and beautiful voices and left people cheering for more. Nacson Espinoza, an organizer with SCULA, then gave a report on behalf of the coalition about the situation for workers around the world. The night ended with a beautiful reading of revolutionary poetry from Alejandro Olea and Oscar Villalobos.

After a night of food, performance, speakers and politics, participants left the event inspired and charged, ready to continue the fight for social justice and the rights of workers around the world!



Celebration participants enjoyed the program



Bluegrass singers "Boot Hill"



"Viva Chile!" dancers



HEU President Fred Muzin



April 24, 2008



April 24, 2008



April 12, 2008

## MAWO & ALISON BODINE DEFENCE COMMITTEE

By Janine Solanki

Since Canada's ruling class escalation of their war drive in Afghanistan in 2004, Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) launched the 'Canada Out of Afghanistan Campaign' to engage not only antiwar activists, but all peace-loving, working and poor people in education, mobilization and protest against the now almost 7 year long occupation of Afghanistan.

With this campaign came the Canada Out of Afghanistan petition, a testament to the increasing perspective of people in the lower mainland against the occupation of Afghanistan. The petition goes far beyond 14,000 signatures – in fact this is over 14,000 people that have had their regular day interrupted with a conversation, or a debate, on Canada's role in Afghanistan. With this petition MAWO organizers have been able to track the reactions as initial debates on Canada's so called "peace-keeping" role in 2004, have now become discussions on the reasons for Canada's recent extension of their occupation to 2011.

As MAWO resolved to have at least 2 petitions a month, in the same period MAWO co-chair Alison Bodine, who is facing a 2 year ban from Canada based on political targeting by the Canada Border Services Agency, also had supporters stepping up the petition campaign within the Alison Bodine Defence Committee (ABDC) and Mobilization Against War and Occupation. As Alison recently won a partial victory by gaining leave to appeal her case to Federal Court in a Judicial Review, ABDC and MAWO organizers saw the importance of increasing

the knowledge of the public on this attack on human and democratic rights and have worked to collect more signatures to demand "Lift the Ban on Alison Bodine" and will now go into her hearing with over 3600 signatures.

In April 2008, alongside ABDC specific peti-

## PETITION CAMPAIGNS



May 24, 2008



May 6, 2008



May 24, 2008



May 6, 2008



April 12, 2008

## ATTRACT HUNDREDS IN VANCOUVER!

On Saturday April 12th MAWO organizers hit the Vancouver Public Library, armed with petitions on clipboards, collecting in total over 450 signatures in just a few hours. Then on Thursday April 24th, the afternoon rush at Broadway and Commercial

became busier as students, workers, families and even children approached organizers to sign the petitions and get more information, and again collected a total 450 signatures!

In May 2008, as supporters of Alison Bodine drew closer in preparing for the June 12th Judicial Review, and organized 2 petition drives specifically demanding "Lift the 2 year ban on Alison!" On Friday May 9th and Thursday May 15th, Alison Bodine supporters at Broadway and Commercial approached pedestrians, many who were already familiar with Alison's case and eager to sign the petition, and collected over 650 petition signatures on Alison's petition alone!

As the numbers on these petition grows, so do the number of people who have taken a step in getting involved in organizing against war and occupation!

# Socialism & Man in Cuba

## Ernesto Che Guevara



Dear Comrade:

Though belatedly, I am completing these notes in the course of my trip through Africa, hoping in this way to keep my promise. I would like to do so by dealing with the theme set forth in the title above. I think it may be of interest to Uruguayan readers.

A common argument from the mouths of capitalist spokesmen, in the ideological struggle against socialism, is that socialism, or the period of building socialism into which we have entered, is characterized by the abolition of the individual for the sake of the state. I will not try to refute this argument solely on theoretical grounds, but rather to establish the facts as they exist in Cuba and then add comments of a general nature. Let me begin by broadly sketching the history of our revolutionary struggle before and after the taking of power.

As is well known, the exact date of the beginning of the revolutionary struggle—which would culminate in January 1959—was July 26, 1953. A group of men led by Fidel Castro attacked the Moncada barracks in Oriente Province on the morning of that day. The attack was a failure; the failure became a disaster; and the survivors ended up in prison, beginning the revolutionary struggle again after they were freed by an amnesty. In this process, in which there was only the germ of socialism, man was a fundamental factor. We put our trust in him—individual, specific, with a first and last name—and the triumph or failure of the mission entrusted to him depended on his capacity for action.

Then came the stage of guerrilla struggle. It developed in two distinct environments: the people, the still sleeping mass that had to be mobilized; and its vanguard, the guerrillas, the motor force of the mobilization, the generator of revolutionary consciousness and militant enthusiasm. This vanguard was the catalyzing agent that created the subjective conditions necessary for victory. Here again, in the framework of the proletarianization of our thinking, of this revolution that took place in our habits and our minds, the individual was the basic factor. Every one of the fighters of the Sierra Maestra who reached an upper rank in the revolutionary forces has a record of outstanding deeds to his credit. They attained their rank on this basis. It was the first heroic period, and in it they competed for the heaviest responsibilities, for the greatest dangers, with no other satisfaction than fulfilling a duty.

In our work of revolutionary education we frequently return to this instructive theme. In the attitude of our fighters could be glimpsed the man of the future.

On other occasions in our history the act of total dedication to the revolutionary cause was repeated. During the October crisis and in the days of Hurricane Flora we saw exceptional deeds of valor and sacrifice performed by an entire people. Finally, the method to perpetuate this heroic attitude in daily life is, from the ideological standpoint, one of our fundamental tasks.

In January 1959, the revolutionary government was established with the participation of various members of the treacherous bourgeoisie. The presence of the Rebel Army as the basic element of strength constituted the guarantee of power. Serious contradictions developed right away. In the first instance, in February 1959, these were resolved when Fidel Castro assumed leadership of the government, taking the post of prime minister. This process culminated in July of the same year with the resignation under mass pressure of President Urrutia. In the history of the Cuban revolution there now appeared a character, well-defined in its features, who would systematically reappear: the mass. This multifaceted being is not, as is claimed, the sum of elements of the same type (reduced, moreover, to that same type by the reigning system), which acts like a flock of sheep. It is true that it follows its leaders, basically Fidel Castro, without hesitation. But the degree to which he won this trust results precisely from having interpreted the people's desires and aspirations in their full meaning, and from the sincere struggle to fulfill the promises he made.

The mass participated in the agrarian reform and in the difficult task of the administration of state enterprises; it went through the heroic experience of Playa Giron; it was hardened in the battles against various bands of bandits armed by the CIA; it lived through one of the most important decisions of modern times during the October crisis; and today it continues to work for the building of socialism.

Viewed superficially it might appear that those who speak of the subordination of the individual to the state are right. The mass carries out with matchless enthusiasm and discipline the tasks set by the government, whether in the field of the economy, culture, defense, sports, etc.

The initiative generally comes from Fidel or from the revolutionary high command and is explained to the people, who make it their own. In some cases the party and government take a local experience and generalize it, following the same procedure.

Nevertheless, the state sometimes makes mistakes. When one of these mistakes occurs, one notes a decline in collective enthusiasm due to the effect of a quantitative decrease in each of the elements that make up the mass. Work is paralyzed until it is reduced to insignificant amounts. It is time to make a correction. That is what happened in March 1962, as a result of the sectarian policy imposed on the party by Anibal Escalante. Clearly this mechanism is not enough to ensure a succession of sensible measures. A more structured connection with the mass is needed, and we must improve it in the course of the next years. But as far as initiatives originating in the upper strata of the government are concerned, we are currently utilizing the almost intuitive method of sounding out general reactions to the great problems we confront.

In this Fidel is a master. His own special way of fusing himself with the people can be appreciated only by seeing him in action. At the great public mass meetings one can observe something like the dialogue of two tuning forks whose vibrations interact, producing new sounds. Fidel and the mass begin to vibrate together in a dialogue of growing intensity until they reach the climax in an abrupt conclusion crowned by our cry of struggle and victory. The difficult thing to understand for someone not living through the experience of the revolution is this close dialectical unity between the individual and the mass in which both are interrelated and, at the same time, in which the mass, as an aggregate of individuals, interacts with its leaders.

Some phenomena of this kind can be seen under capitalism, when politicians appear capable of mobilizing popular opinion. But when these are not genuine social movements—if they were, it would not be entirely correct to call them capitalist—they live only so long as the individual who inspires them, or until the harshness of capitalist society puts an end to the people's illusions. In capitalist society man is controlled by a pitiless law usually beyond his comprehension. The alienated human specimen is tied to society as a whole by an invisible umbilical cord: the law of value. This law acts upon all aspects of his life, shaping his course and destiny.

The laws of capitalism, which are blind and are invisible to ordinary people, act upon the individual without his being aware of it. He sees only the vastness of a seemingly infinite horizon before him. That is how it is painted by capitalist propagandists who purport to draw a lesson from the example of Rockefeller—whether or not it is true—about the possibilities of success. The amount of poverty and suffering required for a Rockefeller

to emerge, and the amount of depravity entailed in the accumulation of a fortune of such magnitude, are left out of the picture, and it is not always possible for the popular forces to make these concepts clear. (A discussion of how the workers in the imperialist countries gradually lose the spirit of working-class internationalism due to a certain degree of complicity in the exploitation of the dependent countries, and how this at the same time weakens the combativity of the masses in the imperialist countries, would be appropriate here, but that is a theme which goes beyond the aim of these notes.)

In any case the road to success is pictured as beset with perils—perils that, it would seem, an individual with the proper qualities can overcome to attain the goal. The reward is seen in the distance; the way is lonely. Furthermore, it is a contest among wolves. One can win only at the cost of the failure of others. I would now like to try to define the individual, the actor in this strange and moving drama of the building of socialism, in his dual existence as a unique being and as a member of society. I think the place to start is to recognize his quality of incompleteness, of being an unfinished product. The vestiges of the past are brought into the present in the individual consciousness, and a continual labor is necessary to eradicate them. The process is two-sided. On the one side, society acts through direct and indirect education; on the other, the individual submits himself to a conscious process of self-education.

The new society in formation has to compete fiercely with the past. This past makes itself felt not only in the individual consciousness—in which the residue of an education systematically oriented toward isolating the individual still weighs heavily—but also through the very character of this transition period in which commodity relations still persist. The commodity is the economic cell of capitalist society. So long as it exists its effects will make themselves felt in the organization of production and, consequently, in consciousness.

Marx outlined the transition period as resulting from the explosive transformation of the capitalist system destroyed by its own contradictions. In historical reality, however, we have seen that some countries that were weak limbs on the tree of imperialism were torn off first—a phenomenon foreseen by Lenin.

In these countries capitalism had developed sufficiently to make its effects felt by the people in one way or another. But it was not capitalism's internal contradictions that, having exhausted all possibilities, caused the system to explode. The struggle for liberation from a foreign oppressor; the misery caused by external events such as war, whose consequences privileged classes place on the backs of the exploited; liberation movements aimed at overthrowing neocolonial regimes—these are the usual factors in unleashing this kind of explosion. Conscious action does the rest. A complete education for social labor has not yet taken place in these countries, and wealth is far from being within the reach of the masses through the simple process of appropriation.

Underdevelopment, on the one hand, and the usual flight of capital, on the other, make a rapid transition without sacrifices impossible. There remains a long way to go in constructing the economic base, and the temptation is very great to follow the beaten track of material interest as the lever with which to accelerate development.

There is the danger that the forest will not be seen for the trees. The pipe dream that socialism can be achieved with the help of the dull instruments left to us by capitalism (the commodity as the economic cell, profitability, individual material interest as a lever, etc.) can lead into a blind alley. And you wind up there after having traveled a long distance with many crossroads, and it is hard to figure out just where you took the wrong turn. Meanwhile, the economic foundation that has been laid has done its work of undermining the development of consciousness. To build communism it is necessary, simultaneous with the new material foundations, to build the new man. That is why it is very important to choose the right instrument for mobilizing the masses. Basically, this instrument must be moral in character, without neglecting, however, a correct use of the material incentive—especially of a social character.

As I have already said, in moments of great peril it is easy to muster a powerful response to moral incentives. Retaining their effect, however, requires the development of a consciousness in which there is a new scale of values. Society as a whole must be converted into a gigantic school.

In rough outline this phenomenon is similar to the process by which capitalist consciousness was formed in its initial period. Capitalism uses force but it also educates people in the system. Direct propaganda is carried out by those entrusted with explaining the inevitability of class society, either through some theory of divine origin or a mechanical theory of natural law. This lulls the masses, since they see themselves as being oppressed by an evil against which it is impossible to struggle.

Next comes hope of improvement—and in this, capitalism differed from the earlier caste systems, which offered no way out. For some people, the principle of the caste system will remain in effect; the reward for the obedient is to be transported after death to some fabulous other world where, according to the old beliefs, good people are rewarded. For other people there is this innovation: Class divisions are determined by fate, but individuals can rise out of their class through work, initiative, etc. This process, and the myth of the self-made man, have to be profoundly hypocritical: it is the self-serving demonstration that a lie is the truth.

In our case direct education acquires a much greater importance. The explanation is convincing because it is true; no subterfuge is needed. It is carried on by the state's educational apparatus as a function of general, technical, and ideological education through such agencies as the Ministry of Education and the party's informational apparatus. Education takes hold among the masses and the foreseen new attitude tends to become a habit. The masses continue to make it their own and to influence those who have not yet educated themselves. This is the indirect form of educating the masses, as powerful as the other.

But the process is a conscious one. The individual continually feels the impact of the new social power and perceives that he does not entirely measure up to its standards. Under the pressure of indirect education, he tries to adjust himself to a situation that he feels is right and that his own lack of development had prevented him from reaching previously. He educates himself.

In this period of the building of socialism we can see the new man being born. His image is not yet completely finished—it never will be, since the process goes forward hand in hand with the development of new economic forms.

Aside from those whose lack of education makes them take the solitary road toward satisfying their own personal ambitions, there are those—even within this new panorama of a unified march forward—who have a tendency to walk separate from the masses accompanying them. What is important, however, is that each day men are acquiring ever more consciousness of the need for their incorporation into society and, at the same time, of their importance as the motor of that society. They no longer travel completely alone

over lost roads toward distant aspirations. They follow their vanguard, consisting of the party, the advanced workers, the advanced men who walk in unity with the masses and in close communion with them. The vanguards have their eyes fixed on the future and its reward, but it is not a vision of something for the individual. The prize is the new society in which men will have different characteristics: the society of communist man.

The road is long and full of difficulties. At times we lose our way and must turn back. At other times we go too fast and separate ourselves from the masses. Sometimes we go too slow and feel the hot breath of those treading at our heels. In our zeal as revolutionists we try to move ahead as fast as possible, clearing the way. But we know we must draw our nourishment from the mass and that it can advance more rapidly only if we inspire it by our example. Despite the importance given to moral incentives, the fact that there remains a division into two main groups (excluding, of course, the minority that for one reason or another does not participate in the building of socialism) indicates the relative lack of development of social consciousness. The vanguard group is ideologically more advanced than the mass; the latter understands the new values, but not sufficiently. While among the former there has been a qualitative change that enables them to make sacrifices in their capacity as an advance guard, the latter see only part of the picture and must be subject to incentives and pressures of a certain intensity. This is the dictatorship of the proletariat operating not only on the defeated class but also on individuals of the victorious class.

All of this means that for total success a series of mechanisms, of revolutionary institutions, is needed. Along with the image of the multitudes marching toward the future comes the concept of institutionalization as a harmonious set of channels, steps, and restraints, and well-oiled mechanisms that facilitate the advance, that facilitate the natural selection of those destined to march in the vanguard, and that bestow rewards on those who fulfill their duties and punishments on those who commit a crime against the society that is being built.

This institutionalization of the revolution has not yet been achieved. We are looking for something new that will permit a complete identification between the government and the community in its entirety, something appropriate to the special conditions of the building of socialism, while avoiding to the utmost a transplanting of the compromises of bourgeois democracy—such as legislative chambers, for example—into the society in formation. Some experiments aimed at the gradual institutionalization of the revolution have been made, but without undue haste. The greatest brake has been our fear lest any appearance of formality might separate us from the masses and from the individual, might make us lose sight of the ultimate and most important revolutionary aspiration: to see man liberated from his alienation.

Despite the lack of institutions, which must be overcome gradually, the masses are now making history as a conscious collection of individuals fighting for the same cause. Man under socialism, despite his apparent standardization, is more complete. Despite the lack of a perfect mechanism for it, his opportunities for expressing himself and making himself felt in the social organism are infinitely greater.

It is still necessary to deepen his conscious participation, individual and collective, in all the mechanisms of management and production, and to link this to the idea of the need for technical and ideological education, so that he sees how closely interdependent these processes are and how their advancement is parallel. In this way he will reach total consciousness of his social being, which is equivalent to his full realization as a human creature, once the chains of alienation are broken. This will be translated concretely into the reconquering of his true nature through liberated labor, and the expression of his own human condition through culture and art.

In order for him to develop in the first way, work must acquire a new status. Man-as-a-commodity ceases to exist, and a system is installed that establishes a quota for the fulfillment of his social duty. The means of production belong to society, and the machine is merely the trench where duty is fulfilled. Man begins to free his thinking of his work and to understand his full stature as a human being through the object created, through the work accomplished. Work no longer entails surrendering a part of his being in the form of labor power sold, which no longer belongs to him, but represents an emanation of himself, a contribution to the common life in which he is reflected, the fulfillment of his social duty.

We are doing everything possible to give work this new status of social duty and to link it on the one side with the development of technology, which will create the conditions for greater freedom, and on the other side with voluntary work based on the Marxist appreciation that man truly reaches his full human condition when he produces without being compelled by physical necessity to sell himself as a commodity.

Of course, there are still coercive aspects to work, even when it is voluntary. Man has not transformed all the coercion that surrounds him into conditioned reflexes of a social character, and in many cases he still produces under the pressures of his environment. (Fidel calls this moral compulsion.) He still needs to undergo a complete spiritual rebirth in his attitude toward his own work, freed from the direct pressure of his social environment, though linked to it by his new habits. That will be communism.

The change in consciousness does not take place automatically, just as change in the economy does not take place automatically. The alterations are slow and are not rhythmic; there are periods of acceleration, ones that are slower, and even retrogressions. Furthermore we must take into account, as I pointed out before, that we are not dealing with a period of pure transition, as Marx envisaged it in his Critique of the Gotha Program, but rather with a new phase unforeseen by him: an initial period of the transition to communism, or of the construction of socialism. It is taking place in the midst of violent class struggles, and with elements of capitalism within it that obscure a complete understanding of its essence.

If we add to this the scholasticism that has held back the development of Marxist philosophy and impeded a systematic treatment of the transition period, whose political economy has not been developed, we must agree that we are still in diapers and that it is necessary to devote ourselves to investigating all the principal characteristics of this period before elaborating an economic and political theory of greater scope. The resulting theory will, no doubt, put great stress on the two pillars of the construction of socialism: the education of the new man and the development of technology. Much remains to be done in regard to both, but delay is least excusable in regard to the concept of technology as a basic foundation since this is not a question of going forward blindly but of following a long stretch of road already opened up by the world's more advanced countries. This is why Fi-

del pounds away with such insistence on the need for the technological and scientific training of our people and especially of its vanguard.

In the field of ideas that do not lead to activities involving production, it is easier to see the division between material and spiritual necessity. For a long time man has been trying to free himself from alienation through culture and art. While he dies every day during the eight or more hours in which he functions as a commodity, he comes to life afterward in his spiritual creations. But this remedy bears the germs of the same sickness: it is a solitary individual seeking harmony with the world. He defends his individuality, which is oppressed by the environment, and reacts to aesthetic ideas as a unique being whose aspiration is to remain immaculate.

It is nothing more than an attempt to escape. The law of value is no longer simply a reflection of the relations of production; the monopoly capitalists—even while employing purely empirical methods—surround it with a complicated scaffolding that turns it into a docile servant. The superstructure demands a kind of art that the artist has to be educated in. Rebels are subdued by the machine, and only exceptional talents may create their own work. The rest become shamefaced hirelings or are crushed.

A school of artistic inquiry is invented, which is said to be the definition of freedom, but this "inquiry" has its limits, imperceptible until we clash with them, that is, until the real problems of man and his alienation arise. Meaningless anguish or vulgar amusement thus become convenient safety valves for human anxiety. The idea of using art as a weapon of protest is combated. Those who play by the rules of the game are showered with honors—such honors as a monkey might get for performing pirouettes. The condition is that you not try to escape from the invisible cage.

When the revolution took power there was an exodus of those who had been completely housebroken. The rest—whether they were revolutionaries or not—saw a new road. Artistic inquiry experienced a new impulse. The paths, however, had already been more or less laid out, and the escapist content hid itself behind the word "freedom." This attitude was often found even among the revolutionaries themselves, a reflection in their consciousness of bourgeois idealism.

In countries that have gone through a similar process attempts have been made to combat such tendencies by an exaggerated dogmatism. General culture was virtually a taboo, and the acme of cultural aspiration was declared to be the formally exact representation of nature. This was later transformed into a mechanical representation of the social reality they wanted to show: the ideal society, almost without conflicts or contradictions, that they sought to create.

Socialism is young and has its mistakes. We revolutionaries often lack the knowledge and intellectual daring needed to meet the task of developing the new man with methods different from the conventional ones—and the conventional methods suffer from the influences of the society that created them. (Again the theme of the relationship between form and content is posed.) Disorientation is widespread, and we are absorbed by the problems of material construction. There are no artists of great authority who at the same time have great revolutionary authority. The men of the party must take this task in hand and seek attainment of the main goal: to educate the people.

What is sought then is simplification, something everyone can understand, something functioning everyone can understand. True artistic inquiry ends, and the problem of general culture is reduced to taking some things from the socialist present and some from the dead (therefore, not dangerous) past. Thus socialist realism arises upon the foundations of the art of the last century. But the realistic art of the nineteenth century also has a class character, more purely capitalist perhaps than this decadent art of the twentieth century that reveals the anguish of alienated man. In the field of culture capitalism has given all that it had to give, and nothing remains but the stench of a corpse, today's decadence in art. But why try to find the only valid prescription in the frozen forms of socialist realism? We cannot counterpose "freedom" to socialist realism, because the former does not yet exist and will not exist until the complete development of the new society. But we must not, from the pontifical throne of realism-at-all-costs, condemn all art forms since the first half of the nineteenth century, for we would then fall into the Proudhonian mistake of going back to the past, of putting a straitjacket on the artistic expression of the man who is being born and is in the process of making himself.

What is needed is the development of an ideological-cultural mechanism that permits both free inquiry and the uprooting of the weeds that multiply so easily in the fertilized soil of state subsidies. In our country the error of mechanical realism has not appeared, but rather its opposite. And that is so because the need for the creation of a new man has not been understood, a new man who would represent neither the ideas of the nineteenth century nor those of our own decadent and morbid century.

What we must create is the man of the twenty-first century, although this is still a subjective aspiration, not yet systematized. This is precisely one of the fundamental objectives of our study and our work. To the extent that we achieve concrete successes on a theoretical plane—or, vice versa, to the extent that we draw theoretical conclusions of a broad character on the basis of our concrete research—we will have made a valuable contribution to Marxism-Leninism, to the cause of humanity.

By reacting against the man of the nineteenth century we have relapsed into the decadence of the twentieth century. It is not a very grave error, but we must overcome it lest we open a wide breach for revisionism. The great multitudes continue to develop. The new ideas are gaining a good momentum within society. The material possibilities for the integrated development of absolutely all members of society make the task much more fruitful. The present is a time of struggle; the future is ours.

To sum up, the fault of many of our artists and intellectuals lies in their original sin: they are not truly revolutionaries. We can try to graft the elm tree so that it will bear pears, but at the same time we must plant pear trees. New generations will come that will be free of original sin. The probabilities that great artists will appear will be greater to the degree that the field of culture and the possibilities for expression are broadened. Our task is to prevent the current generation, torn asunder by its conflicts, from becoming perverted and from perverting new generations. We must not create either docile servants of official thought, or "scholarship students" who live at the expense of the state—practicing freedom in quotation marks. Revolutionaries will come who will sing the song of the new man in the true voice of the people. That is a process that takes time.

In our society the youth and the party play a big part.

The former is especially important because it is the malleable clay from which the new man can be built without any of the old vestiges. The youth are treated in accordance with our aspirations. Their education is every day more complete, and

we are not forgetting about their integration into work from the outset. Our scholarship students do physical work during their vacations or along with their studying. Work is a reward in some cases, a means of education in others, but it is never a punishment. A new generation is being born.

The party is a vanguard organization. It is made up of the best workers, who are proposed for membership by their fellow workers. It is a minority, but it has great authority because of the quality of its cadres. Our aspiration is for the party to become a mass party, but only when the masses have reached the level of the vanguard, that is, when they are educated for communism.

Our work constantly aims at this education. The party is the living example. Its cadres must teach hard work and sacrifice. By their action, they must lead the masses to the completion of the revolutionary task, and this involves years of hard struggle against the difficulties of construction, class enemies, the maladies of the past, imperialism.

Now, I would like to explain the role played by the individual, by man as an individual within the masses who make history. This is our experience; it is not a prescription.

Fidel gave the revolution its impulse in the first years, and also its leadership. He always set its tone. But there is a good group of revolutionaries who are developing along the same road as the central leader. And there is a great mass that follows its leaders because it has faith in them. It has faith in them because they have known how to interpret its aspirations. It is not a matter of how many kilograms of meat one has to eat nor of how many times a year someone can go to the beach, nor how many pretty things from abroad you might be able to buy with present-day wages. It is a matter of making the individual feel more complete, with much more internal richness and much more responsibility. The individual in our country knows that the glorious period in which he happens to live is one of sacrifice; he is familiar with sacrifice. The first ones came to know it in the Sierra Maestra and wherever they fought; afterward all of Cuba came to know it. Cuba is the vanguard of Latin America and must make sacrifices because it occupies the post of advance guard, because it shows the masses of Latin America the road to full freedom.

Within the country the leadership has to carry out its vanguard role. And it must be said with all sincerity that in a real revolution, to which one gives his all and from which one expects no material reward, the task of the vanguard revolutionary is at one and the same time magnificent and agonizing.

At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality. Perhaps it is one of the great dramas of the leader that he must combine a passionate spirit with a cold intelligence and make painful decisions without flinching. Our vanguard revolutionaries must make an idea of this love of the people, of the most sacred causes, and make it one and indivisible. They cannot descend, with small doses of daily affection, to the level where ordinary men put their love into practice.

The leaders of the revolution have children just beginning to talk, who are not learning to say "daddy." They have wives who must be part of the general sacrifice of their lives in order to take the revolution to its destiny. The circle of their friends is limited strictly to the circle of comrades in the revolution. There is no life outside of it. In these circumstances one must have a big dose of humanity, a big dose of a sense of justice and truth in order not to fall into dogmatic extremes, into cold scholasticism, into an isolation from the masses. We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity is transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force.

The revolutionary, the ideological motor force of the revolution within his party, is consumed by this uninterrupted activity that comes to an end only with death, unless the construction of socialism is accomplished on a world scale. If his revolutionary zeal is blunted when the most urgent tasks have been accomplished on a local scale and he forgets about proletarian internationalism, the revolution he leads will cease to be a driving force and sink into a comfortable drowsiness that imperialism, our irreconcilable enemy, will utilize to gain ground. Proletarian internationalism is a duty, but it is also a revolutionary necessity. This is the way we educate our people.

Of course there are dangers in the present situation, and not only that of dogmatism, not only that of freezing the ties with the masses midway in the great task. There is also the danger of the weaknesses we can fall into. If a man thinks that dedicating his entire life to the revolution means that in return he should not be distracted by such worries as that his child lacks certain things, that his children's shoes are worn out, that his family lacks some necessity, then with this reasoning he opens his mind to infection, bathes germs of future corruption. In our case we have maintained that our children should have or should go without those things that the children of the common man have or go without, and that our families should understand this and struggle for it to be that way. The revolution is made through man, but man must forge his revolutionary spirit day by day.

Thus we march on. At the head of the immense column—we are neither ashamed nor afraid to say it—is Fidel. After him come the best cadres of the party, and immediately behind them, so close that we feel its tremendous force, comes the people in its entirety, a solid structure of individualities moving toward a common goal, individuals who have attained consciousness of what must be done, men who fight to escape from the realm of necessity and to enter that of freedom.

This great throng organizes itself; its organization is a result of its consciousness of the necessity of this organization. It is no longer a dispersed force, divisible into thousands of fragments thrown into the air like splinters from a hand grenade, trying by any means to achieve some protection from an uncertain future, in desperate struggle with their fellows. We know that sacrifices lie ahead and that we must pay a price for the heroic fact that we are, as a nation, a vanguard. We, as leaders, know that we must pay a price for the right to say that we are at the head of a people that is at the head of Latin America. Each and every one of us punctually pays his quota of sacrifice, conscious of being rewarded with the satisfaction of fulfilling a duty, conscious of advancing with everyone toward the new man visible on the horizon.

Allow me to draw some conclusions: We socialists are freer because we are more complete; we are more complete because we are freer. The skeleton of our complete freedom is already formed. The flesh and the clothing are lacking; we will create them. Our freedom and its daily sustenance are paid for in blood and sacrifice. Our sacrifice is conscious: an installment payment on the freedom that we are building. The road is long and in part unknown. We know our limitations. We will create the man of the twenty-first century—we, ourselves. We will forge ourselves in daily action, creating a new man with a new technology. The individual plays a role in mobilizing and leading the masses insofar as he embodies the highest virtues and aspirations of the people and does not wander from the path. Clearing the way is the vanguard group, the best among the good, the party. The basic duty of our work is the youth. We place our hope in them and prepare them to take the banner from our hands.

If this inarticulate letter clarifies anything, it has accomplished the objective that motivated it. Receive our ritual greeting—which is like a handshake or an "Ave Maria Purissima":

**Patria o muerte! [Homeland or death]**

# Native People's Alliance Fundraiser in Seattle for Cuban Five A Huge Success!

By Kerri Goodwin

On May 24, 2008, the Native People's Alliance with Friends and Allies called out to all peace loving people and supporters of the Cuban Five to come together for a fundraiser to support the case of the Cuban Five in Seattle, Washington.

The Cuban Five are five heroes who are being held in jails across the United States for defending their country from attacks by US-backed terrorist groups. Organizers from the Free the Cuban Five Committee-Vancouver and the Indigenous Rights and Action Project from Vancouver went down to Seattle to attend the exciting fundraiser that the Native's People Alliance with Friends and Allies was hosting. After crossing the border and driving down to Seattle, we pulled into the driveway of El Centro de la Raza, where the event was being held.

Upon arriving, we met with Harold Belmont, an active organizer with the Native's People Alliance with Friends and Allies, who gave the opening welcome with song and also spoke passionately about his history of going from being a dispossessed drunk on Skid Row to being radicalized with the social movements of the 1970s. In particular, he talked about how his involvement in the American Indian Movement impacted him. He said after hearing about the Cuban Five case, it was important to undertake immediate action. This case is also strongly connected

to the Indigenous political prisoners and struggle today. This fundraiser was his effort to help for their freedom.

Roberto Maetras, the executive director of El Centro de la Raza, welcomed us in to the center and spoke some of the dynamic works that the center has done. He spoke about one of the exciting events that had happened when a delegation of Cuba came to visit the center. He sang a song that gave the crowd an interesting look at Cuba. Beatrice Funk, who is on the National Lawyers Guild, spoke briefly about the legalities around the case of the Five.

After a few speakers, everyone was standing as Harold Belmont and Kelly White welcomed everyone for dinner and also gave the ceremonial offering plate before everyone ate a very delicious meal.

Harold invited Aaron Mercredi next, who is an organizer with the Indigenous Rights and Action Project (IRAP) and Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) to speak about the Cuban Five and other political prisoners such as Leonard Peltier that are being held in US prisons today. "Leonard Peltier and the Cuban 5 are people who are the backbone of our movement today. Their example and their legacy inspire new generations of fighters who have joined the fight for social justice," Aaron said. Aaron ended his talk by saying that we, the people of Canada and United States, need to take

a step further to build the work about cases that are unjust. Jane Cutter, who is an active member and organizer of the antiwar organization International ANSWER in Seattle, gave an outlook on the work that the National Committee for the Five organizes.

It was very exciting to see that the Indigenous community took a big step forward to become closer to connecting the struggles that Indigenous people face and the Cuban people face against imperialism that lies in Canada and the United States. The event came to a

closing with a ceremonial blanket song and material give away about the Cuban Five.

The event fundraised over three hundred dollars for the legal costs for the five heroes. It was a huge honour for Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver and the Indigenous Rights and Action Project to be a part of this significant event. Together we must stand for social justice and freedom for all political prisoners, regardless of borders!



## mawo forum-classes: No Effective Activism Without Political Education

By Nita Palmer

In April 2008, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) launched a campaign of regular public forums and forum-classes on topics relevant to the antiwar movement today. These events are

Nita Palmer speaking at April 9 MAWO forum-class.



an important means to reach out to more people who are interested in learning about and discussing organizing against war and occupation, as well as an important tool for those of us who are already organizers within the antiwar movement to educate ourselves on the critical issues which the antiwar movement must address today.

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, MAWO activists and organizers gathered in Joe's Café on

Commercial Drive to participate in the forum-class titled "Palestine: 60 Years of Struggle for Self-Determination", presented by MAWO organizer Mike Chimenti. The forum-class was focused on the tightening down of the blockade and sanctions against the people of Gaza, and the heroic Palestinian resistance to 60 years of occupation by Israel.

On April 18<sup>th</sup>, MAWO held a public forum at the Britannia Community Centre titled "Canada in Afghanistan: War, Occupation, and Extension". MAWO executive committee member Nita Palmer presented on the destruction of Afghanistan by the occupation forces and the recent vote in Canada's Parliament to extend the occupation of Afghanistan from 2009 to 2011. Ali Yerevani, political editor of the Fire This Time newspaper then outlined the why Afghanistan is important to the imperialist plan for war, occupation, and plunder of the resources and trade markets of the Middle East.

The April 23<sup>rd</sup> MAWO forum class was



presented by MAWO organizer and member of the Fire This Time Newspaper editorial board Thomas Davies. The class was titled "Sudan: Imperialists Open the Next Front in the New Era of War and Occupation". With propaganda for an invasion of Sudan by UN forces growing every day, the antiwar movement must counter this with our own education in defence of the Sudanese people's right to self-determination.

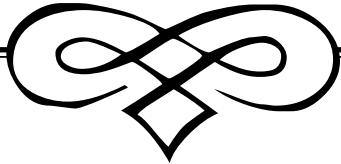
"The Deepening Crisis in Afghanistan" was presented on May 7<sup>th</sup> by MAWO executive committee member Nita Palmer. She outlined the crisis for Afghans of destruction of their country by the occupation, and the crisis for the occupation forces of facing a popular resistance in Afghanistan which they have been unable to beat.

As the ruling classes of Canada, the US and other imperialist countries continue their propaganda and drive for war in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond, all peace and anti-war organizations must counter the lies and deception of the war makers with education and information of our own. MAWO's forum-classes are an important weapon in the battle to build an antiwar movement to confront the new era of war and occupation.

For dates, location, or more information on MAWO's forums and forum-classes and other upcoming actions, please visit [www.mawovancouver.org](http://www.mawovancouver.org).



# Leader of Cuban Women's Federation Tours BC, Explaining "What is Cuba Beyond Fidel"?



By Noah Fine

Since February 19, 2008, when Fidel Castro announced that he would not accept the nomination to continue as President of Cuba, there has been renewed interest in Cuban politics by both friends and foes of Cuba. From March 17-22, 2008, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) hosted an exciting BC-wide speaking tour entitled "Cuba Beyond Fidel".

The tour featured two experienced speakers on Cuban politics. First was Tamara Columbié, the head of the Department of International Cooperation of the Cuban Federation of Women (FMC), which represents 4.1 million Cuban women. Tamara spoke during the tour about the gains of the Cuban revolution and emphasized that the Cuban people, with Fidel's leadership, have made huge gains in the last 49 years. Speaking alongside Tamara was John Waller, the International Coordinator of the Pastors for Peace Friendship Caravan to Cuba. John spoke on the US blockade against Cuba and the US government's response to Fidel's

decision in the framework of the upcoming US elections.

The tour visited four campuses, where over 150 students and faculty participated in events at the University of British Columbia, University of Victoria, Langara College and Capilano College. The tour also traveled to Vancouver Island, with events in the Comox Valley and Victoria. The events were co-organized with Victoria Goods for Cuba, Comox Valley Friends of Cuba and the Comox Valley Peace Group.

As a close to the tour, a celebratory event was held in Vancouver. Over 70 people attended the evening which began with a reading of poetry written by the Cuban 5 political prisoners in US jails. Kelly White and Vivian, two Indigenous activists and elders spoke passionately about the oppression that Indigenous people face and the hope that the Cuban revolution provides. They welcomed Tamara Columbié as their Cuban sister. Live music and beautiful spoken word closed the evening.



The "Cuba Beyond Fidel" tour was a great success with students, teachers and community members who showed interest in learning more about how the Cuban people are advancing the ideas of their revolution alongside Fidel, both being "foot soldiers in the battle of ideas".

## Two Hungry Wolves and a Little Red Riding Hood Fidel Castro May 18, 2008

ONE basic idea has been occupying my mind since my old days as a utopian socialist. It came from nowhere, with the simple notions of good and evil inculcated in everybody by the society in which they are born, full of instincts and lacking in values that parents, particularly mothers, begin to sow in any society or epoch.

As I did not have a political mentor, hazard and chance were inseparable components of my life. I acquired an ideology on my own account from the moment when I had a real opportunity to observe and meditate upon the years I lived as a child, an adolescent and a young student. For me education became the instrument par excellence for change in the period in which it has befallen me to live and on which the very survival of our fragile species might depend.

After many years of experience, what I think today on the delicate issue is totally coherent with this idea. I do not need to apologize – as certain people prefer to do – for stating the truth, although it might be hard.

More than 2,000 years ago, Demosthenes, a famous Greek orator, ardently defended in public squares a society in which 85% of the people were slaves or citizens lacking in equality and rights, as a natural state of affairs. Philosophers shared that point of view. The word democracy emerged there. They could not have been asked for more in their time. Today, with a vast wealth of knowledge, the productive forces have

multiplied innumerable times and messages via the mass media are drawn up for millions of people; the overwhelming majority, fed up with traditional politics, do not want to hear anything about that. Public figures lack confidence at a time when it is most needed by the peoples given the risks that threaten us.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Francis Fukuyama, a U.S. citizen of Japanese origin, born and educated in the United States and with a university degree in that same country, wrote his book *The End of History and the Last Man*, which many people must know as it was highly promoted by the leaders of the empire. He had become a hawk of neoconservatism and a promoter of the one way of thinking

According to him, only one class would remain, the U.S. middle class; the rest of us, I think, would be condemned to live as beggars. Fukuyama was a definite supporter of the war on Iraq, like Vice president Cheney and his select group. For him, history ends in what Marx saw as "the end of pre-history."

In the opening ceremony of the Latin American and Caribbean-European Union Summit in Peru on May 15, English, German and other languages were spoken without essential parts of the speeches being translated by the television channels into Spanish or Portuguese, as if in Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador or other nations, Indians, Blacks, mixed-race persons

and whites – more than 550 million people, in their vast majority poor – spoke English, German or another foreign language.

However, these days the grand Lima meeting and its final declaration is being spoken of with praise. There, among other things, it was understood that the weapons acquired by a country threatened with genocide by the empire, as Cuba has been for many years and Venezuela is today, are not to be ethically differentiated from those that deploy repressive forces to repress the people and defend the interests of the oligarchy, allied with that same empire. One cannot convert nations into just one more item of merchandise or compromise the present and future of the new generations.

The Fourth Fleet was not mentioned, of course, in the televised speeches of that meeting, as an interventionist and

threatening force. One of the Latin American countries represented there has just practiced combined maneuvers with U.S. Nimitz-type aircraft carriers, endowed with all kinds of weapons of mass destruction.

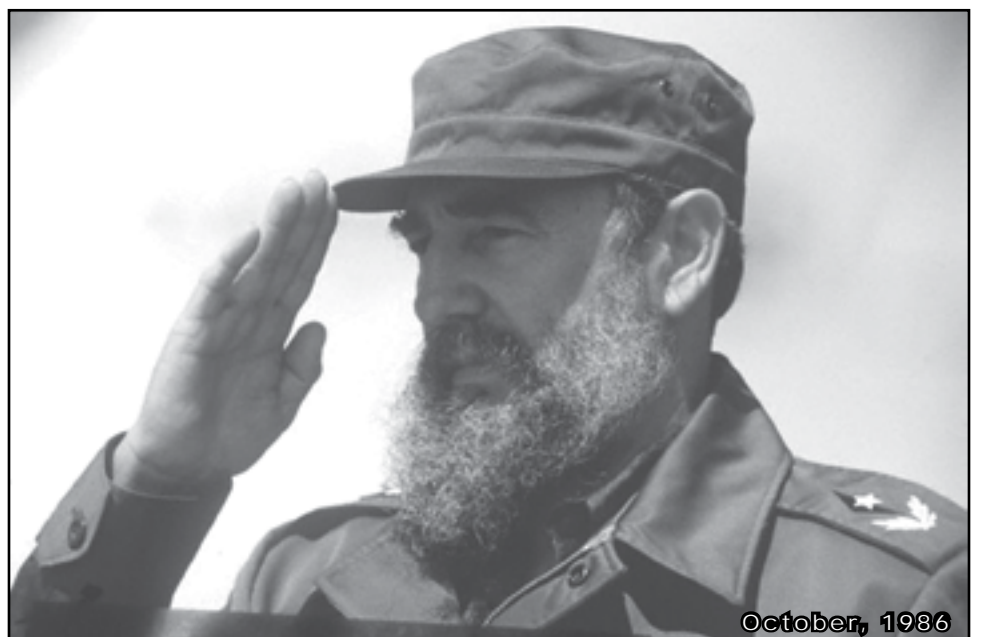
A few years ago the repressive forces in that country disappeared, tortured and murdered tens of thousands of people. The sons and daughters of the victims were expropriated by the defenders of the properties of the wealthy. Their principal military leaders cooperated with the empire in its dirty wars. They trusted in that alliance.

Why fall into the same trap again? Although it is easy to infer which is the country referred to, I do not want to mention it in order not to hurt a sister nation.

The Europe that raised its voice in song is the same that supported the war on Serbia, the U.S. conquest of Iraq's oil, the religious conflicts in the Near and Middle East, the secret prisons and landings, and the conspiracies of horrendous torture and assassination hatched by Bush.

That Europe shares with the

*continued on page 15*



Una idea básica ocupaba mi mente desde mis viejos tiempos de socialista utópico. Partía de la nada con las simples nociones del bien y el mal que a cada cual le inculca la sociedad en que nace, lleno de instintos y carente de valores que los padres, en especial las madres, comienzan a sembrar en cualquier sociedad y época.

Como no tuve preceptor político, el azar y la casualidad fueron componentes inseparables de mi vida. Adquirí una ideología por mi propia cuenta desde el instante en que tuve una posibilidad real de observar y meditar los años que viví como niño, adolescente y joven estudiante. La educación se convirtió para mí en el instrumento por excelencia de un cambio en la época que me tocó vivir, de la cual dependería la propia supervivencia de nuestra frágil especie.

Después de una larga experiencia, lo que pienso hoy sobre el delicado tema es absolutamente coherente con esta idea. No necesito pedir excusas, como prefieren algunos, por decir la verdad aunque sea dura.

Hace más de dos mil años, Demóstenes, orador griego famoso, defendió con ardor en las plazas públicas una sociedad en la que el 85 por ciento de las personas eran esclavas o ciudadanos que carecían de igualdad y derechos como algo natural. Los filósofos compartían ese punto de vista. De allí surgió la palabra democracia. No se les podía exigir más en su tiempo. Hoy, que se dispone de un enorme caudal de conocimientos, las fuerzas productivas se han multiplicado incontables veces y los mensajes a través de los medios masivos se elaboran para millones de personas; la inmensa mayoría, cansada de la política tradicional, no quiere oír hablar de ella. Los hombres públicos carecen de confi-

# Dos lobos hambrientos y una caperucita roja

Fidel Castro Mayo 18, 2008



anza cuando más la necesitan los pueblos ante los riesgos que los amenazan.

Al derrumbarse la URSS, Francis Fukuyama, ciudadano norteamericano de origen japonés, nacido y educado en Estados Unidos y titulado en una universidad en ese mismo país, escribe su libro *El fin de la historia y el último hombre*, lo que muchos seguramente conocen, pues fue muy promovido por los dirigentes del imperio. Se había convertido en un halcón

del neoconservadurismo y promotor del pensamiento único.

Quedaría, según él, una sola clase, la clase media norteamericana; los demás, pienso yo, estaríamos condenados a ser mendigos. Fukuyama fue partidario decidido de la guerra contra Iraq, como el vicepresidente Cheney y su selecto grupo. Para él la historia finaliza en lo que Marx veía como "el fin de la prehistoria".

fácil de inferir el país aludido, no deseo mencionarlo por no herir a una nación hermana.

La Europa que en esa reunión llevó la voz cantante, es la misma que apoyó la guerra contra Serbia, la conquista por Estados Unidos del petróleo de Iraq, los conflictos religiosos en el Cercano y Medio Oriente, las cárceles y aterrizajes secretos, y los planes de torturas horribles y asesinatos fraguados por Bush.

Esa Europa comparte con Estados Unidos las leyes extraterritoriales que, violando la soberanía de sus propios territorios, incrementan el bloqueo contra Cuba obstaculizando el suministro de tecnologías, componentes e incluso medicamentos a nuestro país. Sus medios publicitarios se asocian al poder mediático del imperio.

Lo que dije en la primera reunión de América Latina con Europa, celebrada hace nueve años en Río de Janeiro, mantiene toda su vigencia. Nada ha cambiado desde entonces excepto las condiciones objetivas, que hacen más insostenible la atroz explotación capitalista.

El anfitrión de la reunión estuvo a punto de sacar de sus casillas a los europeos, cuando en la clausura mencionó algunos puntos planteados por Cuba:

1. Condonar la deuda de América Latina y el Caribe.
2. Invertir cada año en los países del Tercer Mundo el 10 por ciento de lo que gastan en las actividades militares.
3. Cesar los enormes subsidios a la agricultura, que compiten con la producción agrícola de nuestros países.
4. Asignar a Latinoamérica y el Caribe la parte que les corresponde del compromi-

*continued from page 14*

United States extraterritorial legislation which, in violation of the sovereignty of their own territories, is increasing the blockade against Cuba by blocking the supply of technologies, components and even medicines to our country. Its publicity media is associated with the empire's media power.

What I said in the first Latin American meeting with Europe nine years ago in Río de Janeiro has lost none of its validity. Nothing has changed since then except the objective conditions, which are making atrocious capitalist exploitation even more unsustainable.

The meeting's host was at the point of making the Europeans fly off the handle when, in the closing session, he mentioned certain points proposed by Cuba:

- 1) To cancel the debt of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 2) To annually invest 10% of what is being spent on military activities in the Third World nations.
- 3) To end the enormous subsidies to agriculture which compete against our countries' agricultural products.
- 4) To allocate to Latin America and the Caribbean their part of the commitment of 0.7% of its GDP.

Judging by the faces and the looks, I observed that the European leaders were swallowing hard for some seconds. But, why get so uptight? In Spain it would be even easier to make vibrant speeches and marvelous final declarations. There had been a lot of hard work. The banquet was coming. There would not be any food crisis on the table. The proteins and liquors would be flowing free. The only person missing was Bush, who was working tirelessly for peace in the Middle East, as is his custom. He was excused. Long live the market!

The dominant spirit among the rich representatives of Europe was one of ethnic and political superiority. All of them were the bearers of capitalist and consumerist bourgeois thinking and talked and applauded in its name. Many brought with them the businesspersons who are the pillar and support of "their democratic systems, guaranteeing freedom and human rights." You would have to be an expert in cloud physics to understand them.

At the present time, the United States and Europe are competing between and against each other for oil, essential raw materials and markets, now with the addition of the pretext of combating terrorism and organized crime, which they themselves have created with voracious and insatiable consumer societies. Two hungry wolves disguised as good grandmothers, and a Little Red Riding Hood.

Fidel Castro Ruz  
May 18, 2008  
10:32 pm



En la ceremonia inaugural de la cumbre América Latina y Caribe-Unión Europea celebrada en Perú el pasado 15 de mayo, se habló en inglés, alemán y otros idiomas europeos sin que partes esenciales de los discursos se tradujeran por las televisoras al español o al portugués, como si en México, Brasil, Perú, Ecuador y otros, los indios, negros, mestizos y blancos—más de 550 millones de personas, en su inmensa mayoría pobres—hablasen inglés, alemán u otro idioma foráneo.

Sin embargo, se menciona ahora elogiosamente la gran reunión de Lima y su declaración final. Allí, entre otras cosas, se dio a entender que las armas que adquiere un país amenazado de genocidio por el imperio, como lo ha sido Cuba desde hace muchos años y lo es hoy Venezuela, no se diferencian éticamente de las que emplean las fuerzas represivas para reprimir al pueblo y defender los intereses de la oligarquía, aliada a ese mismo imperio. No se puede convertir la nación en una mercancía más ni comprometer el presente y el futuro de las nuevas generaciones.

La IV Flota no se menciona, por supuesto, en los discursos que se televisaron de aquella reunión, como fuerza intervencionista y amenazante. Uno de los países latinoamericanos allí representados acaba de realizar maniobras combinadas con un portaviones de Estados Unidos del tipo Nimitz, dotado con todo tipo de armas de exterminio en masa.

En ese país hace unos pocos años las fuerzas represivas desaparecieron, torturaron y asesinaron a decenas de miles de personas. Los hijos de las víctimas fueron expropiados por los defensores de las propiedades de los grandes ricos. Sus

principales líderes militares cooperaron con el imperio en sus guerras sucias. Confiaban en esa alianza. ¿Por qué caer de nuevo en la misma trampa? Aunque es

so del 0,7% del PIB.

Por las caras y las miradas, observé que los líderes europeos tragaron en seco durante unos segundos. Pero, ¿por qué amargarse? En España sería todavía más fácil pronunciar discursos vibrantes y maravillosas declaraciones finales. Se había trabajado mucho. Venía el banquete. No habría en la mesa crisis alimentaria. Abundarían las proteínas y los licores. Faltaba sólo Bush, que trabajaba, incansable, por la paz en el Medio Oriente, como es habitual en él. Estaba excusado. ¡Viva el mercado!

El espíritu dominante en los ricos representantes de Europa era la superioridad étnica y política. Todos eran portadores del pensamiento capitalista y consumista burgués, y hablaron o aplaudieron en nombre de este. Muchos llevaron consigo a los empresarios que son el pilar y sostén de "sus sistemas democráticos, garantes de la libertad y los derechos humanos". Hay que ser expertos en la física de las nubes para comprenderlos.

En la actualidad, Estados Unidos y Europa compiten entre sí y contra sí por el petróleo, las materias primas esenciales y los mercados, a lo que se suma ahora el pretexto de la lucha contra el terrorismo y el crimen organizado que ellos mismos han creado con las voraces e insaciables sociedades de consumo. Dos lobos hambrientos disfrazados de abuelitas buenas, y una Caperucita Roja.

Fidel Castro Ruz  
18 de Mayo, 2008  
10:32 pm

# Key Address by José Ramón Machado Ventura to the Conference on World Food Security

“Hunger and malnourishment are the result of an international economic order that maintains and deepens poverty, inequality and injustice”, said the head of the Cuban delegation to the meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

Two years ago, in this very hall, the international community agreed to eradicate world hunger. The aim to halve the number of malnourished people by 2015 was set. That modest and inadequate goal is bound to strike us as a pipe-dream today.

The world food crisis is not a circumstantial phenomenon. Their serious

and recent manifestation, in a world that produces enough food for all its inhabitants, clearly reveals the systemic and structural nature of the crisis.

Hunger and malnourishment are the result of an international economic order that maintains and deepens poverty, inequality and injustice.

The North countries have an unquestionable share of responsibility for the hunger and malnourishment of 854 million people. They imposed commercial liberalization upon a world with patently unequal actors and advanced financial recipes calling for structural adjustments.

They brought ruin to many small producers in the South and turned self-sufficient and even export nations into net importers of food products.

The governments of developed countries refuse to eliminate their outrageous agricultural subsidies while imposing their rules of international trade on the rest of the world. Their voracious transnational corporations set prices, monopolize technologies, impose unfair certification processes on trade and manipulate distribution channels, sources of financing, trade and supplies for the production of food worldwide. They also control transportation, scientific research, gene banks and the production of fertilizers and pesticides.

The worst of it all is that, if things continue as they are, the crisis will become even more serious. The production and consumption patterns of developed countries are accelerating the planet's climate change, which threatens humanity's very existence. These

patterns must be changed. The irrational attempt to perpetuate these disastrous forms of consumerism is behind the sinister strategy of transforming grains and cereals into fuels.

At the Havana Summit, Non-Aligned Countries called on peoples to work towards a peaceful and prosperous world and a just and equitable international order. This is the only path to follow if we're to put an end to the food crisis.

The right to food is an inalienable human right. At Cuba's instance, this has been ratified by successive resolutions approved by the former Commission on Human Rights since 1997 and, later, by the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. As the representative of the Non-Aligned Movement, with the support of more than two thirds of UN member



Protest over high food prices. Bengal, India November 2007

states, our country also promoted the calling of a seventh special session of the Human Rights Council, which has just called for concrete actions to address the world food crisis.

Hunger and malnourishment cannot be eradicated through palliatives, nor with symbolic donations which—let us be honest—will not satisfy peoples' needs and will not be sustainable.

At the very least, agricultural production in South countries must first be rehabilitated and developed. Developed countries have more than enough resources for this. What's required is the political will of their governments.

If NATO's military budget were reduced by a mere 10% a year, nearly 100 billion dollars would be available for spending elsewhere.

*continued on page 17*



Machado addressing the Conference on World Food Security.

## INTERVENCION DE JOSE RAMON MACHADO VENTURA EN LA CONFERENCIA SOBRE LA SEGURIDAD ALIMENTARIA

*Intervención del jefe de la delegación cubana, compañero José Ramón Machado Ventura, a la Conferencia de Alto Nivel sobre la «Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial: los Desafíos del Cambio Climático y la Bioenergía. Medidas requeridas para obtener la seguridad alimentaria mundial»*

Sr. Presidente:

En esta misma sede, hace

la mitad para el año 2015. Aquella meta, tímida e insuficiente, parecería hoy una quimera.

La crisis alimentaria mundial no es un fenómeno circunstancial. La gravedad de sus recientes manifestaciones, en un mundo que produce suficientes alimentos para todos, es un claro reflejo de su naturaleza sistémica y estructural.

desigualdad y la injusticia.

Los países del Norte tienen una indiscutible responsabilidad en el hambre y la desnutrición de 854 millones de personas. Ellos impusieron la liberalización comercial entre actores claramente desiguales y las recetas financieras de ajuste estructural. Provocaron la ruina de muchos pequeños productores en el Sur y convirtieron en importadores netos de alimentos a países que antes se autoabastecían e, incluso, exportaban.

Los gobiernos de los países desarrollados se niegan a eliminar los escandalosos subsidios agrícolas, mientras imponen sus reglas al comercio internacional. Sus voraces transnacionales establecen precios, monopolizan tecnologías, imponen injustas certificaciones y manipulan

los canales de distribución,

eran el cambio climático,

camino para alcanzar una solución verdadera a la crisis alimentaria.

La alimentación es un derecho humano inalienable. Por iniciativa de Cuba, así quedó confirmado desde 1997 por sucesivas resoluciones adoptadas en la antigua Comisión de Derechos Humanos y después en el Consejo, y por la

Asamblea General de Naciones Unidas. Nuestro país, en representación de los Países No Alineados, y con el copatrocinio de más de dos tercios de los miembros de Naciones Unidas, promovió también la convocatoria de la séptima sesión extraordinaria del Consejo de Derechos Humanos, que acaba de instar a la adopción de medidas concretas para la

*continuado en la página 17*



Protesta en Haití.

doce años, la comunidad internacional acordó erradicar el hambre en el mundo. Se estableció entonces el objetivo de reducir el número de personas desnutridas a

El hambre y la desnutrición son consecuencias de un orden económico internacional que sostiene y profundiza la pobreza, la

las fuentes de financiamiento, el comercio y los insumos para la producción mundial de alimentos. Controlan, además, el transporte, la investigación científica, los fondos genéticos y la producción de fertilizantes y plaguicidas. Lo peor es que si todo sigue como hasta hoy, la situación se hará aún más grave. Los patrones de producción y consumo de los países desarrollados acel-



Protesta en Haití

las fuentes de financiamiento, el comercio y los insumos para la producción mundial de alimentos. Controlan, además, el transporte, la investigación científica, los fondos genéticos y la producción de fertilizantes y plaguicidas. Lo peor es que si todo sigue como hasta hoy, la situación se hará aún más grave. Los patrones de producción y consumo de los países desarrollados acel-

que amenaza la existencia misma de la humanidad. Es preciso sustituirlos. La pretensión irracional de perpetuar ese funesto consumismo, empujó la siniestra estrategia de convertir granos y cereales en combustibles. Los Países No Alineados llamamos en la Cumbre de La Habana a establecer un mundo pacífico y próspero y un orden mundial justo y equitativo. Este es el único

**MACHADO ADDRESS TO FOOD SECURITY CONFERENCE**  
*continued from page 16*

If the foreign debt of developing countries, a debt they have paid several times over, were cancelled, South countries would have at their disposal the 345 billion dollars they annually devote to service payments.

If developed countries honoured their commitment to devote 0.7 % of the Gross Domestic Product to Official Development Aid, South countries would be able to rely at least on an additional 130 billion dollars a year.

If only one fourth of the money squandered each year on commercial advertisement were devoted to food production, nearly 250 billion dollars could be destined to fight hunger and malnutrition.

If the money destined to agricultural subsidies in the North were destined to agricultural development in the South, our countries would have around a billion dollars a day at their disposal, to invest in food production.

Mr. Chairman,

This is the message brought by Cuba, a country ferociously blockaded but

standing proud on its principles and the unity of its people: yes, this food crisis can be successfully confronted, but we should target the root of the problem, address its real causes and repudiate demagoguery, hypocrisy and false promises.

Allow me to conclude recalling the words of Fidel Castro, when he addressed the UN General Assembly in New York in



**INTERVENCIÓN DE MACHADO EN LA CONFERENCIA SOBRE LA SEGURIDAD ALIMENTARIA**  
*continuado de la página 16*

solución de la crisis alimentaria global.

El hambre y la desnutrición no pueden ser erradicadas con la adopción de medidas paliativas. Tampoco con donativos simbólicos que, seamos honestos, no cubrirán las necesidades ni serán sostenibles.

Se requiere al menos reconstruir y desarrollar la producción agrícola de los países del Sur. Los países desarrollados cuentan sobradamente con los recursos para ello. Lo que se necesita es la voluntad política de sus gobiernos.

Si los gastos militares de la OTAN en un año, fueran reducidos en solo un 10%, se liberarían casi 100 mil millones de dólares.

Si se condonara la deuda externa de los países en desarrollo, que ya hemos pagado más de una vez, los países del Sur dispondrían de 345 mil millones de dólares anuales que hoy dedican a su servicio.

Si los países desarrollados cumplieran su

compromiso de destinar el 0.7 % de su Producto Interno Bruto a la Asistencia Oficial al Desarrollo, los países del Sur tendríamos de al menos 130 mil millones de dólares adicionales cada año.

Si se destinara a la producción de alimentos, solo una cuarta parte del dinero que cada año se derrocha en publicidad comercial, casi 250 mil millones de dólares podrían dedicarse a combatir el hambre y la desnutrición.

Si se destinara al desarrollo agropecuario en el Sur, el dinero que se utiliza para subsidios agrícolas en el Norte, nuestros países dispondrían de alrededor de mil millones de dólares diarios para invertir en la producción de alimentos.

Señor Presidente:

Este es el mensaje de Cuba, ferozmente bloqueada pero erguida en sus principios y en la unidad de su pueblo: sí se puede enfrentar con éxito esta crisis alimentaria, pero hay que ir a la raíz del problema, abordar sus causas profundas y rechazar la demagogia, la hipocresía y las falsas promesas.

Concluyo recordando las palabras de Fidel Castro ante la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas, en Nueva York, en octubre de 1979:

«El ruido de las armas, del lenguaje amenazante, de la prepotencia en la escena internacional debe cesar. Basta ya de la ilusión de que los problemas del mundo se pueden resolver con armas nucleares. Las bombas podrán matar a los hambrientos, a los enfermos, a los ignorantes, pero no pueden matar el hambre, las enfermedades, la ignorancia».

Muchas gracias.

October 1979:

“The noise of weapons, of the menacing language, of the haughtiness on the international scene must cease. Enough of the illusion that the problems of the world can be solved by nuclear weapons. Bombs may kill the hungry, the sick and the ignorant, but bombs cannot kill hunger, disease and ignorance.”

Thank you very much.

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# LA POLÍTICA CÍNICA DEL IMPERIO

## Fidel Castro - 25 Mayo, 2008

No sería honesto de mi parte guardar silencio después del discurso de Obama la tarde del 23 de mayo ante la Fundación Cubano-Americana, creada por Ronald Reagan. Lo escuché, como hice con el de McCain y el de Bush. No guardo rencor hacia su persona, porque no ha sido responsable de los crímenes cometidos contra Cuba y la humanidad. Si lo defendiera, les haría un enorme favor a sus adversarios. No temo por ello criticarlo y expresar con franqueza mis puntos de vista sobre sus palabras.

¿Qué afirmó?

“A través de mi vida ha habido injusticia y represión en Cuba, y nunca durante mi vida el pueblo ha conocido la verdadera libertad, nunca en la vida de dos generaciones ha conocido el pueblo de Cuba una democracia... no hemos visto elecciones durante 50 años... Nosotros no vamos a soportar estas injusticias, juntos vamos a buscar la libertad para Cuba,” les expresa a los anexionistas y continúa: “Esa es mi palabra. Ese es mi compromiso. ...es hora de que el dinero estadounidense haga que el pueblo cubano sea menos dependiente del régimen de Castro. Voy a mantener el embargo ...”



El contenido de las palabras de este fuerte candidato a la Presidencia de Estados Unidos, me exonera de la necesidad de explicar el porqué de esta reflexión.

El propio José Hernández, uno de los directivos de la Fundación Cubano-Americana al que Obama elogia en su discurso, era el propietario del fusil automático de calibre 50, mirilla telescópica y rayos infrarrojos capturado por casualidad junto a otras mortíferas armas, durante su transportación por mar hacia Venezuela, donde la Fundación proyectó asesinar al que esto escribe en una reunión internacional que tuvo lugar en Margarita, estado venezolano de Nueva Esparta.

El grupo de Pepe Hernández deseaba volver al pacto con Clinton, a quien el clan de Mas Canosa traicionó, ofreciéndole mediante fraude la victoria a Bush en el 2000 porque había prometido asesinar a Castro, algo que todos aceptaron gustosos. Son rejugos políticos propios del sistema decadente y contradictorio de Estados Unidos.

El discurso del candidato Obama se puede traducir en una fórmula de hambre para la nación, las remesas como limosnas, y las visitas a Cuba en propaganda para el consumismo y el modo de vida insostenible que lo sustenta.

¿Cómo va a enfrentar el gravísimo problema de la crisis alimentaria? Los granos hay que distribuirlos entre los seres humanos, los animales domésticos y los peces, que de año en año son cada vez más pequeños y más escasos en los mares sobreexplotados por los grandes arrastreros a los que ningún organismo internacional fue capaz de frenar. No es fácil producir carne a partir del gas y el petróleo. El propio Obama sobreestima las posibilidades de la tecnología en la lucha contra el cambio climático, aunque está más consciente que Bush de los riesgos y del escaso tiempo disponible. Podría asesorarse con Gore, que es también demócrata y dejó de ser candidato,

porque conoce bien el ritmo acelerado en que se incrementa el calentamiento. Su cercano rival político aunque no aspirante, Bill Clinton, experto en leyes extraterritoriales como la Helms-Burton y la Torricelli, puede asesorarlo en un tema como el bloqueo, que prometió erradicar y nunca cumplió.

¿Cómo se expresó en su discurso de Miami el que sin duda es, desde el punto de vista social y humano, el más avanzado candidato a la postulación presidencial en Estados Unidos? “Durante 200 años” —dijo— “Estados Unidos ha dejado en claro que no vamos a soportar la intervención en nuestro



hemisferio, sin embargo debemos ver que hay una intervención importante, el hambre, la enfermedad, la desesperación. Desde Haití hasta Perú podemos hacer algo mejor las cosas y debemos hacerlo, no podemos aceptar la globalización de los estómagos vacíos...” ¡Magnífica definición de la globalización imperialista: la de los estómagos vacíos! Debemos agradecerse; pero hace 200 años Bolívar luchó por la unidad de América Latina y hace más de 100 años Martí dio su vida combatiendo contra la anexión de Cuba a Estados Unidos. ¿Dónde están las diferencias entre lo que proclamó Monroe y lo que dos siglos después proclama y reivindica Obama

en su discurso?

“Tendremos un enviado especial de la Casa Blanca, como lo hizo Bill Clinton” —expresó casi al concluir— “...vamos a ampliar el Cuerpo de Paz y les vamos a pedir a más jóvenes que hagan que nuestros vínculos con las gentes se hagan más fuertes y quizás más importantes. Podemos forjar el futuro, y no dejar que el futuro nos forje a nosotros.” Es una bella frase, porque admite la idea, o al menos el temor, de que la historia hace a los personajes y no al revés.

Los Estados Unidos de hoy no tienen nada que ver con la declaración de principios de Filadelfia formulada por las 13 colonias que se rebelaron contra el colonialismo inglés. Hoy constituyen un gigantesco imperio, que no pasaba en aquel



momento por la mente de sus fundadores. Nada cambió sin embargo para los indios y los esclavos. Los primeros fueron exterminados a medida que la nación se extendía; los segundos continuaron siendo objeto de subastas en los mercados —hombres, mujeres y niños— durante casi un siglo, a pesar de que “todos los hombres nacen libres e iguales”, como afirma la declaración. Las condiciones objetivas en el planeta favorecieron el desarrollo de ese sistema.

Obama en su discurso atribuye a la Revolución Cubana un carácter antidemocrático y carente de respeto a la libertad y los derechos humanos. Es exactamente el argumento que, casi sin excepción, utilizaron las administraciones de Estados Unidos para justificar sus crímenes contra nuestra patria. El bloqueo mismo, por sí solo, es genocida. No deseo que los niños norteamericanos se eduquen en esa bochornosa ética.



La revolución armada en nuestro país no habría sido tal vez necesaria sin la intervención militar, la Enmienda Platt y el coloniaje económico que esta trajo a la isla.

La Revolución fue producto del dominio imperial. No se nos puede acusar de haberla impuesto. Los cambios verdaderos pudieron y debieron originarse en Estados Unidos. Sus propios obreros, hace más de un siglo, lanzaron la demanda de las ocho horas, hija de la productividad del trabajo.

Lo primero que los líderes de la Revolución Cubana aprendimos de Martí fue creer y actuar en nombre de una organización fundada para llevar a cabo una revolución. Siempre dispusimos de facultades previas y, una vez institucionalizada, fuimos elegidos con la participación de más del 90 por ciento de los electores, como es ya costumbre en Cuba, y no la ridícula participación que muchas veces, como en Estados Unidos, no llega al 50 por ciento de los electores. Ningún otro país pequeño y bloqueado como el nuestro habría sido capaz de resistir tanto tiempo, a base de ambición, vanidad, engaño o abusos de autoridad, un poder como el de su vecino. Afirmarlo constituye un insulto a la inteligencia de nuestro heroico pueblo.

No cuestiono la aguda inteligencia de Obama, su capacidad polémica y su espíritu de trabajo. Domina las técnicas de comunicación y está por encima de sus rivales en la competencia electoral. Observo con simpatía a su esposa y sus niñas, que lo acompañan y animan todos los martes; es sin duda un cuadro humano agradable. No obstante, me veo obligado a varias delicadas preguntas, aunque no pretendo respuestas, únicamente consignarlas.

1° ¿Es correcto que el Presidente de Estados Unidos ordene el asesinato de cualquier persona en el mundo, sea cual fuere el pretexto?

2° ¿Es ético que el Presidente de Estados Unidos ordene torturar a otros seres humanos?

3° ¿Es el terrorismo de estado un instrumento que debe utilizar un país tan poderoso como Estados Unidos para que exista la paz en el planeta?

4° ¿Es buena y honorable una Ley de Ajuste que se aplica como castigo a un solo país, Cuba, para desestabilizarlo, aunque cueste la vida a niños y madres inocentes? Si es buena, ¿por qué no se aplica el derecho automático de residencia a los haitianos, dominicanos y demás países del Caribe, y se hace lo mismo con los mexicanos, centroamericanos y suramericanos, que mueren como moscas en el muro de la frontera mexicana o en aguas del Atlántico y el Pacífico?

5° ¿Puede Estados Unidos prescindir de los inmigrantes, que cultivan vegetales, frutas, almendras y otras exquisiteces para los norteamericanos? ¿Quién barrería sus calles, prestaría servicios domésticos y realizarían los peores y



continuado en la página 20

It would be dishonest of me to remain silent after hearing the speech Obama delivered on the afternoon of May 23 at the Cuban American National Foundation created by Ronald Reagan. I listened to his speech, as I did McCain's and Bush's. I feel no resentment towards him, for he is not responsible for the crimes perpetrated against Cuba and humanity. Were I to defend him, I would do his adversaries an enormous favor. I have therefore no reservations about criticizing him and about expressing my points of view on his words frankly.

What were Obama's statements?

"Throughout my entire life, there has been injustice and repression in Cuba. Never, in my lifetime, have the people of Cuba known freedom. Never, in the lives of two generations of Cubans, have the people of Cuba known democracy. (...) This is the terrible and tragic status quo that we have known for half a

How does he plan to address the extremely serious problem of the food crisis? The world's grains must be distributed among human beings, pets and fish, which become smaller every year and more scarce in the seas that have been over-exploited by the large trawlers which no international organization could get in the way of. Producing meat from gas and oil is no easy feat. Even Obama overestimates technology's potential in the fight against climate change, though he is more conscious of the risks and the limited margin of time than Bush. He could seek the advice of Gore, who is also a democrat and is no longer a candidate, as he is aware of the accelerated pace at which global warming is advancing. His close political rival Bill Clinton, who is not running for the presidency, an expert on extra-territorial laws like the Helms-Burton and Torricelli Acts, can advise him on an issue like the blockade, which he prom-

we can choose the future over the past." A beautiful phrase, for it attests to the idea, or at least the fear, that history makes figures what they are and not all the way around.

Today, the United States have nothing of the spirit behind the Philadelphia declaration of principles formulated by the 13 colonies that rebelled against English colonialism. Today, they are a gigantic empire undreamed of by the country's founders at the time. Nothing, however, was to change for the natives and the slaves. The former were exterminated as the nation expanded; the latter continued to be



# The Empire's Hypocritical Politics

## Fidel Castro, May 25 2008

century – of elections that are anything but free or fair (...) I won't stand for this injustice, you won't stand for this injustice, and together we will stand up for freedom in Cuba," he told annexationists, adding: "It's time to let Cuban American money make their families less dependent upon the Castro regime. (...) I will maintain the embargo."

The content of these declarations by this strong candidate to the U.S. presi-

used to lift and never did.

What did he say in his speech in Miami, this man who is doubtless, from the social and human points of view, the most progressive candidate to the U.S. presidency? "For two hundred years," he said, "the United States has made it clear that we won't stand for foreign intervention in our hemisphere. But every day, all across the Americas, there is a different kind of struggle --not against foreign armies, but against the deadly

auctioned at the marketplace —men, women and children—for nearly a century, despite the fact that "all men are born free and equal", as the Declaration of Independence affirms. The world's objective conditions favored the development of that system.

In his speech, Obama portrays the Cuban revolution as anti-democratic and lacking in respect for freedom and human rights. It is the exact same argument which, almost without exception,

semble the ridiculous levels of electoral participation which, many a time, as in the case of the United States, stay short of 50 percent of the voters. No small and blockaded country like ours would have been able to hold its ground for so long on the basis of ambition, vanity, deceit or the abuse of power, the kind of power its neighbor has. To state otherwise is an insult to the intelligence of our heroic people.

dency spares me the work of having to



explain the reason for this reflection.

José Hernández, one of the Cuban American National Foundation directives who Obama praises in his speech, was none other than the owner of the 50-calibre automatic rifle, equipped with telescopic and infrared sights, which was confiscated, by chance, along with other deadly weapons while being transported by sea to Venezuela, where the Foundation had planned to assassinate the writer of these lines at an international meeting held in Margarita, in the Venezuelan state of Nueva Esparta.

Pepe Hernández' group wanted to renegotiate a former pact with Clinton, betrayed by Mas Canosa's clan, who secured Bush's electoral victory in 2000 through fraud, because the latter had promised to assassinate Castro, something they all happily embraced. These are the kinds of political tricks inherent to the United States' decadent and contradictory system.

Presidential candidate Obama's speech may be formulated as follows: hunger for the nation, remittances as charitable hand-outs and visits to Cuba as propaganda for consumerism and the unsustainable way of life behind it.

threat of hunger and thirst, disease and despair. That is not a future that we have to accept --not for the child in Port au Prince or the family in the highlands of Peru. We can do better. We must do better. (...) We cannot ignore suffering to our south, nor stand for the globalization of the empty stomach."

A magnificent description of imperialist globalization: the globalization of empty stomachs!

We ought to thank him

for it. But, 200 years ago, Bolivar fought for Latin

American unity and, more than 100 years

ago, Martí gave his life in the struggle against the annexation of Cuba by the United States. What is the difference between what Monroe proclaimed and what Obama proclaims and resuscitates in his speech two centuries later?

"I will reinstate a Special Envoy for the Americas in my White House who will work with my full support. But we'll also expand the Foreign Service, and open more consulates in the neglected regions of the Americas. We'll expand the Peace Corps, and ask more young Americans to go abroad to deepen the trust and the ties among our people," he said near the end, adding: "Together,

U.S. administrations have used again and again to justify their crimes against our country. The blockade, in and of itself, is an act of genocide. I don't want to see U.S. children inculcated with those shameful values.

An armed revolution in our country might not have been needed without the military interventions, Platt Amendment and economic colonialism visited upon Cuba.

The revolution was the result of imperial domination. We cannot be accused of having imposed it upon the country. The true changes could have and ought to have been brought about in the

United States. Its own workers, more than a century ago, voiced the demand for an eight-hour work shift, which stemmed from the development of productive forces.

The first thing the leaders of the Cuban revolution learned from Martí was to believe in and act on behalf of an organization

founded for the purposes of bringing about a revolution. We were always bound by previous forms of power and, following the institutionalization of this organization, we were elected by more than 90 percent of voters, as has become customary in Cuba, a process which does not in the least re-



I am not questioning Obama's great intelligence, his debate skills or his work ethic. He is a talented orator and is ahead of his rivals in the electoral race. I feel sympathy for his wife and little girls, who accompany him and give him encouragement every Tuesday. It is indeed a touching human spectacle. Nevertheless, I am obliged to raise a number of delicate questions. I do not expect answers; I wish only to raise them for the record.

Is it right for the president of the United States to order the assassination of any one person in the world, whatever the pretext may be?

Is it ethical for the president of the United States to order the torture of other human beings?

Should state terrorism be used by a country as powerful as the United States as an instrument to bring about peace on the planet?

Is an Adjustment Act, applied as punishment on only one country, Cuba, in order to destabilize it, good and honorable, even when it costs innocent children and mothers their lives? If it is good, why is this right not

automatically granted to Haitians, Dominicans, and other peoples of the Caribbean, and why isn't the same Act applied to Mexicans and people from Central and South America, who die like



continued on page 20

continued from page 19

flies against the Mexican border wall or in the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific?

Can the United States do without immigrants, who grow vegetables, fruits, almonds and other delicacies for U.S. citizens? Who would sweep their streets, work as servants in their homes or do the worst and lowest-paid jobs?

Are crackdowns on illegal residents fair, even as they affect children born in the United States?

Are the brain-drain and the continuous theft of the best scientific and intellectual minds in poor countries moral and justifiable?

You state, as I pointed out at the beginning of this reflection, that your country had long ago warned European powers that it would not tolerate any intervention in the hemisphere, reiterating that this right be respected while demanding the right to intervene anywhere in the world with the aid of hundreds of military bases and naval, aerial and spatial forces distributed across the planet. I ask: is that the way in which the United States expresses its respect for freedom, democracy and human rights?

Is it fair to stage pre-emptive attacks on

sixty or more dark corners of the world, as Bush calls them, whatever the pretext may be?

Is it honorable and sound to invest millions and millions of dollars in the military industrial complex, to produce weapons that can destroy life on earth several times over?

Before judging our country, you should know that Cuba, with

economic and financial blockade and the aggression of your powerful country, is proof that much can be done with very little. Not even our closest ally, the Soviet Union, was able to achieve what we have.

The only form of cooperation the United States can offer other nations consist in the sending of military professionals to those countries. It cannot offer

tors). They are not to blame for this, for society does not inculcate such values in them on a massive scale.

We have never subordinated cooperation with other countries to ideological requirements. We offered the United States our help when hurricane Katrina lashed the city of New Orleans. Our internationalist medical brigade bears the glorious name of Henry Reeve, a young man, born in the United States, who fought and died for Cuba's sovereignty in our first war of independence.

Our revolution can mobilize tens of thousands of doctors and health technicians.

It can mobilize an equally vast number of teachers and citizens, who are willing to travel to any corner of the world to fulfill any noble purpose, not to usurp people's rights or take possession of raw materials.

The good will and determination of people constitute limitless resources that cannot be kept and would not fit in a bank's vault. They cannot spring from the hypocritical politics of an empire.

Fidel Castro Ruz  
May 25, 2008  
10:35 p.m.



its education, health, sports, culture and sciences programs, implemented not only in its own territory but also in other poor countries around the world, and the blood that has been shed in acts of solidarity towards other peoples, in spite of the eco-

anything else, for it lacks a sufficient number of people willing to sacrifice themselves for others and offer substantial aid to a country in need (though Cuba has known and relied on the cooperation of excellent U.S. doc-

continuado de la página 18  
menos remunerados trabajos?

6° ¿Son justas las redadas de indocumentados que afectan incluso a niños nacidos en Estados Unidos?

7° ¿Es moral y justificable el robo de cerebros y la continua extracción de las mejores inteligencias científicas e intelectuales de los países pobres?

8° Usted afirma, como recordé al inicio de esta reflexión, que su país advirtió hace tiempo a las potencias europeas que no admitiría intervenciones en el hemisferio, y a la vez reitera la demanda de ese derecho, reclamando al mismo tiempo el de intervenir en cualquier parte del mundo con el apoyo de cientos de bases militares, fuerzas navales, aéreas y espaciales distribuidas en el planeta. Le pregunto, ¿es esa la forma en que Estados Unidos expresa su respeto por la libertad, la democracia y los derechos humanos?

9° ¿Es justo atacar sorpresiva y preventivamente sesenta o más oscuros rincones del mundo, como los llama Bush, sea cual fuere el pretexto?

10° ¿Es honorable y cuerdo invertir millones de millones de dólares en el complejo militar industrial para producir armas que pueden liquidar varias veces la vida en la Tierra?

Usted debiera conocer, antes de juzgar a nuestro país, que Cuba, con sus programas de educación, salud, deportes, cultura y ciencias, aplicados no sólo en su propio territorio sino también en otros países pobres del mundo, y la sangre derramada en solidaridad con otros pueblos, a pesar del bloqueo económico y financiero y las agresiones de su poderoso país, constituye una prueba de que puede hacerse mucho con muy poco. Ni a nuestra mejor aliada, la URSS, le fue permitido trazar nuestro destino.



Para cooperar con otros países, Estados Unidos sólo puede enviar profesionales vinculados a la disciplina militar. No puede hacerlo de otra forma, porque carece de personal en número suficiente dispuesto a sacrificarse por otros y ofrecer apoyo significativo a un país con dificultades, aunque en Cuba hemos conocido y han cooperado con nosotros excelentes médicos norteamericanos. Ellos no tienen la culpa porque la sociedad no los educa masivamente en ese espíritu.

La cooperación de nuestro país nunca la hemos subordinado a requisitos ideológicos. Se la ofrecimos a Estados Unidos cuando el Katrina golpeó duramente la ciudad de Nueva Orleans. Nuestra brigada médica internacionalista lleva el nombre glorioso de Henry Reeve, un joven nacido en ese país que luchó y murió por la soberanía de Cuba en la primera guerra por nuestra independencia.

Nuestra Revolución puede convocar a decenas de miles de médicos y técnicos de la salud. Puede convocar de forma igualmente masiva a maestros y ciudadanos dispuestos a marchar a cualquier rincón del mundo, para cualquier noble propósito. No para usurpar derechos ni conquistar materias primas.

En la buena voluntad y disposición de las personas hay infinitos recursos que no se guardan ni caben en las bóvedas de un banco. No emanan de la política cínica de un imperio.

Fidel Castro Ruz  
Mayo 25 de 2008  
10 y 35 p.m.

By Manuel Yepe\*

A CubaNews translation  
Edited by Walter Lippmann  
www.walterlippmann.com

“Although a recession in the developed world is now more or less inevitable, China, India and some of the oil-producing countries are in a very strong countertrend. So, the current financial crisis is less likely to cause a global recession than a radical realignment of the global economy, with a relative decline of the US and the rise of China and other countries in the developing world”.

Soros predicts an economic realignment with a relative decline of the United States.

The above came from “The Worst Market Crisis in 60 Years”, an article by George Soros—the rich American financial speculator of Hungarian origin and president of Soros Management Foundation—published in the London daily Financial Times last January 22.

“The current financial crisis was precipitated



by a bubble in the US housing market. In some ways it resembles other crises that have occurred since the end of World War II at intervals ranging from 4 to 10 years. However, there is a profound difference: the current crisis marks the end of an era of credit expansion based on the dollar as the international reserve currency. The periodic crises were part of a larger boom-bust process. The current crisis is the culmination of a super-boom that has lasted for more than 60 years.

It's not the market what brings balance to these crises, but the official interventions. Until one day...

Every time the credit expansion ran into trouble the financial authorities intervened, injecting liquidity and finding other ways to stimulate the economy. That created a system of asymmetric incentives also known as moral hazard, which encouraged ever greater credit expansion. The system was so successful that people came to believe in what former US president Ronald Reagan called the magic of the marketplace and I call market fundamentalism. Fundamentalists believe that markets tend towards equilibrium and the common interest is best served by allowing participants to pursue their self-interest. It is an obvious misconception, because it was the intervention of the authorities that prevented financial markets from breaking down, not the markets themselves. Nevertheless, market fundamentalism emerged as the dominant ideology in the 1980s, when financial markets started to become globalized and the US started to run a current account deficit.

The financial markets encouraged consumers to borrow by introducing ever more sophisticated instruments and more generous terms. The authorities aided and abetted the process by intervening whenever the global financial system was at risk, but official regulations have been progressively relaxed until they have practically disappeared.

The super-boom, Soros says, got out of hand when the new products became so complicated that the authorities could no longer calculate the risks and started re-

# GLOBAL ECONOMY: RECESSION OR REALIGNMENT

lying on the risk management methods of the banks themselves.

The central banks had to inject an unprecedented amount of money and new credit instruments and practices have been applied which are unsound and unsustainable. And so on and so forth in many other links of the system until the final blow came, he adds.

Used to butting in every time there's a crisis in the offing, the US Federal Reserve will have no choice but to announce new cuts in the interest rates to try and keep the US from going into recession, but the major market analysts take it for granted that there will be a crisis that can only be mitigated as long as China and India maintain their levels of demand to avoid an abrupt production slowdown and prevent recession from spreading.

Meanwhile, the World Economic Forum, a yearly meeting place for the world's wealthiest and mightiest, held in Davos, Switzerland last January 21 to 26, had also pinned all its hopes on a solution to shun disaster in those two huge nations and other developing economies.

Consumed by the fear of a recession or at least a serious US economic slowdown likely to pull the world economy down with it, the Forum this year stumbled upon a paradox: where China's and India's huge growth rates were seen until very recently as a threat to Western economy, there's widespread concern now about the danger that a worldwide recession puts a brake on them.

Attending the Forum was Wang Juanzhou, president of China's mobile communication equipment manufacturing enterprise, who forecast that his country would be hit by the

world recession, “but not so hard” given the expected increase in consumer spending, one of the three key elements—together with exports and capital investment—of China's spectacular growth.

Another singular paradox generated by the winds of economic recession was manifest in the piece of advice that Dominique Strauss Kahn, the brand-new leader of the International Monetary Fund, gave the countries “with problems”: make your tax policies more flexible to overcome trouble.

After imposing for the last half century the tax surplus concept as the sine qua non, now the IMF recommends developed countries to fuel their economy by breaking their tax balance with no regard for monetary policies.

No less contradictory is to have the US's foreign debt financed by Japan, China, Saudi Arabia and other nations not only as its great creditors but also as depositors of their huge financial reserves in Wall Street banks, thus becoming hostages to the US dollar.

In Davos, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said: “The U.S. economy is resilient, its structure is sound, and its long-term economic fundamentals are healthy. The United States continues to welcome foreign investment and free trade. And the economy, our economy, will remain a leading engine of global economic growth”.

What future of the world economy do you bet on: recession, realignment or continuity of the unjust globalized disorder?

\* Manuel E. Yepe Menéndez is a professor at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana, Cuba.

## ECONOMÍA GLOBAL: RECESIÓN O REALINEACIÓN

Por Manuel Yepe\*

“Aunque una recesión en el mundo desarrollado es ahora más o menos inevitable, China, India y ciertos países productores de petróleo se encuentran en posición de contrarrestar los efectos del fenómeno. De ahí que es menos probable que la actual crisis financiera sea causa de una recesión económica global y es probable que a lo que conduzca sea a una realineación global de la economía, con la declinación relativa de Estados Unidos y un alza de China y otros países del mundo en vías de desarrollo”.

Soros pronostica una realineación económica con un declive relativo de Estados Unidos.

Lo anterior es el criterio del acaudalado especulador financiero húngaro-norteamericano y presidente de la Fundación Soros Management, George Soros, en un artículo aparecido en el diario londinense Financial Times el 22 de enero del 2008, con el título “La peor crisis del mercado en 60 años” (“The Worst Market Crisis in 60 Years”).

Para Soros, la actual crisis financiera ha sido precipitada por la llamada burbuja inmobiliaria estadounidense. De cierta manera, recuerda las otras crisis que han ocurrido a intervalos que han sido de entre cuatro y diez años desde el fin de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, pero existen profundas diferencias.

Las crisis periódicas forman parte de un proceso mayor de expansión crediticia con el dólar estadounidense como divisa internacional de reserva que duró 60 años y ha llegado a su fin.

Los mercados no traen los equilibrios en estas crisis, sino las intervenciones oficiales, hasta un día...

Cada vez que la expansión del crédito se veía

en problemas, las autoridades financieras intervenían inyectando liquidez o de otra forma estimulando la economía. Esto propició el surgimiento de un sistema asimétrico de incentivos, al tiempo que promovía una aún mayor expansión del crédito.

Las apariencias eran tales que la gente llegó a creer en lo que el presidente Ronald Reagan llamaba la “magia del mercado” y que Soros identifica como el “fundamentalismo de mercado”. Los fundamentalistas aprecian que el mercado aporta una tendencia al equilibrio y por tal motivo sirve al interés común el hecho de que los participantes actúen en función del interés particular de cada uno.

Obviamente, se pasaba por alto que no era el mercado el que aportaba el “equilibrio” sino la intervención de las autoridades financieras para evitar los derrumbes.

No obstante, el fundamentalismo de mercado emergió como la ideología dominante y se globalizó de manera que a Estados Unidos le fue dable succionar los ahorros del resto del mundo, consumir más de lo que produce y cargar con su actual déficit de cuenta corriente.

Los mercados financieros estimulaban a los consumidores a endeudarse mediante instrumentos cada vez más sofisticados y términos más generosos.

Las autoridades apoyaban y respaldaban el proceso interviniendo cuando el sistema financiero global estaba en riesgo, pero las regulaciones oficiales eran cada vez menores hasta que llegaron prácticamente a desaparecer.

La expansión del crédito —dice Soros— fue tan formidable que escapó de las manos de las

autoridades financieras que se vieron incapacitadas para calcular los riesgos y empezaron a dejar el asunto a cargo de los propios bancos.

Los bancos centrales se vieron obligados a inyectar cantidades de dinero sin precedentes y surgieron nuevos instrumentos de crédito y prácticas que han resultado inseguras e insostenibles.

Según Soros, lo mismo ocurrió en muchos otros eslabones del sistema crediticio hasta que fue el sistema financiero en su conjunto lo que estalló.

A la Reserva Federal de Estados Unidos, cuya intervención ante las amenazas de crisis ha devenido habitual, no le queda más camino que anunciar nuevas bajas de la tasa de interés para tratar de evitar que Estados Unidos entre en recesión, pero los principales analistas de mercado ya dan por descontada la crisis y ven como única solución, para atenuarla, impedir una brusca desaceleración en el ámbito mundial sobre la base de que China e India mantengan su nivel de demanda para evitar que disminuya abruptamente la actividad productiva y la recesión se generalice.

Entretanto, el Foro Económico Mundial que cada año reúne a las personalidades más ricas y poderosas del mundo, que sesionó en Davos, en los Alpes suizos, de enero 21 al 26 del 2008, depositó igualmente sus esperanzas de atenuar el desastre en esas dos enormes naciones y en otros mercados de países en desarrollo.

En ese encuentro, dominado por el temor a una recesión, o al menos a una seria desaceleración de la economía estadounidense que arrastre consigo a la economía mundial, se dio la paradoja de que allí donde los altos crecimientos de China e India eran vistos hasta muy recientemente como una amenaza para las economías occidentales, hoy se manifiestan las más serias preocupaciones por el peligro de que ellas se frenen a resultas

de una recesión mundial.

El presidente de la empresa productora de equipos móviles de comunicaciones de China, Wang Jianzhou, participante en el evento de Davos, pronosticó que la economía de su país sería afectada por una recesión mundial, “pero no mucho”, gracias a la expansión del consumo interno prevista, que integra junto a las exportaciones y las inversiones de capital los tres elementos clave del espectacular crecimiento chino.

Otra singular paradoja generada por los peligros de la recesión de la economía global se manifestó en la recomendación de la nueva titular del Fondo Monetario Internacional, Dominique Strauss Kahn, a los países “con problemas”, de que flexibilicen sus políticas fiscales para salir adelante.

Una institución que desde hace medio siglo viene imponiendo el criterio del superávit fiscal como un principio sine-qua-non, recomienda a los países desarrollados que estimulen su economía violando el equilibrio fiscal al margen de la política monetaria.

También contradictorio es que el endeudamiento externo de Estados Unidos sea financiado por Japón, China, Arabia Saudita, y otros países, no solo como sus grandes acreedores sino también como depositantes de sus enormes reservas monetarias en bancos de Wall Street, algo que les hace rehenes del dólar estadounidense.

En Davos, Condoleezza Rice, la canciller norteamericana, dijo que “la economía de Estados Unidos es resistente, su estructura es sólida, sus fundamentos económicos a largo plazo están sanos y que seguirá siendo motor del crecimiento económico mundial”.

¿A qué futuro de la economía mundial apuesta usted: recesión, realineación o continuidad del injusto desorden globalizado?

\*Manuel E. Yepe Menéndez es profesor en el Instituto Superior de Relaciones Internacionales.

# Vancouver Protests Continue: "The 5 Are Heroes, US Government: Let Them Free!"



By Noah Fine

## MARCH 25<sup>TH</sup>

As the U.S. Government moves in an attempt to close the case of the 5 Cuban Heroes in their favour, protest and cries for justice ring louder than ever as the Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver organizes its 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> monthly picket line in front of the U.S. Consulate.

On Tuesday March 25th, energetic chants of "Free the Cuban 5 now!" rang throughout the streets of Downtown Vancouver as over 25 people gathered outside the U.S. consulate.

David Whittlesey, a participant in the U.S. civil rights movement and long time social justice activist opened the protest with an update on the case of anti-Cuban terrorist Luis Posada Carriles known for his admitted terrorism against Cuba who currently walks free in Miami while the Cuban 5 remain in prison.

After David spoke, the picketers hit the

pavement and chanted and marched in a long picket line stretching in front of the consulate as people stopped to pick up information on the case.

The next speaker was shelanyk, a coordinator of the Alison Bodine Defence Committee (ABDC). Kira pas-

Kira Kotor of the Commissionately related the case



of the Cuban 5 to the Case of Alison Bodine, a young Cuba solidarity activist and Pastors for Peace Caravanista who was politically targeted by the Canada Border Services Agency for her social justice work and now faces a two year ban from Canada.

After several more rounds of pickets and chants with Cuban flags waving in the wind, the last speaker to take the megaphone at this picket was Noah Fine, coordinator of the Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver. Noah spoke about the wives and family members of the Cuban 5 who have continuously been denied visas by the U.S government to visit their loved ones in prison.

conducted against the island and the first major defeat for the U.S in Latin America.

## APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup>

On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, cries of "U.S. Hands Off Cuba!" and "Let the 5 Free!" welcomed supporters to the U.S. Consulate for the 28<sup>th</sup> time in 28 months.

Max Tennant from Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) opened the picket beautifully and moved the crowd by reading some of the poetry written by the 5 while in prison.

Inspired by the poetry, protesters took to the sidewalk, picket signs and banners in hand, with loud and incredible chants of "We Fight We Fight for Liberty! The Cuban 5ive will be Free!"

Next up was Tamara Hansen, the coordinator of VCSC. Tamara spoke about the U.S. attempt to militarily invade Cuba through the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. She outlined that this military invasion was one of the first major terrorist attacks

conducted against the island and the first major defeat for the U.S in Latin America.

Picket MC Sarah Alwell, Coordinator of the Social Justice Committee of the Capilano Students' Union, closed the protest by outlining the importance of the Cuban 5 and what they represent for the movement for Social Justice. She also reiterated the necessity for people to come to the streets to demand justice and that "as long as the Cuban 5 are imprisoned we will come to the streets every month until the very day that they are free and reunited with their loved ones!"

The picket ended with people energized and ready to continue the fight for justice!



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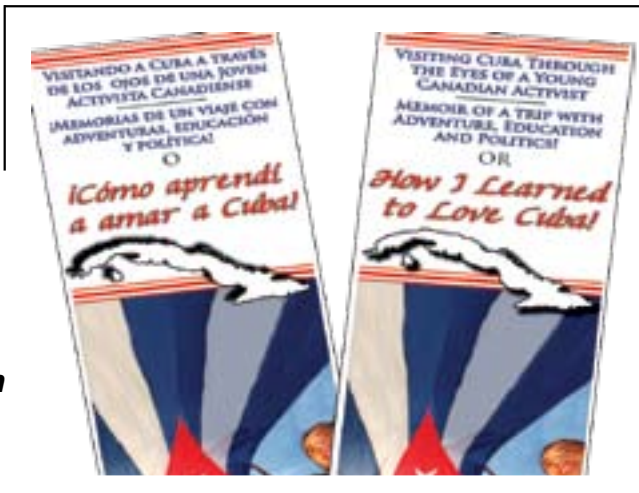
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## Who is VCSC?

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](mailto:cubacommunities@yahoo.ca)

778-882-5223

[vancubasolidarity.com](http://vancubasolidarity.com)

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

Además apoyamos 3 campañas de peticiones:

-1- Contra el Bloqueo de los EE.UU. contra Cuba

-2- Por Libertad de los Cinco Cubanos Encarcelados en los EE.UU.

-3- Por la Extradición del Terrorista Anticubano Luis Posada Carriles

A través de las campañas de peticiones en toda la lower mainland, en eventos, festivales, secundarias, y universidades, podemos

## ¿Quiénes son VCSC?

conversar con miles de personas sobre Cuba. El objetivo de este trabajo es llevar a Cuba, un país haciendo importantes avances sociales, a jóvenes, estudiantes, mujeres, personas de América Latina, personas del tercer mundo y a otras personas trabajadoras y oprimidas en Canadá, como un ejemplo de la construcción de un mundo mejor.

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

Para conseguir mas información contacta:

[cubacommunities@yahoo.ca](mailto:cubacommunities@yahoo.ca)

778-882-5223

[www.vancubasolidarity.com](http://www.vancubasolidarity.com)



## 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.freethefive.org](http://www.freethefive.org) or

[www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca](http://www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca)

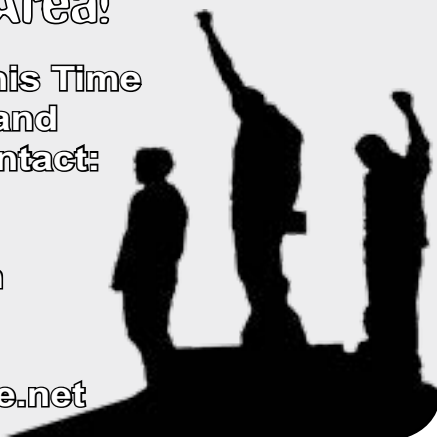
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## EVENTS AND ACTIONS



### VANCOUVER

Thursday June 12

Alison Bodine Judicial Review Hearing and Defence Rally 8:45AM  
Federal Court of Canada Building,  
Vancouver Pacific Center  
3rd Floor, 701 W Georgia St  
Judicial Review Hearing (open to the public) @ 9:30am  
Org'd by: Alison Bodine Defence Committee  
Info: [defendalisonbodine@hotmail.com](mailto:defendalisonbodine@hotmail.com)

Friday/Saturday June 13-14

CHE GUEVARA Thinker and Fighter!  
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Co-Org'd by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba & Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver

Thursday, June 19

Picket Action: Canada/NATO Out of Afghanistan!  
4PM  
Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment Center  
1070 W Georgia St  
Org'd by: Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)

Thursday, June 26

Political Tribute Centennial Birthday Celebration of Salvador Allende  
7PM  
Chilean Housing Co-op (3390 School Ave)  
Comité Centario Salvador Allende  
Info: 604-724-7369

Saturday, June 28

Antiwar Rally: US Hands off Iran! Canada/NATO Out of Afghanistan! US/UK Out of Iraq!  
2PM  
Vancouver Art Gallery

Robson & Hornby, Downtown Vancouver  
Co-Org'd by: Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) & Iranian Community Against War (ICAW)

Monday June 30

Public Forum: US Hands Off Iran! Don't Attack Iran!  
6:30PM

Burnaby Public Library - Metrotown Branch  
6100 Willingdon Ave  
Org'd: Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) & Iranian Community Against War (ICAW)

Friday July 4

Monthly Cuba-Cultural Film Night  
7PM  
Film Screening: "Septembers and More"  
Mount Pleasant Neighborhood House  
800 East Broadway  
Org'd by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba

Saturday, July 12

Family Celebration Centennial Birthday Celebration of Salvador Allende  
7PM  
Chilean Housing Co-op (3390 School Ave)  
Comité Centario Salvador Allende

### CALGARY

Friday June 6

Emergency Rally for the Cuban Five!  
5PM  
American Consulate Building  
615 Macleod Trl SE (across from the library)  
Info: [www.freethefive.org](http://www.freethefive.org)

### TORONTO

Saturday June 21

Urgent Rally for the Cuban Five - Protest the latest Court Decision!  
1pm  
360 University Avenue (U.S. Consulate in Toronto)  
Org'd by: Toronto Forum on Cuba  
Info: [www.torontoforumoncuba.tyo.ca](http://www.torontoforumoncuba.tyo.ca)

Wednesday June 11

The New Bolivia: Democracy Under Attack  
7PM  
OISE, Room 2212 252 Bloor St. W.  
Org'd by: Toronto Bolivia Solidarity  
Info: [torontoboliviasolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:torontoboliviasolidarity@gmail.com)

### OSHAWA

Thursday June 12

Solidarity March with GM Workers  
12 NOON  
Org'd by the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW)  
info: [www.caw.ca](http://www.caw.ca)

### HALIFAX

Tuesday June 10

Free Film Screenings: "Stealing A Nation" and "Breaking Ranks"  
7PM  
Dalhousie University - SUB  
Rm 303, 6136 University Avenue  
Org'd by: Halifax Peace Coalition  
Info: [hfxpeace@chebucto.ca](mailto:hfxpeace@chebucto.ca)

Tuesday June 17

Free Film Screenings: "Aristide & the Endless Revolution" and "Iraq for Sale"  
7PM  
Dalhousie University - SUB  
Rm 303, 6136 University Avenue  
Org'd by: Halifax Peace Coalition

### MONTREAL

Saturday June 14

Painting RAMON Bus for Friendship Caravan to Cuba  
5PM  
Café Rico  
969 rue Rachel  
Org' par: Comité Fabio Di Celmo pour les 5  
Info: <http://www.solidaritequebeccuba.qc.ca>

Thursday July 3

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Parc de L'Amérique Française  
Org' par: La coalition Guerre à la Guerre  
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