

FIRE THIS TIME



The Newspaper of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice

Issue 12 - April 2004 Issue

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FREE

THE WAR IS NOT OVER BRING ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!



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Occupied Iraq After One Year: The 'Reconstruction' of Imperialist Plundering

By Mike Krebs

"We have no books, no stationary, nothing... when I asked the contractor why they didn't finish the job, they said: we don't work for you, we work for the Americans." – Ahmad Abdu-satar, an Iraqi schoolteacher, describes the conditions of the 'rebuilt' school where he works, from 'Occupation. Inc' by Herb Docena and Pratap Chatterjee, February 17th 2004.

As the crisis for the US-led occupation of Iraq deepens, every lie presented by the US and its allies for justifying the war and occupation falls apart in the eyes of the people around the world, exposing the true nature and agenda of these imperialist powers. From the still not found 'weapons of mass destruction' to the excuse of 'bringing democracy', the rhetoric used by the US ruling class and its allies to justify the occupation of Iraq is being blown apart by the reality on the ground in Iraq.

This applies to the myth still being promoted that the US and its imperialist partners are engaged in 'reconstructing' Iraq's infrastructure, economy, and government. What the imperialists occupying Iraq are trying to accomplish is nothing more than the reconstruction of imperialist plundering in Iraq, and they are trying to reconfigure every institution of Iraq from top to bottom with this agenda in mind. However, the US-led imperialist coalition is failing even at rebuilding an Iraq suitable for capitalist plundering.

'Rebuilding' Iraq's infrastructure

The reconstruction of imperialism in Iraq is being administered by the US through the Coalition Provisional Authority. This involves granting lucrative contracts for 'reconstruction' of infrastructure to private corporations, most of which are American multinationals, such as Bechtel and Halliburton.

The biggest hypocrisy here is that the US-led occupation force is claiming to rebuild the very same infrastructure that it has been responsible for destroying for over a decade. Aside from pulverizing Iraqi infrastructure with bombs, first in the 1991 Gulf war and again in the most recent war, Iraqi schools, hospitals, industries, power plants, oil refineries, and other institutions were all denied access to even the most basic supplies and spare parts during the UN sanctions against the people of Iraq. These sanctions were implemented and enforced by the same imperialist powers who now claim to be 'fixing' Iraq. How could such savage powers, responsible for at least a million dead Iraqis as a result of the destruction they brought down on Iraq for over a decade, now claim to be capable of 'rebuilding' the country they have destroyed?

Bechtel, an American corporation, was awarded a contract worth over a billion dollars US for repairing Iraqi infrastructure, including school, sewage, and water systems, but so far has built little more than its own profits in this process. According to a report from January 28th 2003 compiled by Anthony Cordesman, researcher for the US right-wing think tank the *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, the Bechtel corporation has repaired only 2,241 out of 11,939 damaged schools in Iraq as of January 2004. Cordesman also notes that schools in Iraq are still deteriorating faster than they are being 'rebuilt.'

On top of this, a closer look at the schools supposedly 'rebuilt' by Bechtel reveals the appalling conditions that this corporation is leaving these schools in. A recent internal study on the renovated Iraqi schools by US Army personnel, which was leaked to the



Iraqis protest over fuel and power shortages.

American press, shows the mess that Bechtel has created for Iraqi schoolchildren and teachers: "Major clean-up work required. Bathrooms in poor condition...in almost every case, the paint jobs were done in a hurry, causing more damage to the appearance of the school than in terms of actually providing a finish that will protect the structure. In one case the paint job actually damaged critical lab equipment, making it unusable." Other problems at these 'rebuilt' schools include leaking roofs, frequent power shortages, and bathrooms flooded with unflushed sewage due to no proper drainage installations.

Bechtel has shown the same inability and unwillingness to rebuild other infrastructure in a way that will improve the lives of people in Iraq. Electrical power remains a critical problem throughout Iraq, as does access to clean water and functioning sewage systems. According to the Cordesman report, the 220 water treatment plants in Iraq are currently operating at 65% of prewar levels, and water supply for agriculture only meets two-thirds of the demand.

The rebuilding of Iraqi oil infrastructure is facing similar problems. This rebuilding of Iraqi oil production is being carried out by Halliburton, a US-based company that currently holds the largest amount of business in Iraq, but due to constant pipeline and facility damage carried out by the Iraqi resistance, oil production in Iraq is still a disaster. On top of the resistance, the problem of electrical power shortages, coupled with a Halliburton scandal involving overcharging on imported gas, has created a fuel shortage problem where basic essential demand for refined gas is not met. Iraqis wishing to get gas for their cars often wait in lineups all day, and sometimes the gas never comes at all.

With the appalling conditions being brought down on the daily lives of the Iraqi people by the brutal US-led occupation in the name of 'reconstruction', is it any wonder why the anti-occupation resistance continues to grow? Clearly there is more to the resistance than 'anti-Americanism', it has to do with the havoc being brought down on the people of Iraq by their foreign occupiers, who are deepening the poverty and despair in Iraq while driving themselves into a deeper economic, political, and military crisis.

Private Armies Guarding The Reconstruction Process

"Yes, it a profit motive that brings companies into a dangerous location, but that is what capitalism is all about." – Army Corp of Engineers spokesperson Dowling, responding to allegations that Halliburton

is overcharging the US military for meal service.

The unpopularity of the 'reconstruction' being carried out by companies like Bechtel is reflected in the high level of security that these companies require to carry out their business of swindling the people of Iraq. Aside from the cover provided by the over 160,000 troops occupying Iraq, Bechtel also has its own private security force, which is being provided through a contract granted to a British company called Global Risk. The Bechtel office complex in Iraq itself is a militarized zone, complete with guards, barbed wire, sandbags, and roadblocks.

Would Bechtel really need this much protection if it was actually providing benefits for the people of Iraq? Clearly not, and attacks on the company by the Iraqi resistance have sent a strong message to Bechtel that it is unwelcome in Iraq. In the summer of 2003, a Bechtel convoy of engineers, executives, and guards was attacked by a crowd that hurled giant chunks of ripped-up concrete at the business executives in the SUV they were traveling in, shattering most of the windows.

Iraqi Resistance Blocks Privatization Agenda

"War makes privatization easy: First you destroy the society, and then you let the corporations rebuild it." Hacen Djemam, general secretary, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions.

The resistance of the Iraqi people against the US-led occupation has also posed a direct challenge to the imperialist agenda of privatizing Iraqi state-owned industries. Originally the privatization of much of Iraq's 600 state-owned enterprises was at the forefront of the imperialist agenda of pillaging Iraq. However, according to a statement from December 28th of 2003 by Paul Bremer, the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, "It's just disappeared from the agenda...it was just too risky."

The risk has mostly to do

with the fact that privatization would mean cutting tens of thousands of jobs at a time where unemployment in Iraq is already at least 60%. As Dather Al-Kashab, manager of the state-owned Al Daura oil refinery, explained recently to a delegation of American trade unionists in Iraq, "If I put on the hat of privatization, I'll have to fire 1500 of the refiners 3000 workers...if I dismiss employees now, I'm killing them and their families." Of course, before these workers die off, they will likely join the regular demonstrations of unemployed Iraqi workers calling for an end to the occupation.

The US-led agenda of privatizing state-run enterprises is also facing strong resistance from Iraqis who are employed by them. Struggling against low wages, poor working conditions, and the threat of privatization, Iraqi workers have been quick to assert what little space they have under occupation to organize themselves into unions. Under the former government in Iraq, the right of workers in state-owned enterprises to organize unions was taken away in 1987, and to date the Coalition Provisional Authority is still upholding this anti-worker legislation. This has not prevented the Iraqis from organizing unions regardless of the law: there are already two new major labour federations in Iraq, The Workers Democratic Trade Union Federation and the Worker's Unions and Councils.

The rapid pace at which the organized labour movement in Iraq has developed flies directly in the face of the colonialist myth put forward by the imperialist occupiers that Iraqis are 'incapable' of governing themselves or looking out for their own interests. Despite routine harassment at the hands of the occupation forces, including the arresting of union leaders and the shutting raiding of the Federation's office on December 6th 2003, Iraqis continue to organize themselves as workers, employed and unemployed, demanding both immediate gains like wage increases and better workplace conditions, but also recognizing that these things are

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Imperialists Expand War and Occupation to Latin America

By Shannon Bundock

President Jean Bertrand Aristide stepped down as President and left Haiti early in the morning on Sunday, February 29th, 2004, under threat of a coup from former death squad leaders. Shortly thereafter, the US announced that it was sending in marines to help 'stabilize' the country and make way for a UN 'peacekeeping' force. Soon after, the UN Security Council unanimously decided to send multi-national forces.

Imperialist View of Haiti

The character of US intervention this time around has changed somewhat, but still bears striking similarities to its historic, colonial character. For example, the words of Roosevelt in 1928, speaking on the 1915-1934 US occupation of Haiti could easily be transferred to the present day:

'In Haiti a worse situation faced us. That Republic was in chronic trouble, and it as it is close to Cuba the bad influence was felt across the water. Presidents were murdered, governments fled, several times a year. We landed our marines and sailors only when the unfortunate Chief Magistrate of the moment was dragged out of the French Legation, cut into six pieces and thrown to the mob. Here again we cleaned house, restored order, built public works and put governmental operation on a sound and honest basis. We are still there. It is true, however, that in Santo Domingo and especially in Haiti we seem to have paid too little attention to making the citizens of these states more capable of reassuming the control of their own governments. But we have done a fine piece of material work, and the world ought to thank us.'

This racist attitude that the people need to be 'civilized,' and this patronizing approach, have changed little in the past 80 years. What has changed, though, is the level of sophistication of imperialism and, of course, the emerging strategy of long-term direct military occupation of oppressed nations. Speaking to present-day occupation of Haiti, Colin Powell said in 2004, 'We were not prepared to do that [to go in before Aristide resigned] and find ourselves trapped once again for an indefinite period, supporting an individual who may have been elected democratically but was not governing effectively or democratically.' (Emphasis added)

In the past recent years the US has maintained its active 'relationship' with Haiti, which has mainly meant this continued influence over the political governing of the country, to ensure it is friendly to US interests and to ensure control is maintained over radical/anti-imperialist sentiment. This sentiment is a major concern for the US throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Along with the populations of nearly every country in the region, the people of Haiti are a growing threat for imperialists, despite the complexity of their situation and the lack of a revolutionary leadership.

In this situation, where the Aristide government was failing to do the job for imperialists, the most suitable outcome for the US was to have Aristide leave before things got worse and a more powerful force gained control. By adding to the pressure on Aristide, the US ensured that they would be sending in 'peacekeepers' to occupy, rather than an invasion force that would have to pacify paramilitaries. Currently, what is most important for the US, Canada and France is to establish and stabilize the occupation in Haiti.

Speaking directly to this, on March 3rd Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin, said, 'What you've got to do is get a political agreement between the parties that will allow us to not just send troops to maintain peace, but to establish a good justice system, to set up a good police force, and I have said that Canada will be very, very much there when that happens.' He continues, 'We did that the last time, and we pulled out too soon. My view is we're going to have to go back in, set up a justice system, put in the police forces, train their police forces and stay until in fact we are sure that stability is there.'

The question that is opened up by this is: Why is the stabilization of occupation in Haiti so important to imperialism? This can only be answered by understanding that the significance of Haiti, which has led to the recent military intervention, is not an isolated significance. In fact, the role of the US, French and Canadian intervention in Haiti is very much connected not only to political developments in Latin America and the Caribbean, but to the political relationship between imperialist nations and oppressed nations globally.



US Soldiers in Haiti, March 18th 2004.

Why Haiti Matters to Imperialists

President Aristide has a history of bending to the imperialist agenda, including the implementation of economic measures which were against the interests of the Haitian people, such as the austerity measures of the November 2000 agreement with the IMF (International Monetary Fund). Despite this, however, Aristide did play a significant role in the overthrow of the incredibly repressive puppet regime of the Duvalier family, who had been ruling and plundering the country since 1957. As a result he



had a level of real support from working and poor people in Haiti, which played a role in his rise to presidency.

What is also clear for Aristide, however, is that a major aspect of the crisis we are seeing now is a result of the fact that he missed the opportunity to effectively mobilize people in Haiti against the crippling effects of imperialist political and economic intervention. Ultimately, what we are witnessing now reflects the failure of his strategy, which was to balance allowing imperialist influence with maintaining popular support.

What truly led to the 'unrest' in Haiti was a combination of incredibly harsh economic conditions and a lack of revolutionary leadership. In these conditions, the people of Haiti began to respond to the economic crisis they were facing (incredible poverty, unemployment, etc.) and they began to mobilize. The

invasion of Haiti cannot be seen as an isolated attempt to deal with a 'problematic nation.' Rather, in order to really analyse this we need to understand it in the context of the overall agenda and plans of the US, of France and of Canada. The context of the invasion of Haiti must take into account the agenda of imperialist foreign policy, beginning immediately after September 11th, which was direct military invasion, occupation, destruction and plundering of oppressed nations. When the 'era of war and occupation' was opened after 9/11, we saw the invasion of Afghanistan, which served as a testing ground for the opening of a major direct military occupation of other 'problem' countries in the Middle East.

This strategy of imperialism was a response to the capitalist economic crisis that is facing imperialist nations globally. The crises of mass layoffs, increasing unemployment and over-production, for example, are all forcing imperialist nations to respond by re-dividing the world's resources and markets. The result is a rivalry and competition for the influence, domination and ultimately occupation of oppressed and weak nations. In this context it was obvious that war and occupation would not end with Afghanistan, and to no surprise there was an immediate move against more targets. Thusly, March 2003 brought with it the invasion, war and occupation of Iraq, and March 2004 brought with it the invasion of Haiti.

The weak rationalization of the imposition of 'democratic governments' is not just the rationalization for the occupations of Iraq and Haiti. The truly 'global' character of the strategy of military intervention is partially exposed in statements made by US officials in regards to Colombia and Venezuela. For example, the US has been in a major campaign against Venezuela on the pretext that the government of President Chávez is 'undemocratic.' As well, the US has recently been stepping up pressure and aggression on Cuba for 'meddling with the internal affairs of other nations.' That Haiti is a launching ground

for further expansion into the Caribbean and Latin America, must be seen in the context of these moves threatening Colombia, the moves that are threatening Venezuela, and in the context of preparing for a military intervention in Cuba.

Speaking to reporters on January 6th, 2004, Roger Noriega, assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere affairs, accused Cuba of 'actions to destabilize Latin America [that] are increasingly provocative to the inter-American community.' He said, 'Those that continue in destabilizing democratically elected governments, interfering in the internal affairs of other governments, are playing with fire.' At a press conference two days later, US Secretary of State Colin Powell defended Noriega's comments. 'I've been in senior national security positions on and off over the last 17 years. And through that whole period of time, Cuba has been trying to do everything it could to destabilize parts of the region,' he stated. Powell said that all 35 Latin American countries are democracies 'except one, and that's Cuba, which continues to oppress its people.'

Replying to the US smears, Dagoberto Rodríguez, chief of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, said on January 8th, 2004, 'If there's been a force for destabilization in the continent, and of interference in the continent, I think that almost everyone in Latin America would agree that it is a country situated a little more to the north of Cuba,' referring to the US. According to the Associated Press, unnamed US officials told reporters that 'Cuba and Venezuela are working together to oppose pro-American, democratic governments in the region with money, political indoctrination and training, such as in Ecuador and Uruguay. Venezuelan resources may have helped in the October ouster of Bolivia's elected, pro-American president, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada.'

What this illustrates is that in recent months, the build-up to direct military occupation has been mounting in the Caribbean and Latin America. Developments in Haiti, far from being so extraordinary themselves, simply gave the US, France and Canada a 'legitimate' reason to begin stationing troops, to establish an occupation and to set the foundations for the opening of the era of war and occupation in Latin America.

Canada's Role

What we need to understand – as people living in Canada – is that Canada's role in Haiti is indicative of its overall approach to third world countries. This role that Canada plays, the role of an imperialist nation, is not something new to the Canadian government. However, the decision by the Canadian ruling class to step up and strongly pose itself on the world stage is a significant development.

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The Geneva Accord: An Imperialist-Zionist Plot to Kill More Palestinians

By Shannon Bundock

During the second week of October 2003, a new 'Israeli-Palestinian peace proposal,' known as the 'Geneva Accord,' was released. The Geneva accord is the culmination of more than 2 1/2 years of negotiation undertaken by various high-profile Palestinians and 'Zionist-left' Israelis. The drafting of the accord was led by former Labour Justice Minister Yossi Beilin, and many Israelis involved, though acting as individuals, were members of various political parties and tendencies in the Israeli government. The Palestinian 'representatives' led by Yasser Abed Rabbo (former Palestinian minister associated with Yasser Arafat's wing in the Palestinian Fatah party) constituted a smaller segment of the group who were working with no mandate whatsoever, except from themselves and the Israelis who enlisted them.

Zionism Legitimized!

The Geneva Accords are supported by several 'left-Zionist' MPs, former generals in the IDF (Israeli Defence Forces) and several moderate right wing politicians. Its creators have tried to characterize the Geneva Accords as a 'breakthrough,' when in fact it is nothing really new. The Accords call for a 'two-state solution' wherein a Palestinian 'state' would be established in the West Bank and Gaza, but without sovereignty or control of its own borders or airspace. Israel would be permitted to keep military forces in it forever, while the Palestinian 'state' would not be permitted to establish any military. The Palestinian 'state' would be occupied by a 'Multinational Force' that could only be withdrawn with Israeli agreement.

The Geneva Accords reject the historic

claim of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland. It accepts the legitimacy of the existence of Israel as a Zionist state, i.e. as a state for the 'Jewish people' (not the Israeli-Jewish people) based on the ideology of the Zionist movement.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw praised the 'courage' of Israeli and Palestinian 'negotiators' who were involved in the Geneva Initiative. Addressing parliament, Straw said, 'I commend the courage of all of those involved, especially Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abed Rabbo... The plan provides a realistic two-state solution, on the basis of land for peace.'

A more clear explanation of what the Geneva Accords really mean for Palestine ironically comes from one of the authors, Israeli general Amram Mitzna, in his presentation of the plan to Israelis: 'For the first time in history, the Palestinians explicitly and officially recognized the state of Israel as the state of the Jewish people forever. They gave up the right of return to the state of Israel and a solid, stable Jewish majority was guaranteed. The Western Wall, the Jewish Quarter (of Jerusalem) and David's Tower will all remain in our hands. The suffocating ring was lifted from over Jerusalem and the entire ring of settlements around it -- Givat Zeev, old and new Givon, Maale Adumim, Gush Etzion, Neve Yaacov, Pisgat Zeev, French Hill, Ramot, Gilo and Armon Hanatziv will be part of the expanded city, forever. None of the settlers in those areas will have to leave their homes.'

What is interesting is that despite the fact that the Geneva Accord makes no steps forward in favour of Palestinians, it is viewed by Israeli President Sharon and far-right Israelis as too concessionary to Palestine. Sharon said that the recent armed attacks waged by the Palestinian resistance



The Israeli Apartheid Wall in the West Bank.

factions prove that 'terror is trying to extinguish any hope for diplomatic progress in the region.' According to Sharon, the US-sponsored 'Road Map' is the only plan Israel has accepted, and the Geneva initiative only gives the Palestinians the impression that they do not have to keep to their 'road map' pledges to fight terror.

This has created a situation where Geneva is counterposed to the 'Road Map' and viewed as the 'progressive' peace plan that caters to Palestinians. The result is a skewed version of 'both sides,' which leaves no space for the real demands of Palestinians for their rights.

Israel Zionist State and Decline of Global Imperialism

The situation facing Israel is one of increasing instability as a result of increasing pressure from Palestinian resistance and from the overall crisis of capitalism and imperialism globally. Israel, being very closely tied to the US and other dominant imperialist nations, is affected and confronted by the global relationship of forces between oppressed people of the world and imperialism. The antiwar movement that sprang to life in 2003 against the US-led war on Iraq has been a setback for imperialism as it has further developed the consciousness of the people globally against imperialism and occupation of oppressed nations, including Palestine.

The development of the Geneva Accord has to be seen in this global context of the failure of the US-led occupation forces to establish themselves in Iraq and the failure of Canadian-led NATO forces to stabilize their occupation of Afghanistan. In the era of direct military occupation of third-world nations it is clear that the crisis facing imperialist nations is also affecting the balance of forces between the colonial occupiers of Israel and the people of Palestine.

Similar to Canada, to the US and to all major imperialist nations, the Israeli government is putting more pressure on its own working class in an attempt to slow the economic crisis facing the country. As a result Israel must negotiate dealing with resistance to the attacks on the poor and working Israelis, as well as resistance to attacks on Palestinians across the region. This is also adding to instability for Israel's occupation.

From this, what is clear is that the denouncement of Geneva is not a result of the fact that it would be a major step

forward for Palestine, but rather a result of the failure and weakness of the reactionary agenda of Israel. The split between support for the Geneva Accords and support for the Road Map is not a split between Zionists and Palestinians, but rather a split between the Israeli ruling class itself on how to best maintain the state of Israel and quell resistance.

Self Determination for Palestinians and Right of Return

Obviously, for Palestine and for the antiwar movement, the question is not between Geneva Accords and the Road Map. The real question is how to reject all supposed 'peace plans' that serve as a distraction from the demands of the Palestinian people: for an end to the occupation and for true sovereignty, and for recognition of the Palestinian right to return to their homeland before the occupation of Palestine and the expulsion of millions of Palestinians from their homes by the Israeli government before 1948, during 1948 and after 1948 (formation of Israel). In the final analysis, no plan that further maintains the oppression of the Palestinian people has the capacity to bring peace.

In order to bring true peace, the first question that must be addressed is that of justice and sovereignty. The movement in Palestine and the demands of the Palestinian people are the same demands being echoed by the people of Iraq and the people of Afghanistan. These demands are being echoed by Indigenous people in Canada and, as a result of the recent invasion, echoed by the people of Haiti. This universal demand of oppressed nations globally is simple: SELF DETERMINATION.

As an option for Palestine, the Geneva Accords were dead before they began because of the total rejection of this demand for sovereignty, which is the foundation of the Palestinian resistance.

The response of the antiwar movement must continue to be one in support of the popular movement in Palestine against occupation and for the Palestinian right to return to their homes. The people of the world cannot be distracted by the attempts of Zionists --all types of them-- and soft-imperialists to undermine the movement against occupation. In order to build a movement globally that can truly oppose and defeat occupation of oppressed nations, our demands must be clear and independent from ruling classes. *No to the Zionist Occupation of Palestine! Yes to Self-determination for Palestine!*

Hands Off Haiti!

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With 190 soldiers in Haiti currently and a total of 450 ready to go in, Canada is not shifting from its 'peacekeeping history,' but rather just showing the thinly veiled truth of its tradition. This tradition is one of 513 years of invasion and genocide of oppressed indigenous nations in the interest of the colonial European ruling class. This tradition has now developed into military invasion and occupation of oppressed third world nations, in the interest of the Canadian ruling class who represent the interests of Canada's corporations and capitalist class. Even more explicitly than the Canada-led NATO occupation of Afghanistan, Canada is involved deeply in the intervention of Haiti in order to establish its position in the coming years of imperialist occupation and plundering across the Middle East, the Caribbean, Latin America and across the globe.

Hands Off Haiti!

Overall what is most clear is that we must respond to the invasion and occupation of Haiti with an understanding of its significance. Since March 2003, we have witnessed the failure of imperialism in achieving its agenda for a quick stabilization and establishment of the occupation, both in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is relevant and related to the move into Latin America mainly because of the fact that the US agenda has a long-term global perspective -- establishing

occupation and waging war in the Middle East has never been the ultimate end goal of imperialism.

The failure to implement their 'Plan A' strategy (quick establishment of occupation, with little resistance) is equally relevant because it gives us perspective on the balance of forces between oppressed nations and imperialist nations. When imperialists arrogantly expand their strategy, we need to resist and step up the struggle, in order to effectively push them back. The global antiwar movement, in solidarity with Iraqi resistance, showed the threat against imperialism when millions of people are in the streets. To build an effective movement, we need to understand the power of unity of oppressed people in resistance to beat back imperialism. We must put the occupation of Haiti in the framework of the global political situation in which the epoch of war and occupation has developed. As a result, we must face the challenge to expand the agenda of the antiwar movement to include mass opposition to the invasion of Haiti and to the undermining of the sovereignty of the Haitian people. The antiwar, anti-occupation movement must not only condemn the imperialist intervention in Haiti but also effectively expand the agenda of the movement to defend the sovereignty of the people of Haiti, and to organize actions in support of self-determination for Haitian people. *US, CANADA, FRANCE OUT OF HAITI!*

Canada Out of Afghanistan

By Kira Koschelanyk
& Shannon Bundock

"I visited Afghanistan for the first time ... In a lifetime of making my way through places of upheaval, I had not seen anything like it ...with contours of rubble rather than streets, where people live in collapsed buildings,... They have no light and heat... Hardly a wall stands that does not bear the pock-marks of almost every caliber of weapon. Cars lie upended at roundabouts. Power poles built for a modern fleet of trolley buses are twisted like paperclips. The buses are stacked on top of each other..." -John Pilger, journalist. 2003

More than two years after the launch of the US-led "War on Terrorism", complete dominance over Afghanistan and its people continues to evade the US, Canada and other multi-national imperialist forces. Not only has the US failed to establish this occupation, the Canadian-led NATO forces have done no better. All forces have proven incapable of improving basic living conditions of the Afghan people, or providing them with promised "liberation". After two years, there still persists a lack of basic services such as electricity, sanitation, sewage and garbage collection. In addition, there remain more than 11 million mines in Afghanistan, making it the most heavily mined country in the world. Three hundred Afghans are killed or injured each month by mines. The population continues to live in extreme poverty and instability, up to 80% below the threshold of \$1 a day.

Statistics Speak Out!

The Afghan Transitional Authority (ATA) is barely maintaining its position within Kabul, and what power or control it does possess is propped up by the presence of the occupying International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Seventy-eight percent of the population of Afghanistan live outside of Kabul, so the bulk of Afghan people are subject to rule by "independent" forces with their own private armies and militias. Many of the same leaders who destroyed Kabul and killed 50,000 civilians while fighting for control after the end of the Soviet occupation in 1989 now hold positions in Karzai's cabinet.

Only 3% of all international aid spent in Afghanistan has been for reconstruction; the US-led military coalition accounts for 84%. An official with the Ministry of Rural Affairs, Omar Zakhilwal, has stated that the government gets less than 20% of the aid that is delivered to Afghanistan. "We don't even have enough money to pay wages, let alone plan reconstruction", he said. More than US\$10 billion has been spent on Afghanistan since October 7, 2001, most of it by the US. More than 80% of this has paid for bombing the. Also, Washington gave each independent militia tens of thousands of dollars in cash and truckloads of weapons. "We were reaching out to every commander that we could," a CIA official told the Wall Street Journal during the initial war on Afghanistan.

"Liberating" Afghan Women

"...if talking about Afghanistan is confined only to abuse of women then in fact it is throwing dust into the eyes of the world ...we can play an effective role for women's emancipation (only) on the basis of freedom of the country."

-Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, statement released on International Women's Day, March 8 2004.

George Bush claimed that the US invasion and occupation saved Afghan women from oppression. Unfortunately for Bush, 99%



US soldiers frisk an Afghan man at a roadside checkpoint near Kandahar, March 14th 2004.

of women in Afghanistan disagree. The conditions of their daily lives expose that their situation is no better, if not worse in most cases than before the occupation. Mainstream media has saturated public opinion with images of Afghan women and girls free of the burka, taking jobs, going to school and even holding positions of "authority" in the Karzai government. The reality is that whatever concessions have been made in favor of women are shown only in the capital, Kabul. In reality, most of these "advancements" are not representative of Afghan women as a whole and are only enforced as long as they are available for propaganda use.

In the western city of Herat, it is prohibited for women to drive and it is illegal for them to travel with an unrelated man, even an unrelated taxi driver. According to Human Rights Watch, "women and girls have almost no access to health care, particularly in Herat, where fewer than one percent of women give birth with a trained attendant."

Just as the situation of women in Afghanistan is decidedly no better than under the Taliban, this chaos and insecurity extends to the rest of the population as well. The 11,500 troops of the occupying forces in the country carry out endless foot patrols through the streets and house raids of "suspected terrorists". With the suppression of occupying forces, daily life for Afghans is a frustrating and desperate ordeal. For more than two years, Afghan women, men and children have been enduring death, poverty and destruction by U.S. style "freedom". The only real liberation has been liberation of imperialist interests. *Operation Enduring Freedom* has meant enduring freedom for imperialists to occupy and plunder the resources and lives of the people of Afghanistan.

Canada's Role

Since the deployment of some 1,500 Canadian troops to Afghanistan in 2001, Canada has been actively participating in the US-led war on terrorism and trying to improve its position among other imperialist countries on the world stage. Since 2001, the Canadian government has

continually stated its intent to expand its role significantly and has continually acted to back up these statements, in particular in the very recent past.

According to Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan, Chris Alexander, "Paul Martin in his (Liberal leadership) acceptance speech, made quite a big emphasis on looking hard at our foreign and defense policies and how they might be adjusted to meet the challenges of the current world." Alexander went on to say that he hopes this means an even bigger role for Canada in Afghanistan. Alexander's sentiments were soon backed up by Defense Minister John McCallum, who said in reference to Afghanistan in early December, "We are about to have a new Prime Minister who is determined that Canada play a bigger role on the world stage."

Mere months later on February 9th the Change of Command Ceremony took place in Kabul. Canadian Lieutenant General Rick Hillier became the leading officer of the Canadian-led NATO forces and secured a fighting chance for Canada in the imperialist race for world domination. Canada has contributed two six-month rotations of 2,000 troops to ISAF, which makes it the leading contributor of troops to the mission. L.Gen Hillier will command the force of more than 5,500 soldiers from 33 nations for the next six months.

Though Canada's 1 year commitment in Afghanistan is up in August of 2004, Canadian and NATO officials are showing no signs that a withdrawal is planned. On January 29th the head of NATO met with Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham to ask Canada to maintain a presence in Afghanistan after the scheduled pull-out date. "We are not going to have 2,000 soldiers walk out of Camp Julien in August and leave Afghanistan," he said. "There will be a continuing Canadian presence, and we have to work out the best presence that will be contributing to peace there." Many officials are quoted saying that it will be necessary to have a presence in Afghanistan for at least 5-10 years.

Canada's role in the occupation extends beyond providing occupying troops. The

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is also heavily engaged in Afghanistan through the CANADEM team, which is assisting in the training of Afghan police officers. So, Canada's role does not end in the occupation. Canadian agencies are involved in setting up the future suppression of the people through the training of the state police force, the intent of which is to eventually ensure long-term and sustainable suppression of the population under an imperialist-friendly government.

Resistance, Self-Determination

Though the situation in Afghanistan is incredibly harsh and repressive this has not changed the historic strength and anti-imperialist resistance of the Afghan people. They continue today with consistent attacks on occupying forces in the capital and outside.

The prevailing notion in Canada of the Canadian army as a benevolent and peaceful force is not so widely believed in Afghanistan. With growing calls for sovereignty, the Afghan people understand what they need to begin to re-build and move forward. As was stated by the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan, the only progress that can be made is on the basis of freedom of the country. For dignity, for life: the Afghan people need self-determination.

For people in Canada and for the anti-war movement in Canada, it is essential to continue to support the demands of the Afghan people for self-determination, but also to push to expose Canada's involvement in this occupation. Here in Canada we have a particular role and relationship with Afghanistan, and can work in effective solidarity with Afghan resistance. We must expand the antiwar movement to echo the demands of the Afghan people for sovereignty and acknowledge Canada's leading imperialist role in the denial of their rights. The antiwar movement must demand: Canada out of Afghanistan! Bring All Troops Home Now!

Lesson From History: The United Nations and the Imperialist War Drive

By Brennan Luchsinger

Recent acts of imperialist aggression, ranging from interventions in Haiti, to the US led occupation of Iraq, are clear signals that we have been entering into an era of war and occupation. Examining the role we as poor and oppressed people play in combating this new era of imperialist attacks is a case of examining political forces and questioning the effectiveness of international governing bodies like the United Nations.

The United Nations (UN) are a key force in maintaining imperialist war and occupation through providing a front for imperialism which can be used to legitimize war and occupation from Canada to Afghanistan to Haiti. The UN does this by using forces to occupy nations, forces that cannot support oppressed nations rights to self-determination. Sending armed forces to create structure is a tactic employed the UN that thinly veils the true agenda of carrying out imperialist strategy. To examine how the UN functions as a tool of imperialism and its agenda, it's necessary to take a deeper look at the history of the United Nations.

The Foundations of the United Nations

Similar to the United Nations it's predecessor, the League of Nations, was an international political tool run by powerful imperialist nations. However WW2 changed the balance of forces between imperialist nations, and the U.S. came out as the most powerful of the allied forces. In order to maintain a monopoly over international power the U.S. and England created the United Nations to replace the League of Nations.

The creation of a body like the UN was the beginning of an era in which the U.S. dominated the world political spectrum. In the late 50's and 60's the U.S. domination of the UN came up against the emergence of independent third-world countries that brought poor and oppressed voices to the UN. In order to consolidate power and undermine the efforts of independent nations within the UN General Assembly the UN Security Council (UNSC) was created. The council consisted of five permanent members (U.S., UK, France, Russia, and China) that have veto power over UN General Assembly decisions. This action effectively undermined the importance of the General Assembly and it's structure, which included emerging third-world nations. The structure of the UN is based on serving the interests of imperialism, and this is clear through an analysis of the history of UN military interventions.

A History of United Nations Interventions:

Palestine

In 1922 the League of Nations issued a mandate in support of the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. As a continuation of the colonialist agenda in Palestine, in 1947 the UN approved a partition to split Palestine into two separate states. At the time Palestinians who accounted for 70% of the population and owned 92% of the land were allocated 47% of the territory. During the war of 1948 Zionist Israel expanded their land, and reduced the Palestinian territory to only 23%. More than half the Arab population of Palestine were expelled or fled from their homes through the use of violence and terror.

In 1974 following the Arab Summit in Rabat, the UN granted the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) "observer status" within the UN. The reason behind the UN granting this was to add a sense of democratic discussion to their intervention in Palestine, without actually involving the PLO in the decision making process of the UN.

In 1990 Yasser Arafat addressed the UNSC to following a massacre of Palestinians to request a UN emergency force for the protection and defense of the lives territories and holy places of Palestinians. In response the UN general assembly called for a fact-finding mission to be sent to Palestine. To ensure that the fact-finding mission would

never reveal imperialism the U.S. used its veto power within the UNSC to make sure that the mission would not be sent to Palestine. Since it's inception and first action, the UN has been used as a tool by imperialists to maintain or build power in the Middle East. Countless times the UN has stood by calling for peace conferences and summits, while Palestinians call for an end to the Israeli occupation, and for essential human rights. The Palestinian struggle for self-determination has carried on in spite of UN efforts to protect imperialist interests within the Middle East.

Korea

Under the cover of the UN, The U.S. government attempted to legitimize the



UN Troops in Afghanistan.

division of Korea by holding rigged elections in 1948. Syngman Rhee, a puppet to the U.S. Government led the dictatorship of South Korea for the next 12 years. South Korea under the dictatorship of Syngman Rhee accelerated provocations, causing the North to build its military power. When the Korean War began in 1950 the U.S. government engineered a vote within the UN Security Council to deploy U.S. armed forces in conjunction with 15 other allied forces under the banner of the UN to combat "North Korean Aggression".

After years of brutal war, roughly four million people were killed by foreign troops under the banner of the UN. To this day the Korean War stands as one of the most painful examples of the UN acting as a body that legitimizes military actions of immoral imperialist nations.

Congo

In 1960 Elections held in the Congo saw Patrice Lumumba, and the Congolese National Movement (MNC) form a nation that was independent from it's former colonizer Belgium. Lumumba requested that the UN become involved in the defense of the newly independent state in order to fight the divisions between the new Congolese government. The US grasped the situation that could easily be used to attack the new government, and within the UNSC, voted in favor of a UN intervention. By the end of July 1960 8,000 troops were stationed in the Congo, at the height of the occupation the UN had 20,000 troops engaged in the occupation.

Pro US forces eventually ousted Lumumba from power while UN troops positioned outside his home supported this unilateral action. UN troops proceeded to close down government radio stations and disarm all forces that were loyal to the revolutionary leader. The rival Tshombe regime satisfied the interests of both the US, and Belgium, however in the face of popular pressure from the Congolese, Tshombe was forced into exile. On June 30, 1964, UN forces were removed from the Congo and Tshombe returned to power, and proclaimed that the Congolese national army would handle the "rebels". Two days later he reinstated his mercenary troops and called on the US for military assistance. The UN has constantly

attacked the sovereignty of the Congo and was the key force that debilitated self-determination of the Congo.

Cyprus

In 1955 the people of Cyprus took up arms to expel British colonialism from the island. Britain's instant reaction was to divide the Turkish and Greek population of the island in order to rally support for the British colony. While Cyprus maintained it's sovereignty, Greece attempted to take advantage of such a new and developing state. In 1964 Greek imperialists sent troops to Cyprus to carry out a military coup with the intent of annexing Cyprus as a Greek colony. Turkey responded by sending 30,000 troops to occupy the

president Nasser. In October of 1956 Israeli soldiers invaded Egypt. Britain and France severing their allegiance demanded the immediate withdrawal of Israeli and Egyptian forces from the canal. The U.S. had reacted by using the UN to withdraw troops and keep the Middle East open for further U.S. imperialist domination. By December of 1956 the UN issued a cease-fire, British and French troops withdrew from Egypt, soon to be followed by the Israeli forces.

Iran-Iraq war

During the Iran-Iraq war, the UN was used as a bargaining tool by imperialists to control the Middle East by placing and removing power when and where it was beneficial for imperialism. In September of 1980 the Saddam Hussein regime backed by the US attacked Iran. After a week of Iraqi aggression, the UN called for a cease-fire, and ignored the Iranian appeal for the UN to aid in ending attacks. The cease-fire proved to be useless as a drawn out battle pursued. Immediately after Iran had won back its original territory the UNSC met for the first time since the invasion, and called for a withdrawal to prewar borders.

In 1987 U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy Met with Saddam Hussein and agreed on a resolution calling for a cease-fire that would be pushed through the UN, with the provision that whichever side would not accept the resolution would be subject to an embargo. Iraq accepted immediately, having designed the resolution to place an economic embargo on Iran that would halt their resistance. However, Iran accepted the resolution as long as an "impartial commission" would be setup to investigate the war. Iraq and the US both refused this provision. The UN led peace-talks that resulted in an "undeclared cessation of hostilities". In 1988 due to widespread pressure, Iran accepted the initial UN resolution, but Iraq having again won land from Iran refused.

Gulf war

During the Gulf War when Iraq attacked Kuwait, the U.S. intervened to protect their strategic and economic interests in the Middle East. In order to eject Iraq from Kuwait, the UN Security Council authorized the use of "all means necessary". After the UN deadline was not met, the U.S. under the flag of the UN carried out "operation desert storm".

The victims of this war were the people of Iraq. The ten years of UN imposed sanctions left Iraq's infrastructure and economy crippled. Operation desert storm and the sanctions that followed show the how the UN failed to protect people in Iraq and prepare them only for the total devastation that was to come in March of 2003.

Somalia

The UN intervention in Somalia was beneficial to the US who sought to create military bases in the region that would provide a launching pad for attacks in the Middle East. The strategy carried out by the UN points out the clear admission that genocide was happening, but UN troops were carrying out their own agenda that had nothing to do with ending violence between Somalian clans. The US pursued creating a loyalty in Somalia through supporting groups with arms and military funding. In 1989 after spending 390 million dollars to supply arms to Somalia, the US opened a base in Saudi Arabia, and Somalia was no longer beneficial for imperialism. At this time the U.S. withdrew its troops, along with all UN troops stationed there. While the troops were removed, what remained were the political and economical conditions of a decade of US supported war and occupation. Ali Mahdi's regime (one of many fighting for control of Somalia) became powerful enough for the imperialism to take advantage of it, the UN recognized this as the sole legitimate governing council. To consolidate power for this newly supported regime, the UNSC unilaterally approved the deployment

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Vancouver Police Department Steps Up Violence and Brutality

By Ivan Drury

'In a democratic society based on the rule of law, the police, who are often the guardians of our civil liberties, must be responsible to the public they serve. Citizens and police must be treated and believe they are treated fairly. Allegations of misconduct must be investigated promptly, thoroughly, competently and neutrally. Police discipline hearings arising from public complaints must be timely, competently performed and fair to all participants.'

-From the office of the Police Complaints Commissioner, 1988

On January 14th, 2003, three men were picked up in the Granville mall in downtown Vancouver by a team of six Vancouver Police Officers and driven to a lonely spot in Stanley Park. One at a time, they were taken from the police wagon, sent through a gauntlet of these six police officers and beaten unmercifully with batons and boots.

Perhaps the most unusual thing about this particular incident was that there was a rookie cop there that night who was shocked. When Constable Troy Peters looked on at what his fellow officers were doing and could not disguise his disgust, the most senior officer there, and reportedly the most brutal amongst them said to Peters, 'This is the kind of shit you signed up for.'

Const. Peters reported on his fellow officers' abuse and brutality and, on the strength of this rookie's evidence, the story of this particular 'starlight tour,' or 'breach out of the area,' was given credibility and the case of the 'Stanley Park 6' went to court.

In the midst of the outcry against the brutality at Stanley Park, Police Chief Jamie Graham explained to the media how the case of the so-called 'Stanley Park 6' was a matter of 'bad apples' that was not common behavior within the VPD. He said, 'What happened in Stanley Park was neither lawful nor approved by this department.' He then fired the two most brutal of the cops who had ritualistically beaten the three men they had taken into custody. The other four officers were suspended for 20 days and demoted one rank.

If indeed police brutality in the VPD is isolated to these 6 officers, then why are poor and working people in Vancouver continually harassed, beaten and assaulted by the police after those two especially brutal officers were canned? Why, if this sort of brutality and misconduct is not tolerated by the VDP, out of an average of 140 complaints of police misconduct a year are only



One of the 'Waldorf 8' after brutal assault by Vancouver Police officers.

7 officers found at fault and only 2 disciplined?

The VPD

In January of 2002, the BC Liberals began their massive cuts to social programs and the rights of workers in BC. Overall, Gordon Campbell's neo-liberal agenda meant a 30% cut to funding for the Ministry of Human Resources, a 30% loss of jobs in BC's direct public sector, and 30% cuts to almost every other ministry under Provincial jurisdiction. These cuts represented the severe limiting, and in some cases the complete elimination of the social services and programs that poor and working people in BC depend upon for their lives. Along with this, unemployment rates jumped to the highest they have been in 20 years. With the combination of increased homelessness, poverty and desperation along with the increased police presence in the Downtown Eastside, levels of police brutality and misconduct have also increased. As Police Chief Jamie Graham said of misconduct complaints made against the VPD in 2003, 'Unfortunately for this year, they spiked a bit.'

Allan Garr wrote in the Courier about the case of the Stanley Park 6: '[Police Chief] Graham did fire two of the cops... that leaves four of them on the force, two of them

with criminal records.' However, there are many more violent police in the VPD than the cops that got caught with their batons drawn in Stanley Park.

As far as the British Columbian ruling class was concerned, there were two major negative effects of the rise in violence against poor and working people in BC through the cuts and programs of the Liberal government. The first was that people organized against these cuts and against capitalists who profited from them. This was reflected in mass mobilizations around the province and growing anti-Liberal consciousness and solidarity amongst the working class. The growing consciousness was developing the potential of mass strikes, job action and disruption by poor and working people throughout BC of the capitalist interests of the BC Liberal government.

The second was a rise in desperation amongst the poorest segments of the working class. This is reflected in the recently reported rise in gang activity in Richmond and Surrey, the rise in homelessness throughout Vancouver and the rise in petty property crime throughout the city.

A major BC Liberal and capitalist solution to both these problems was to dispatch police to suppress the actions and the organizational

development of poor and working people against the government and against capitalists. Through police brutality and misconduct, it is the job of the VPD to resolve this conflict in the favor of the ruling class.

The Myth of the 'Bad apple'

'I never saw this as a rotten group of apples. I saw this as a culture where they could get away with it.'
- Phil Rankin, lawyer for the three men beaten in Stanley Park

'These were well-thought-of people in our organization.'
- Vancouver Police Union President Tom Stamatakis on the Stanley Park 6

Certain cases of police brutality have become famous. Unable to flatly deny that brutality and misconduct do not exist within the daily operations of the VDP, the ruling class instead attempts to isolate the cases that cannot be ignored and resolve them. They create scapegoats of these officers that were caught, as in the Stanley Park 6 case, or blame the victims of police brutality, as in the Britannia Police Riot of October 2002 or the more recent orchestrated beating outside the Waldorf Hotel.

The Waldorf 8:

One year and one month following the 'Stanley Park 6' episode, six women and two men were stopped by members of the Vancouver Police Department on East Hastings Street near the Waldorf Hotel. The people, some of whom are anti-poverty activists known to police, demanded to know the badge numbers of the officers who stopped them. At this point, 'backup' arrived and a total of 15 police cars and 30 officers surrounded and attacked the people walking home. Kathleen Yearwood, who witnessed the assault from her home, later said, 'I saw five police kicking and punching one woman who was handcuffed, face down and her feet restrained, she was screaming for help, and I was telling them to stop.' By the end of the assault four people were knocked unconscious, one woman was hospitalized with injuries to her eye and others suffered severe bruising and fractured ribs from police boots and batons.

In this case of the 'Waldorf 8,' differing from the 'Stanley Park 6' by a lack of a Constable Troy Peters figure to blow the whistle on the rest of the police there, the VPD have (so far) soundly denied any wrongdoing without investigation or inquiry.

Can the Complaints Commission End Police Brutality?

'The current process is if we send a complaint to the complaint commission, it gets sent back to the Vancouver Police Department

for investigation.' - John Richardson, Pivot Legal Society

The Case of the Britannia 9:

At a protest against BC Liberal cuts in October 2002, nine people were arrested following the assault and arrest of a United Church Minister. In trial, this protest had been characterized by witnesses as 'like a neighbourhood picnic' until the police assaulted Minister George Feenstra in the middle of his mime routine. Police officers testified to having 'straight armed' a thirteen-year-old boy in the face while removing protestors blocking the police wagon because they were 'concerned for their safety.' Nine protestors (the Britannia 9) were arrested and charged with 'assault on a police officer,' 'obstructing a police officer,' 'causing a disturbance,' and 'unlawful assembly.' (see FTT # 1 and #10-11)

Three official complaints were registered about police actions at this demonstration. The internal investigations officer who dealt with these complaints was called to the stand in the trial of the Britannia 9 on March 17th, 2004. Sergeant Lemcke testified that he investigated one complaint and dismissed the other two. The complaint that he did investigate was from one of the defendants in the trial, Murray Bush. This complaint was that Bush had been taken in a police wagon to the Canadian Tire parking lot on Hastings Street and that the door to the compartment he was in was opened and surrounded by VPD members. These officers threatened Bush's compartment-mate, Scott Rohan, saying, 'Come on out here, tough guy. Let's take care of this right now.' When Rohan refused, the officers said, 'It doesn't matter, we know where you live, we'll take you out.'

Lemcke interviewed two officers, one of whom said that he was 20 to 30 meters away and did not hear or see anything. For the other, the results of Lemcke's interview consisted of three handwritten sentences. He never interviewed Inspector Hobbes, the officer named in the complaint as the main offender. Ultimately he said that he dismissed the case because Inspector Hobbes' written response, after being sent the complainant to read, was 'so complete, so detailed, so eloquent and [that it] so adamantly denied the charges.'

Sergeant Lemcke, as a former full time internal investigation officer, testified that all complaints filed against the VPD are treated with the same care and professionalism as the Britannia complaint. He said that in years of working in investigations, he had only had one of his reports sent back to

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MAWO Launches Afghanistan Campaign: Operation Canada Out!

By Nicole Burton

Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), Vancouver's antiwar, anti-occupation coalition, held a press conference on Thursday, January 29th at the Roundhouse Community Centre, announcing the launch of a comprehensive campaign called 'Operation Canada Out of Afghanistan! Bring the Troops Home Now!'

MAWO members and other speakers explained that the Canada Out! campaign is being launched in the form of a national petition drive, to serve as a major media and education project. 'The petition, addressed to Prime Minister of Canada Paul Martin and Foreign Defence Minister Bill Graham demanding that all Canadian troops be removed from Afghanistan immediately, will be accompanied by forums, conferences, and continuous discussion,' said Kira Koshelanyk, co-chair of MAWO. Then she continued, 'Coinciding with the death of a Canadian soldier, Corporal Jamie Murphy on January 27th, the Canada Out! campaign came as a response to Canada's two-year military presence in Afghanistan, in this time taking on the leadership role of in the NATO occupation in the fall of 2003, and ultimately

resulting in the deaths of seven Canadian soldiers.'

'Our job as MAWO is to not let these deaths be disconnected from the thousands of innocent Afghan civilians who have been killed since the initial invasion,' said Shannon Bundock, co-chair of MAWO. 'This campaign must be seen as a wakeup call to those in Ottawa who are not listening to the demands of people in Canada to bring the troops home.'

As of late 2003, Canada had committed 3,800 Canadian troops to the occupation of Afghanistan, broken up into two six-month rotations. Most recently in February of 2004, the number of Canadian troops on the ground has escalated, with the total number rising from 1,900 to 2,600 within a matter of weeks.

While Canada makes this increased imperialist effort, the basic needs of the Afghan people are still not met. While a large portion of the country's infrastructure was quickly demolished with the initial US invasion in 2001, these services remain non-existent today, despite two years of Canadian oversight under the guise of 'peacekeeping' and 'stabilizing.' This serves as yet another blow to the notion that Canadian troops are occupiers for the sake of the



Speakers at MAWO press conference announcing the launch of the 'Operation: Canada Out!' Campaign, January 29th 2004.

Afghan people.

Lisa Barrett, mayor of Bowen Island and long-time activist for social justice, commented, 'The hypocrisy of waging war on the very people Canada claims it is helping is a true sign of where Canada's real interests lay.' She added on the situation of women specifically, 'When we look to the

people who speak for themselves in Afghanistan.. they were saying, that a military occupation, leaving a legacy of fear and destroying the education systems, the hospital systems, is no way to assist women in regaining any of their rights. It's hypocritical to consider that any North American force could go in and do that for

the people of Afghanistan.'

The MAWO campaign also recognizes the tremendous effect these military aggressions have on young people in particular.

'We believe it is imperative for youth to take part in this

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The Politics of War and Occupation

MAWO CELEBRATES A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE

By Rachel Taylor

On February 22nd, 2004, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) brought together over 120 people at a conference titled 'The Politics of War and Occupation, and Why the War is Not Over: Confronting Imperialism and Colonialism in the Early 21st Century.' MAWO organized the conference as an opportunity to discuss and debate the current global political situation of imperialist interventions, and the necessary approach of the antiwar movement to effectively respond.

The day began at 10am and closed after nearly ten hours of enthusiastic and educational debate and dialogue. MAWO's approach is to see the conference as one positive step in the Lower Mainland antiwar movement, and to build on this action by continuing to consistently organize to educate and mobilize.

The conference was made up of three workshops, each with two topics. One or two speakers opened each workshop to set the stage for the discussion led by conference participants. This discussion formed the basis and the bulk of the event.

The first workshop laid the foundation by exploring the question: 'Why Wars and Occupations: 9/11 and Afterward.' Nic Brown opened the first topic, titled 'World capitalist economy crisis and the state

of imperialist rivalry.' 'A consequence of this rivalry and crisis has been the mad scramble for exploitable resources and political domination over strategic regions,' said Nic. 'The need to bully competitors from their markets and to expand their empire motivated the US-led occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.'

The second topic of this workshop was 'Wars and occupations as the second and third characteristics of the world political situation. What about the most important one?' This workshop, opened by Ali Yerevani, answered this question by establishing that the most important factor in the world context of war and occupation is how to build an independent working class leadership in the antiwar / anti-occupation movement.

The next workshop was titled 'Occupation and Self-Determination: from Cheam to Palestine to Iraq.' This workshop explored and connected the issue of sovereignty for Indigenous nations within Canada with the self-determination of oppressed people under attack in the Third World.

The first topic in this workshop was 'Self-determination of oppressed people and nations as a political vehicle for raising consciousness and anti-imperialist movement building.' Nicole Burton and Aaron Mercredi discussed the right of oppressed people to determine their own futures and manage their own affairs free

from imperialist intervention.

The second topic in this workshop was: 'Canada is occupied land. What's the peculiarity of this occupation of aboriginal land? Is occupation in the third world related and connected to occupation in Canada?' Rachel Taylor and Ivan Drury opened this issue for discussion.

Ivan Drury illustrated the colonial history of Canada. 'This war displaced and literally killed millions of native people who were not 'collateral damage'; rather, their deaths were the goal and strategy of the colonial war.' He established the importance of the issue when he said 'Without justice for native nations, there will never be justice here.'

Rachel Taylor established the connections between the occupation of Indigenous territory in Canada and occupation in the third world. She concluded with, 'As the Canadian government's attacks on Indigenous people are always related to their colonial attacks abroad, the resistance to these attacks must also always be connected and related.'

Finally, the third workshop was titled, 'What kind of antiwar movement do we need to build?'

Shannon Bundock opened the first topic, 'What we've learned about war and

occupation since March 2003.' 'What we have learned in the antiwar movement is that we must establish the movement on the basis of an independent political program... We must build a movement that represents the demands of poor and working people, and overall the demands of the oppressed people under war and occupation.'

The final topic of the day was 'The Antiwar, Anti-occupation Movement: Tasks and Perspectives.' Mike Krebs focused us on our responsibilities here. 'We must express clear support for the struggle of the people in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine and build as effective a movement here as possible to help challenge and weaken imperialist powers.'

'The Politics of War and Occupation' conference was an opportunity for all MAWO members and supporters in Vancouver and in the Lower Mainland to establish a clear and independent working class anti-war program. It allowed us to develop the understanding of the attacks we face at home and abroad and to cultivate a strategy and vision in order to stand and fight in solidarity with our people under attack in Canada and with oppressed people all over the world. This conference helped us to build a movement to defeat the imperialist forces that are waging war against working, poor and oppressed people everywhere.

Anti-War Documentary Film Draws Interest in Vancouver

By Thomas Davies

On January 18th, 2004, Youth Third World Alliance screened the Vancouver premier of the documentary film "Uncovered: The Whole Truth About the Iraq War" to an over-capacity crowd at the Collingwood Neighbourhood House.

Sponsored by Mobilization Against War and Occupation, the event began later than expected due to the overwhelming crowd size. An adjoining room was rented and people squeezed into the standing-room-only event to witness US government officials reveal that not only were the reasons given by the US government and military for the invasion of Iraq false, they were fully aware the entire time. Despite this, the US and UK still set about the brutal invasion and occupation of Iraq, which has resulted in the deaths of over 10,000 Iraqi civilians in the past year, and has the remainder of Iraq's population living without freedom or basic services. Highly publicized dangers included the "imminent threat" of Iraq's nuclear program and the Iraqi government's sponsor of "terrorist organizations." Both allegations were proven false by the film's interviews with many

top US government officials.

Following the film, Youth Third World Alliance members Rachel Taylor and Aaron Mercredi discussed the invasion of Iraq, and how this brutality has been continued and augmented over the past ten months. Focusing on the immediacy of the current situation in Iraq, discussion then shifted among the audience on how best to build an effective antiwar, anti-occupation movement to oppose and defeat the imperialist agenda.

Understanding Canada's history as a territory occupied by force, and the continuing suppression and aggression against the Indigenous people of this land, were central in the discussion's approach to the occupation of Iraq. Recognizing an oppressed nation's basic right to determine their own future led many others in the crowd to echo Iraqi citizens' calls for the United Nations to stay out of Iraq. After undergoing over a decade of brutal United Nations sanctions, which resulted in the deaths of over a million Iraqi civilians, there is understandably hostility towards the United Nations among Iraq's population. This sentiment continues today, especially now as the United Nations would attempt to enter Iraq without the consent of the



MAWO Film Night and Forum on Afghanistan, March 7th 2004.

people and under US pressure to legitimize their occupation.

People who were unable to attend the first event were given another opportunity on February 8th as Mobilization Against War and Occupation responded to the huge demand and energy of the first event and

screened the film once more at the Collingwood Neighbourhood House. The evening was once again characterized by a packed house and lively discussion, with the possibility of showing the film again in the near future being discussed by organizers. The message taken from both

events was clear: not only is there consciousness and momentum behind issues of occupation and self determination in Vancouver, but this consciousness and energy continues to grow and expand every day.

Vancouver College Students Protest Liberals Attacks

By Tamara Hanson,
Aaron Mercredi,
& Nicole Burton

On February 4th, 2004, thousands of Lower Mainland students and their supporters gathered in downtown Vancouver to protest the BC Liberals' tuition fee hikes. Most of the schools had short rallies on their campuses before piling people onto buses and bringing them downtown. Youth-Third World Alliance was asked to speak at three of the Kwantlen campuses as well as at Langara College. Youth-Third World Alliance supported the February 4th National Student Day of Action to stand in solidarity with students everywhere who face increasing attacks on their right to access education.

Tuition Freeze?

After promising to continue the tuition freeze, Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals unfroze tuition in 2001. This has sent prices for post-secondary education skyrocketing, and has left many students deeper in debt. With many tuition fees doubling over the last three years, a BC student's education will now cost approximately 43% more than it would have in 2001.

It is important to realize that the tuition freeze was put in place to protect BC students from the increasing price of post-secondary education across Canada.



Gordon Campbell, who promised to maintain the freeze during his election campaign, failed to do so, and has now opened an attack on the students of BC. It is important for British Columbians to realize how unfreezing tuition fees takes away students' protection and is a blatant attack against them.

It is also important to recognize that these tuition hikes are mainly an attack on young people and that these policies disproportionately affect students in marginalized situations. These attacks on students are a part of an overall offensive against poor and working people in Canada. Welfare denials, restrictions, and huge cuts to disability and childcare are leaving an ever-increasing number of people homeless, desperate, and often unable to maintain even a minimum standard of living.

Tuition Increases!

As well, changes to the Employment Standards Act now allow bosses to further exploit workers with the \$6 training wage. This means that while people new to the job market are attempting to save money for their post-secondary education, they are being paid 25% less than those who were employed before November 2001, while at the same time having to pay approximately 43% more for their education.

Tuition increases mean that students are now struggling under higher financial burdens and a larger percentage of young, poor and working people face the painful reality that education is inaccessible to them. Attending, or even graduating from post-secondary education offers little shelter either. This is no accident, as over 50% of young adult minimum wage workers and 12% of adult minimum wage workers are full-time students at

some time during the year. To maintain this cheap and exploitable pool of labour, the BC Liberal government, along with federal and provincial governments across Canada, seeks to force those students who are desperate to pay back their debt into the most vulnerable positions of unstable, low-wage, and part-time work.

Students Are Poor People

The desperate conditions created by all of these attacks benefit the BC Liberals by keeping young and marginalized people, traditionally a huge source of energy and social change, unstable, preoccupied, and under constant attack. This is an attempt to silence us, and actions like February 4th have confirmed that together, we as students, young and oppressed people can confront these obstacles and organize for our rights. Our job now is to revive the energy of February 4th and to build a movement not only for the rights of students, but for the rights of all people who suffer under increasing cuts and attacks on their dignity and freedom.

Educate-Organize-Mobilize!

We call on organizers in Vancouver to take the energy developed on February 4th to the next step and to build a movement that is consistent and empowering for students and oppressed people, by demanding that the BC Liberal government end attacks on students and that education be free and accessible for all people!

Women's Access to Choice and Health Care Under Conditions of War and Occupation An Indigenous Woman's Perspective

By Rachel Taylor

The talk below was given by Rachel Taylor at the Rock for Choice Conference on Saturday February 7th, 2004, at the SFU Harbour Centre in Vancouver (www.rockforchoicevancouver.com). The workshop was titled 'Women's Health & Issues of Choice Under Illegal Occupation.' Rock for Choice is a feminist event, with the aim of educating and mobilizing people to protect abortion rights and women's health clinics. Every year since 1994, Rock for Choice organizers have successfully arranged a program combining music and social awareness workshops. Thousands of people, and especially young people, participated in this year's Rock for Choice events in Vancouver. For the excellent educational value of this talk we would like to share it with our readers.

- Ali Yerevani, Editor

My name is Rachel Taylor and I am speaking today on the issue of women's access to choice and health care under conditions of war and occupation. I do most of my political work in the antiwar movement, where I am a member of a major antiwar coalition called Mobilization Against War and Occupation, and also an organization called Youth-Third World Alliance. Through this and in addition to working for Redwire Native Youth Media, I have gained a lot of perspective on how war and occupation impact the lives of oppressed people, in particular people of the Third World, oppressed people and women.

I have also developed an understanding and analysis of why and how war and occupation are used to maintain and entrench the oppressed position of all marginalized people.

When asked to speak on this panel at Rock for Choice I began exploring access to choice and healthcare from the perspective and understanding that the conditions of war and occupation provide the most explicit and most blatant examples of how women are controlled and oppressed; and of how we must fight in solidarity with women living under war and occupation in order to fight for our own liberty and freedom as women all over the world.

It is from this perspective of fighting for sovereignty and self-determination as the first step in fighting for real access to choice and health care that I am going to speak today.

At this gathering in support of women's access to reproductive choices and health care, and in particular, at this discussion of access for women under occupation, it is important that we look at this access in the

context of women's access to all social services. Choice, health care, or any one service cannot be isolated. When we look at it in this context we are reminded that the only way women can fully access these services is if women have control over their lives; concretely and directly, this means we support women's and all people's struggles worldwide for liberation and self-determination.

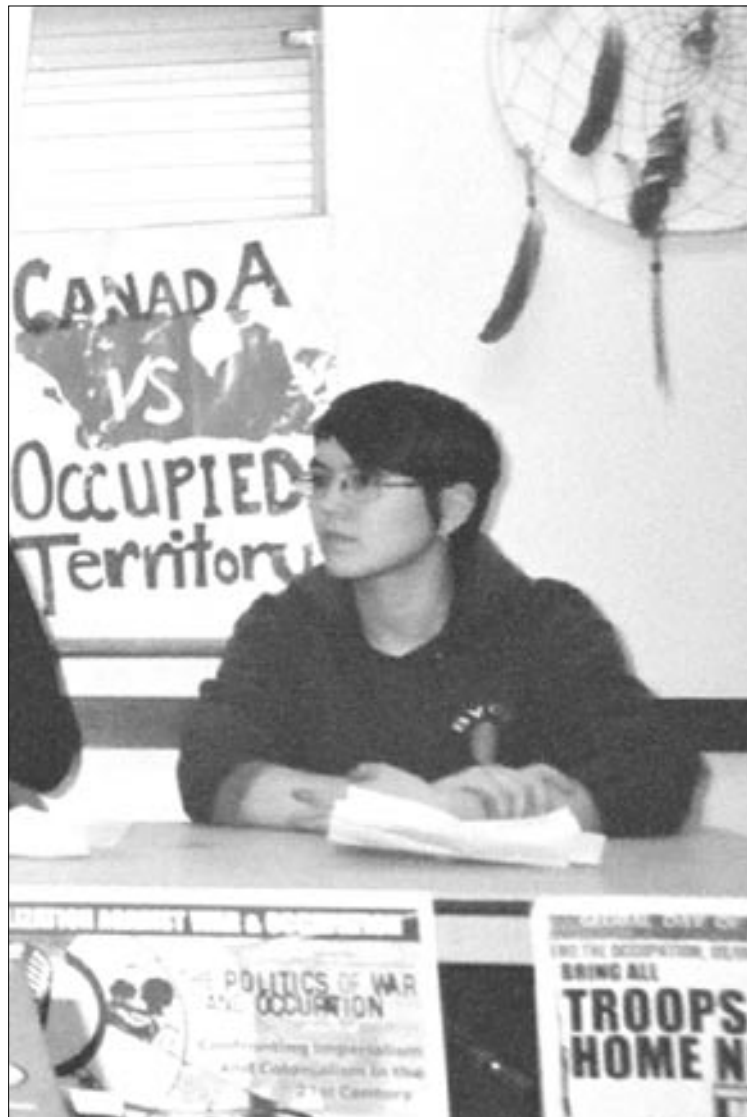
In order to address access to services, we must go to the root of the oppression of women,

which is the basis for the denial of women's basic rights. We can explore women's oppression clearly through looking at the most explicit examples of women in struggle today: women living under war and occupation. Therefore, it is necessary to look at what it means, from an Indigenous woman's perspective, to support the self-determination of women and all people under war, occupation and colonization—in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and colonized Indigenous territories, including the Americas, and North America in particular.

This means to support the struggles of women and all people who are at the forefront of attacks on oppressed people, and at the forefront of resistance, demanding their right denied by oppressive systems today: the right to control their own lives, and by extension, the right to choice.

Indigenous people in North America have been living under occupation for five centuries. The historic and current attacks on Indigenous people here, like attacks against people of the Third World today, all came from colonial forces, whose goal remains: to gain control of the resources and the present and future market through controlling the land and the people under attack, and therefore to deny the right of self-determination.

The very nature of the relationship between Indigenous people and the Canadian government is a relationship that denies our rights to determine our own forms of government. Despite the fact that Section 35 of Canada's constitution recognizes the inherent right to self-government, in reality all decisions concerning every aspect of our lives and livelihoods, our lands and resources, all these decisions are determined and imposed by the colonial Canadian government. In this way, it is the foundation of the Canadian government, and not its actions alone, that denies our right to self-determination, and therefore, denies our full ability to control and determine all aspects of our own lives. This significantly



Rachel Taylor.

and disproportionately impacts women, because we already have an oppressed position based on our gender.

It is necessary to look in this context at the current and historic situation of Indigenous women living under occupation, and our access to health and social services. And we will soon find that there is no period in history when Indigenous women under Canada have had access to a form of health care that fully addressed their health needs. Instead, there is a long history of violent atrocities and human rights violations against Indigenous people by the colonial government, a constant denial of our humanity and dignity, and a continuing fundamental inability to meet the health and social needs of Indigenous people.

In 1928 Alberta passed legislation allowing school officials to forcibly sterilize Indigenous girls; BC passed the same law in 1933. In 1995 after police launched an investigation, the records of this practice were destroyed, so there is no way of knowing how many women and girls in BC and Alberta were forced to undergo this horror. But according to the testimony of a nurse in Alberta, doctors forcibly sterilized entire groups of Indigenous children when they reached puberty. This example paints a background to the completely inhuman approach that the colonial Canadian

government has taken historically toward Indigenous people.

Today, one part of our compounded oppression as women and as Indigenous people living under occupation is that we continue to face incredible barriers to our access to health care and social services. As a result of that our health and well-being are disproportionately worse as women, and worse still as Indigenous people. When looking at any standard measurement of health or quality of life and comparing the status of Indigenous women with the status of the general Canadian population, you can plainly see the effects of our oppressed position under Canadian colonialism.

According to Health Canada, Indigenous women are twice as likely as non-Indigenous women to report their overall health as 'fair or poor.' The infant mortality rate for Indigenous mothers is twice as high as that of non-Indigenous mothers. And Indigenous women have shorter life expectancies than non-Indigenous women by an overwhelming seven years. This factor in particular is a major exposure of the devastating gap between the standard of living and health for Indigenous women and that of the general population in Canada.

In terms of chronic conditions,

we are considerably more likely to develop conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. And while Indigenous people make up only 2% of the population in Canada, we made up 25% of newly diagnosed HIV infections in 1999. As well, while non-Indigenous women represent 7% of all cases of HIV/AIDS in Canada, Indigenous women make up more than twice as many of these cases—almost 16%. And Indigenous people are nearly three times as likely to commit suicide as the general Canadian population, with the highest suicide risk being for young Indigenous women between the ages of 15 and 24, who are devastatingly eight times more likely to commit suicide than the general Canadian population.

These disparities don't stop at our general health and well-being; at virtually every point where we can measure the standard of living of Indigenous people and women living under Canadian occupation, we are at a vastly lower level than the general Canadian population. Again despite our comparatively small numbers in Canada, the rate of imprisonment of Indigenous people means we make up 17% of all prison inmates in the country.

In terms of housing, Indigenous people are more than twice as likely to suffer under crowded living conditions. Also, only 57% of homes in Indigenous communities were considered adequate in 1999. The government conducted a survey in 2001 and found that 73% of all people living in the Nunavik region in Northern Quebec, which is largely an Indigenous population, reported having had their water contaminated at some point during the year. In 1999, 65 First Nations and Inuit communities were under a boil water advisory for, on average, half the year.

In terms of education, in 2001, half of all Indigenous youth in their early 20's had dropped out of high school, and Indigenous youth in that age group were far less likely to graduate from post-secondary education.

In 1996, the unemployment rate for Indigenous women in particular was more than twice as high as that of the general Canadian population, and the unemployment rate for Indigenous people in general was three times as high as the general population.

All of this represents the conditions that Indigenous people, and Indigenous women in particular, live under when they are denied control over our own lives. Throughout all of this and in every other aspect of Indigenous nations' right to decide our own

Continued on page 11

INCREASINGLY ILLEGAL: THE BC LIBERALS' CUTS TO LEGAL AID

By Ivan Drury

As of February 28 2004, the BC Liberals no longer fund legal aid for Immigrant or Refugee claims. Refugees in BC now must face their hearings without legal representation, in a new country, often without speaking the language the laws are written in. The Liberals are sending letters to refugee applicants, in English, offering the services of interpreters in the courtroom to compensate for the lack of legal representation.

This may seem to be a contradiction with Minister George Abbott's statement of May 2003 that the provincial government is seeking to draw more 'skilled' English speaking, young immigrants into Vancouver. However, the elimination of legal aid will not cut off immigrants who can afford to pay thousands and tens of thousands of dollars in legal bills. These cuts will drive everyone who does not have this money underground into Vancouver's growing non-status and super-exploited workforce.

The elimination of legal aid for immigration and refugee claims in BC will amplify the severity of the attacks on refugees by the federal government. By intentionally increasing the base of non-status workers in

the province, the BC Liberal government is attacking the wages, securities and rights of all workers in the province. Working people, their organizations and their unions must organize against these cuts for the democratic, human, labour and legal rights of immigrants, refugees, non-status people and all poor and working people in BC.

Following is a letter of endorsement from Mobilization Against War and Occupation to No One is Illegal - Vancouver, endorsing their campaign against the cuts to legal aid. Fire This Time encourages other groups and activists to endorse and get involved in this campaign and RESTORE LEGAL AID!

Contact No One is Illegal: noii_van@hotmail.com

MAWO Supports and Endorses NOII Vancouver

FEB 15th, 2004

Dear No One is Illegal,

We are writing on behalf of Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) to extend our endorsement of the No One Is Illegal campaign against cuts to legal aid.

We are an antiwar coalition of 50

student, youth, indigenous, labour, and third-world organizations across the lower mainland, and we take an active stance against wars, invasions and occupations abroad as well as against attacks on oppressed people at home. We recognize the attacks on immigrants and refugees at home as an extension of the same wars being waged across the globe.

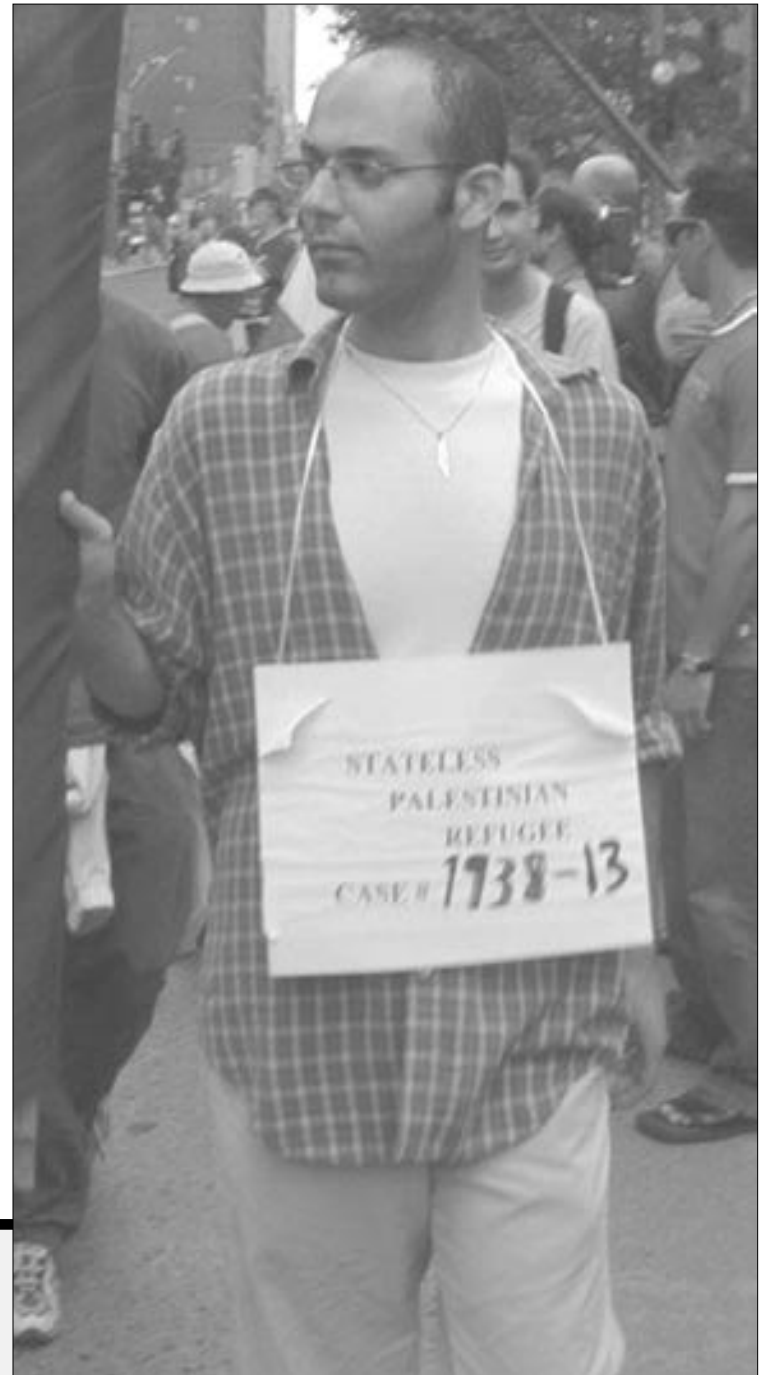
In our last general meeting MAWO voted to endorse the campaign "SAVE LEGAL AID" given the relevance and significance of the attacks being waged currently against immigrants and refugees in Canada and BC. Denial of legal aid to the most oppressed layers of society is one of the most significant attacks we can fight. We recognize that in order to build a movement and effectively fight the war at home we must respond to and organize against attacks on immigrants and refugees.

Through our motion to endorse the campaign of No One Is Illegal, we are offering our participation and support in all levels of the campaign. Please contact us about the future actions and organizing of this campaign.

In Solidarity,

Shannon Bundock and Kira Koshelanyk

MAWO Co-Chairs



A Palestinian marches against the deportation of Palestinian refugees in Montreal. His sign reads 'Stateless Palestinian Refugee.'

Why Women must Demand Sovereignty, Self-determination for Oppressed People

From page 10

destiny, when Indigenous people need to make any decisions about our governance, our livelihoods, the way we support ourselves and each other, what's best for our communities, they way we even get food, or keep each other healthy; when these decisions need to be made, Indigenous people are forced to answer to the same powers that have been attacking us on all these fronts throughout history, the same Canadian government that has broken every treaty ever signed in Canada and every promise they have ever made.

Under this violent, racist and repressive colonization that began 500 years ago in Canada, women have been denied control of their lives. 'Health care' to many Indigenous women, as we have seen, means a horrific history of forced sterilization, of genocidal European disease, and of the repression of traditional medical practices. For example, according to the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, only one third of the urban Indigenous population had access to traditional medical practices, and another third reported not knowing if such health practices were available in their community. Today Indigenous people, and women in particular, still are denied full and adequate services, and this is a direct continuation of the same colonialist occupation that first

stripped Indigenous people of their sovereignty and rights.

Specifically, women, young women, poor women, working women, Indigenous women, are all denied health care and abortion rights to some degree within Canada. Although abortion in Canada was decriminalized in 1988, the legal right to an abortion does not mean that all women have the choice of having an abortion, or the ability to access abortion services, and access throughout the country continues to be severely limited. A 2003 Canadian Abortion Rights Action League report found that only 17.8% of hospitals in Canada provide abortion services, and in Saskatchewan, less than 3%.

In Alberta, there are four hospitals providing abortions, and Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Newfoundland each have only two. All over Canada abortion services are concentrated in major urban centres, while at the same time most reserves are located in more remote rural areas. And for many women, lack of funds for travel prevents them access, particularly in the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, where there is also a higher population of Indigenous people, and where women must be flown to Ottawa or Montreal for abortion services. The same is true in Prince Edward Island, where there are no abortion services

anywhere in the province, and women are forced to travel to private clinics out of province. The same inaccessibility exists in Ontario and Quebec, although they have the highest percentages of hospitals providing abortion. In Newfoundland, at St. John's General Hospital, a doctor's referral is necessary, which is hard to get in many parts of the province; and in New Brunswick, an abortion must be approved by two doctors and performed by a gynaecologist in a hospital to be paid for by the province. At several BC clinics in particular, women are often subject to waiting periods of two to three weeks, and in some places in Canada waiting lists can be up to six weeks, at which point for many women it is too late.

Women's access to choice and to services they need for survival means, by extension, access to the tools to control their lives. The lack of access, or denial of access, directly undermines women's democratic and human rights and maintains their oppression. Based on the foundations of women's oppression under the class structure in general and under capitalism in particular; based on the fact that this oppression is needed for the system to function, we need to recognize that lack of health care is not a flaw in the system, but rather a foundation for its functioning.

As was outlined, Indigenous

people here suffer from disproportionately worse living conditions than the general population, in terms of poverty, lower standards of health, crowded living conditions, higher rates of imprisonment, and unemployment. It's been said we live under 'Third World conditions.' This is no accident, any more than women's oppression under today's oppressive governments is a coincidence. Because of our position under current oppressive governments, women are always disproportionately affected by attacks on working, poor and oppressed people, such as the BC Liberals' attacks we are all facing here. Maintaining the oppression of women and Indigenous people are two sides of the same coin: denying oppressed people control over their own lives, denial of sovereignty. This is one tactic of the overall strategy of imperialist governments, a strategy that requires that all poor, working and oppressed people remain subjugated, divided and under constant attack.

Women's oppression under colonization and occupation can only be addressed if women unite with all oppressed people and demand sovereignty. There is no way that women in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, colonial Canada, or anywhere in the world

can have full and fair access to health care without first having control over their lives. This control does not exist for anybody living under war, occupation, and colonization, when all people's living conditions and ability to access any kind of social services, including education, basic survival needs, and health care, is devastated. When you look into the reasons behind the current era of perpetual war and occupation, you find that the same forces are at work that maintain the oppression of all working, poor, and oppressed people all over the world, including Indigenous people here, and including women. As in all situations, women are disproportionately affected because of our already oppressed position.

A movement to demand full choice for all women, and full control over our lives for all oppressed people, directly threatens the foundations of today's system; a system that employs the tactic of oppressing women and Indigenous people within their agenda of attacks on all of us. To effectively challenge and defeat these attacks, Indigenous women and all women everywhere must unite to demand full sovereignty and self-determination for all oppressed people.

The History of UN Interventions

From page 6

of 3000 troops. As the Struggle for power escalated, the people of Somalia suffered from incredible famine and military aggression. The US attempt to end this suffering was to re-establish capitalist economy by selling food to Somalian traders. Thousands of Somalians died during this famine that the UN and US supported through the form of aid chosen. The aggression that took place in Somalia represents a new era of U.S. involvement in the UN. During missions to Somalia, American forces were the only troops allowed entrance to the country, and also refused to wear the uniform of UN peacekeepers. The UN is still involved in the occupation of Somalia, and Somalians still suffer under oppressive regimes.

Bosnia

With the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, and the placement of 32,000 NATO troops, the UN has tried to establish legitimacy in Bosnia-Herzegovina through creating the most powerful military force in the territory. The US designed accord split the former Yugoslav Republic into Bosnia-Herzegovina along racial lines for the benefit of imperialists. After the NATO led bombing campaign the economic and civil structures of Bosnia-Herzegovina were left devastated and entirely reliant on Western capital.

The United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNCHR) has reported a return

rate of 27%, though the statistics include people displaced to ethnically divided areas. With this factor considered the actual rate of return is only 5%.

The facts of the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina are the results of a tactic of western imperialism seeking to create many mini states that rely on a US economic monopoly to exist. Not only did the UN fail to accomplish its mandate in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also the intervention stands out as a horrific example of the conduct of UN "peacekeepers". Among the many atrocities attributed to UN "peacekeepers" many cases of rape, torture, mutilation, murder, and prostitution have been documented and are still being exposed.

Rwanda

The absolute failure of the UN within Rwanda is a case of the ineffectiveness of the UN in itself. In early April of 1944 the president of Rwanda was killed, the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR), and the Hutu militia began to carry out the mass genocide of the Tutsi's. The UN forces in Rwanda, UNAMIR (United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda) failed to intervene because it was outside of their mandate as a "monitoring" force. In just over two and a half months, it is estimated that half the country's population of eight million have been slaughtered, or turned into refugees.

By late April, the UNSC had voted to remove UNAMIR troops from RWANDA, slashing their presence from 2,500 to 270. In late May

the UNSC voted to restore troops, but the deployment of the 5,500 (mainly African) troops was delayed as the US refused to pay for any of the costs.

In Rwanda we see the type of international aid that is provided by the UN. The UN mission in Rwanda was mandated as a monitoring mission however; they failed to report on the well-documented and eminent genocide. After failing to report, their mandate, along with the hesitant reactions of the UNSC, didn't allow them to react to the genocide. Troops were removed at the exact moment they no longer had control of Rwanda, and sent back as soon as they could establish a UN type of order in Rwanda. Rwanda is an example of UN occupation.

East Timor

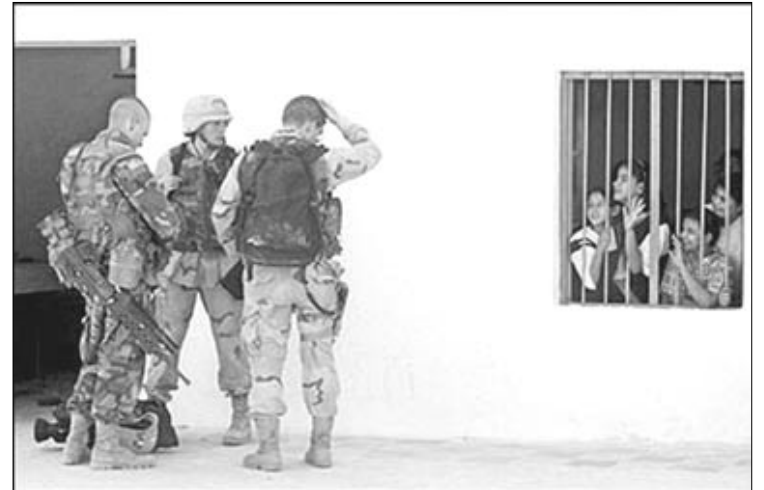
Following a long history of Imperialist intervention, East Timor a former victim of Portuguese colonialism was invaded and annexed by Indonesia. As a result of the invasion, and the oppressive conditions that were created, 200,000 East Timorese were killed. Due to resistance in East Timor amid the late 80's and early 90's, Indonesian president Suharto called a referendum. The referendum was to encompass the question of East Timor's independence. Responding to a high voter turnout rate and the high possibility of a push for sovereignty Indonesian militias carried out a violent dispersion of over 200,000 Timorese.

As a result of the independence vote the UN established a force in east Timor by September of 1999.

By late October the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor officially

Took charge, directly undermining the independence of East Timor. Essentially what peacekeeping forces did in East Timor was establish UN occupation at a time when strategically they could take control of the country and deny any true sovereignty for East Timor.

imminent, the UN took a passive role, and watched as the US demolished Iraq. The role of the UN during the occupation was to legitimize the US position by backing the US led administration in Iraq and providing international support for a unilateral war and occupation where the victims are those who have been allegedly freed.



Iraqi schoolchildren watch US soldiers from inside their classroom.

Sierra Leone

In the early 1990's due to a struggle for power going on since Sierra Leone was declared independent from Britain in the 1960's, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) began a campaign against President Joseph Saidu Momoh. The UN Security Council imposed sanctions on Sierra Leone in 1997 in an attempt to bar the supply of arms. British imperialists continued to funnel weapons and support into the country. Following talks in July of 1999 a peace agreement was signed between the RUF and ECOMOG -an armed monitoring group set up by the Economic Community of West African States. The peace agreement broke down when UN troops arrived to police the agreement, and RUF forces denounced the presence of UN forces. By November of 1999 UN forces came under attack in east Sierra Leone, and shortly after several hundred troops disappeared.

Following the failure to establish UN occupation, British paramilitary troops moved into Sierra Leone to aid in "logistical support" for the UN. With the Military aid of Britain, the UN declared the war over in January of 2000, and established an occupation force to control the region.

Iraq

In September of 2002 the US followed up the 10 years of UN sanctions, by creating the premise for the war on Iraq through addressing Iraq as a "grave and gathering danger" at a UN General Assembly. In November of 2002 after weeks of pressure, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1441 designed to create the "serious consequences" of Iraq not revealing weapons of mass destruction. UN weapons inspectors were sent to the country for their first field visit that was to take place over the next four years.

Thirteen days after Chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix reported on Iraq's willingness to cooperate, the US unilaterally attacked Iraq to "disarm Iraq and free its people". In May of 2003 the UN Security Council approved a resolution backing the US led administration in Iraq, and in turn promoting the illegal occupation of Iraq.

As the war on Iraq became

Haiti

In late February of 2004 Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide was the subject of a coup de etat. Aristide states that he was forced onto a plane by US soldiers and flown to Central Africa. After the Ousting of the democratically elected leader, foreign troops have moved in, under the UN banner, and set up the UN occupation. The official aims of the UN in Haiti are to train a police force, and reinstall the disbanded military. Imperialist nations such as Canada and the US have made it clear that the occupation of Haiti will continue until a structure has taken hold of Haiti that benefits imperialism. The agenda of the UN in Haiti is to implement structure that will not support the people of Haiti. Self-determination is a condition that the UN cannot address, as it contradicts the existence of UN forces in Haiti.

NO TO UN OCCUPATION! NO TO UN INTERVENTION!

Given the clearest examples of UN intervention, there is no doubt that the UN is not a body that can even aid the poor and oppressed people of the world. In no way is it in the interest of people to have their nation invaded and a new structure created for the benefit of foreign nations. In no way have UN led occupations around the world led to an international community that acts to achieve social justice.

Almost more important than the UN's history of imperialist intervention, is the history of the UN's failure to even address some of the most repressive situations around the world. Examples like the US carrying out war in Vietnam, Panama, Chile, and most recently Haiti.

Entering into this era of war and occupation imperialists, including those within the UN have made it clear that working and poor people's interests are not the same as the interests of the UN. The only way we, as poor and oppressed people from marginalized communities can fight these imperialist attacks is to organize with people who represent the voice of our communities! To call out for an end to all occupations whether they are the US marines, or UN "peacekeepers"! And to support the self-determination of all oppressed nations suffering from the imperialist agenda carried out by the United Nations!

End the Occupation of Iraq

From page 2

only attainable by fighting to end both privatization and the occupation itself.

Constitution and Elections

The impossibility for the people of Iraq to see any improvement in their current situation without an end to the US-led occupation is further shown in the problems that imperialists are having with setting up a puppet government that will ensure their imperialist objectives in Iraq are met. The signing of an interim constitution on March 8th by the US-appointed Governing Council, rather than a step forward for the US strategy of establishing a puppet government, further exposed the shaky foundations that the US-led occupation is resting upon. Both before and after the signing, the constitution was heavily criticized even by members of the Governing Council, and as a result the signing was delayed by almost a week. The US can barely get its hand-picked representatives, who by their own admission don't stand a chance of maintaining office if there are elections, to agree on even an interim constitution, how could it possibly carry out the rest of its 'timetable' objective with any degree of popular support in Iraq?

As the ruling classes from the various countries with a stake in Iraq's fate debate over whether it is 'too soon' for elections, whether they should be held before or after the transfer of civil power, and in what capacity the UN should be involved, a more fundamental question remains.

How is it possible to have 'free' or 'democratic' elections in Iraq while the country is still occupied by imperialist countries? Can people 'freely' express their wishes with the presence of 160,000 troops, who constantly harass, imprison, injure and kill Iraqis? Is it possible for the people of Iraq use the political system being designed and set up by imperialists to decide how best to govern their country, when their interests and wishes directly challenge the imperialist objectives in Iraq?

From the hopelessly dysfunctional Governing Council at the top right down to the 'regional caucuses' and councils, which the US set up and claims are intended to build a 'democratic' system in Iraq, the Iraqi response to the imperialist-designed governance models has been to reject their legitimacy. On January 28th, for example, the US-appointed regional council in Nasiriyah was surrounded by roughly 10,000 residents demanding the immediate resignation of all the councilors. The governor was forced to flee from the building.

On the other hand, the ability of the Iraqi people to govern themselves in opposition to the imperialist-imposed schemes for 'governance' is shown in the province of Taji. In November 2003 the Washington Post reported that when the occupying forces showed up to start setting up local councils, they soon discovered that "the Iraqi people formed their own representative councils in this region months ago."

End the Occupation of Iraq! Troops out Now!

As the people of Iraq are seeing every day, whether they are students, workers, unemployed, male female, Sunni, Shi'ite, or Kurdish, the US-led occupation can only bring more destruction as the imperialist occupiers attempt to dig themselves out of the world economic crisis through the super-exploitation of Iraq. It is only through establishing their own institutions, such as the labour unions and regional councils they have already put together, and creating their own government by way of a constituent assembly, that self-determination will be achieved by and for the people of Iraq.

For this to happen, the occupation of Iraq must end at all levels. We must demand an end to the occupation in Iraq, whether it is led by the US or the UN, whether it is 'unilateral' or 'multilateral'. This includes the military presence as well as the Coalition Provisional Authority, we must demand all troops out now!

The destruction in Iraq brought on by the US-led occupation should also serve as a warning to working and oppressed people worldwide of the path that the imperialist countries are taking us on as they launch further wars and occupations in the coming decades. We must extend the demand of self-determination to newly-occupied Haiti. We must also demand self-determination for Afghanistan, Palestine, and Indigenous people, as a united, international struggle against war, occupation, and destruction.

In Defence of Cuban 5 Political Prisoners in US

Letter of Support From Vancouver Activists to Cuban 5

Free the Cuban 5 Committee – Vancouver
PO Box 21607
Vancouver, BC, Canada V5L 5G3
cuban5van@yahoo.ca

Dear Rene, Fernando, Antonio, Ramon,
and Gerardo,

We are sending this message of solidarity because we are inspired by the example you set as part of the worldwide struggle for freedom from imperialism and injustice, and for the dignity of all oppressed people. Our work draws so much from your steadfast commitment to protecting and defending revolutionary Cuba from US imperialism. Following your case as you articulate, with such humanity and integrity, the surrounding politics and issues has truly been the driving force of our movement-building work.

We came together to organize a widely successful public forum with Vladimir Mirabal, Third Secretary of the Cuban Embassy in Canada, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the attack of the Moncada garrison on July 26th (a date we are sure is close to your hearts). We consist basically of youth, women, people of the Third World, and Indigenous activists who are also active in various work regarding Cuba.

Out of the energy and interest sparked at the forum, our group set upon the task of educating, organizing, and mobilizing around your case in solidarity with you five prisoners of imperialism. We understand this case is related to the entire Cuban and international struggle for freedom and dignity.

We also understand that the movement around your case is connected to the struggle for self-determination and sovereignty of Indigenous people right here in Canada, who have been fighting for centuries against the same world forces which have sought, and still seek, to



The Cuban Five, from left to right: Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labanino, Fernando González, **René Gonzalez**, and Antonio Guerrero.

oppress and exploit the Cuban people. The unlawful incarceration of you defenders of the Cuban people's sovereignty happens alongside the brutal suppression of any action taken by First Nations people here to assert their inherent rights and title. That is why we see our work here in Canada as unique and important, and why we will continue this work until the true perpetrators of crimes against the Cuban people and the rest of humanity are exposed and defeated.

We were recently honoured to be part of building Vancouver's welcoming of Irma Gonzalez and Aleida Guevara March, as part of their Canadian speaking tour on this case. It was undeniable that all those present felt the urgency and conviction of Irma's words. There is no comparison to the education one receives from someone so intimately and passionately connected to the case. Since then we have also organized several movie events focusing on your case as well as connecting the case to the struggles in other Latin American countries.

Most importantly, we are actively engaged in a petitioning campaign on your behalf. We consider this to be our most necessary and dynamic work - on the streets, talking to people about the case and discussing

all the issues surrounding it. Every one of the 900-plus signatures we have received since beginning this campaign represents a positive conversation with someone. Through focusing on everyday people not already established as political organizers, we have learned the power and potential of this case of political prisoners to ignite both anger and solidarity in all people in Canada.

How obscene that Olga Salanueva and Adriana Perez were once again denied visas by the US government, and so you are still separated from your loved ones after so many years. What inspiring strength and resolve come from your families and supporters who will continue working until the day you are free!

In today's era of perpetual imperialist war and occupation, the role revolutionary Cuba has played for the people of the world -- urging, inspiring and motivating us to forever advance toward victory -- has taken on even more urgency. As defenders of the Cuban revolution against US imperialism, and as prisoners of imperialism, you are a burning example of resistance.

The terrorism -- bombings, biological warfare, shootings, hijackings, poisonings, blockade, and devastation -- that Cuba has faced from anti-Cuban forces, especially

from within the US and with the backing of the US government and the CIA, are attacks on the people's effort to reclaim their lives and dignity in the face of overwhelming odds. The Cuban people's resilience and defiance of these attacks, easily identifiable in your actions, speak volumes to the billions of people around the world also under attack by the same forces.

We are happy to congratulate you on the recent Atlanta Circuit Court of Appeals decision to hear the grounds for an appeal of your case, as well as a report on the totally politicized nature of the case. This is a major victory for human rights and proof that the injustice and hypocrisy you have faced is clear to anyone objectively looking at the case. We eagerly await March 10th and will use it as a further opportunity to educate and build around your case.

We have faith in people and we have faith in their ability to understand and be moved and mobilized by these injustices. In this new year we see a burning promise in mobilizing around this case to bring you home and continue the efforts towards freedom and dignity.

In Solidarity,

Free the Cuban 5 Committee - Vancouver

Vancouver Demands Free Cuban 5 Political Prisoners in USA

By Thomas Davies

On February 20th, 2004, the Free the Cuban 5 Committee – Vancouver and Amigos de Cuba packed the IWA Hall with more than 130 people for an educational and inspiring film night and forum on the Cuban 5 political prisoners in the US, and the criminal US blockade against Cuba.

City Councillor Tim Louis, Amigos de Cuba's Jose Ostorga, and the Free the Cuban 5 Committee's Shahdin Farsai were the featured speakers who updated us on the situations of the political prisoners and the blockade. Following was 'Desafio (Challenge),' a fascinating, informative Cuban documentary on the US

blockade against Cuba; as well as a short film showing Leonard Weinglass, attorney to the Cuban 5, presenting the case to the National Lawyers' Guild.

The Free the Cuban 5 Committee and Amigos de Cuba continue to organize in defense of Cuba against imperialism, and to educate and mobilize against the inhuman attacks on the five political prisoners and against the brutal US blockade. We invite all those in solidarity with Cuba to get involved and participate! Next meeting: March 25 and April 8, 2004 –please call for venue.

Cuban5van@yahoo.ca

Tel: 604-322-1764

PO Box 21607

Vancouver, BC, V5L 5G3



Vancouver City Councillor Tim Louis speaking at Free the Cuban 5 Forum, February 20th 2004.

Amigos de Cuba...

Estimados amigos de la solidaridad y la amistad,

Lo invitamos a seguir de cerca los acontecimientos en Cuba y América Latina. Conforme se acerca la campaña electoral, la administración Bush y sus fuerzas más recalcitrantes de origen cubano prepotentemente apuntan sus metrallas hacia Cuba como su próxima víctima. Amigos de Cuba los invitamos a ser parte de la rebeldía contra la dictadura fascista de Bush que intenta dominar al mundo a punta de metralla, no sólo defendiendo Cuba sino también América Latina y a los pobres de esta tierra. Necesitamos expresar en todas las formas posibles nuestra oposición a esta nueva sangrienta intervención de EE.UU. contra América Latina.

Lo invitamos a navegar en nuestro portal cibernético para enterarse de los aspectos más relevantes de

Cuba y nuestra querida América Latina. También lo invitamos a mandar sus opiniones. Como comunicadores comunitarios, esperamos servirlo mejor a través de nuestra página electrónica.

Lo invitamos también a ser parte de nuestro equipo, ayudándonos en traducciones, enviándonos artículos alternativos, sugerencias de cómo mejorar nuestra presentación digital y participando en la defensa de la justicia, de Cuba y América del Latin.

Puede escribirnos sus opiniones o el análisis y nosotros los anunciaremos alegremente en nuestro portal. Sus comentarios y sugerencias son bienvenidos. Espere tener noticias de usted..

En solidaridad,
escritorio editorial de Amigos de Cuba
www.amigosdecubacanada.com

Café Rebelde... Café Rebelde...

Café Rebelde is an opportunity for people to come together to celebrate and unite the various struggles for Social Justice in Latin America. It is a coalition of several grassroots organizations. The next Café Rebelde will take place on January 30, 2004 at 7pm, at 706 Clark Drive. The topic will be: political prisoners in different parts of the world. The purpose is to promote solidarity with Latin America. It seeks to open up spaces for the community of Vancouver to share and express Latin American culture and discuss issues of current interest in Latin America. It is a space for political socialization and participation. Café Rebelde can be defined as a place for conscious leisure.

Café Rebelde es un espacio para que la comunidad pueda celebrar y unir la lucha por la justicia social en Latinoamérica. Es organizado por una coalición de varias organizaciones Latino-canadienses. El próximo café rebelde se llevará a cabo el **30 de enero de 2004 a las 7pm, en el 706 de la calle Clark esquina Georgia**. El tema será: presos políticos en diferentes partes del mundo. El objetivo de este proyecto es promover la solidaridad con Latinoamérica. Busca abrir espacios para compartir la cultura latinoamericana y discutir temas de actualidad. Es un espacio para la socialización y participación política. Café Rebelde se puede definir como un lugar para el esparcimiento consciente.

Amigos de Cuba...

Dear friends of solidarity and friendship,

We would like to invite you to continue following closely the events on Cuba and Latin America. As the electoral campaign approaches, the US administration and its most recalcitrant forces of Cuban origin are targeting Cuba as their next prey. We invite you to be part of the rebelliousness against the Bush dictatorship by not only defending Cuba but also Latin America and the poor of this earth. We need to express in all our ways our opposition to the new bloody US intervention in Latin America.

We invite you to browse our new website and give us your opinions. We hope to serve you better as a community communicator. Through our site, you can learn about the most relevant topics related to Cuba, Venezuela and the rest of Latin America.

We invite you as well to become part of our team, by helping us in translations, sending us alternative articles, suggestions and by participating in the struggle for

justice and in defense of Cuba and Latin America. You can write your opinions or analysis and we will happily post them on our website.

Your comments and suggestions are more than welcome. Hope to hear from you.

*In solidarity,
Amigos de Cuba's editing desk
www.amigosdecubacanada.com*

*Recommended topics:
Venezuelan Government Denies Supporting Leftists and Guerrillas
President of the Republic of Cuba, At the Karl Marx Theater on January 3, 2004, for the 45 anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution
UN hands Iraqi funds to occupying force
Top Ten Bush Administration Outrages
Venezuela Asks Interpol to Help Capture Terror Suspects Seeking Asylum in the US
"Without culture there is no revolution" Interview with Farruco Sesto*

Operation: Canada Out!

From page 8

campaign, as we are responsible for understanding how the current actions of Canadian imperialism affect us now, in the near future, and how it will affect generations to come,' said Tania Ortiz, spokesperson for the Student-Youth Committee Against War and a student at Langara College. 'It is also important to see that access to essential services for youth under occupation is bleak. Understanding this, we must work in solidarity with oppressed youth across the world, who are disproportionately the victims of these occupations, and echo the people of their country in their demand for self-determination.'

The comprehensive approach of Canada Out! sees that the demand for self-determination is one for all oppressed people and nations. The campaign inherently challenges Canada's history as a colonialist power, occupying First Nations territory illegally.

'Indigenous peoples are adamant against the occupations in the Middle East just as they are against the occupation here in North America,' said Clayton Thomas-Muller, organizer for MAWO and a member of the Indigenous Environmental Network. 'Occupation is occupation - whether you're talking about Canada in Afghanistan, Israel in Palestine, US/UK in Iraq, or the 500 year occupation of

this continent, known as Turtle Island. What we are advocating is the immediate end to these aggressive interventions upon people's lands, for the troops to come home now.'

Canada Out of Afghanistan! Petition Tour

While this press conference was well attended, the issues raised with MAWO's Canada Out! campaign continue to create discussion around the Lower Mainland months after - particularly among students through the Canada Out! Petition Tour, which has now made stops at nearly every college campus, enabling the issue to receive unprecedented dialogue and ultimately gaining over 2,500 signatures.

This list of supporters steadily grows as the petition campaign has been taken on by a number of student unions and organizations, most being endorsing supporters of MAWO since its foundation. This petition is also readily available online, and is gaining national support from coast to coast.

All work within MAWO's 'Canada Out!' campaign exposes Canada's escalating role as an imperialist power, continued role as colonialist, and adds that such policies—waging war at home and abroad—must be opposed in solidarity with oppressed people and nations, in the crucial struggle for self-determination.

Movimiento Fire This Time Por Justicia Social - Bases de Unidad

La humanidad es amenazada hoy por guerra, crisis económicas, el hambre, la pobreza y el crimen: todos creados por el impulso capitalista por maximizar sus beneficios a expensas de la gente del mundo. Para oponernos a cada uno de estos crímenes contra la humanidad, debemos enfocar todo nuestro trabajo y acción para construir los cimientos para avanzar nuestros intereses en una amplia lucha contra el capital internacional, sus herramientas de división de la clase obrera y sus instituciones locales. El principio fundamental del Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social es la unidad y la solidaridad activa de todos los pobres y gente de trabajo, local e internacionalmente. Debemos reconocer que este principio no tendría sentido sin una lucha activa porque la búsqueda de este principio es agudamente contraria al interés de la clase predominante, los cuales utilizarán todos los medios a su

disposición para mantenernos divididos y hostiles entre nosotros mismos.

Fire This Time es una organización política basada en la acción y comprometida a construir poder social y político de la gente pobre y de trabajo en British Columbia. Creemos que la única manera de desafiar con eficacia y amenazar al gobierno y su agenda corporativa es con la organización de masas de gente activa en lugares de trabajo y en las calles. Estamos dedicados a movilizar y a unificar a gente pobre y de trabajo contra el Gobierno Liberal, sus legislaciones y políticas en contra de los pobres y trabajadores. Estamos comprometidos a organizar con trabajadores y gente pobre de las comunidades más atacadas y explotadas del Lower Mainland y más allá: comunidades de gente de color, inmigrantes, refugiados, "illegales", trabajadores de bajo-salario, gente lisiada, homosexuales, comunidades indígenas, gente

desempleada y familias de bajos ingresos. Nos oponemos a todas las formas de opresión y de explotación: desde sexismo al racismo, de la homofobia al colonialismo y a el resto de instituciones, de pensamiento, de creencia, de acciones y de los comportamientos que humille y degrade a gente para crear hostilidad y división entre nosotros.

La meta del Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social es construir un amplio movimiento de base para derrotar al gobierno Liberal de BC. Nuestro trabajo es proporcionar las herramientas necesarias para unificar y para activar a la clase obrera en BC., para construir un movimiento amplio de base, fuerte y eficaz para oponernos a los Liberales de BC. y sus ataques contra la gente pobre y trabajadores. Este movimiento debe ser integrado en el contexto revolucionario más amplio de la lucha internacional contra el capitalismo e imperialismo; aunque nos

enfoquemos principalmente en política local, esencialmente el alcance de nuestro trabajo es internacionalista. El apoyo a las luchas de la gente oprimida en otros países debilita la hegemonía y el poder de la clase capitalista en otras tierras y por lo tanto debilita su mando local, ayudando así en las batallas de la gente oprimida en Canadá. Además, la práctica de la solidaridad internacional solidifica la cooperación, esencial en la construcción de un movimiento del mundo por justicia social. La agenda del Gobierno Liberal es parte de un programa de reestructuración global conocido como neo-liberalismo. Luchar a los Liberales de BC. es luchar contra el neo-liberalismo y capitalismo global. Debemos ampliarnos en esto, implícita y explícitamente para hacer las conexiones relevantes a nuestras domésticas luchas diarias, para superar la división geográfica, y dejar en claro que cuando participamos en la lucha, no luchamos solos, sino

junto a millones de trabajadores y de gente pobre alrededor del mundo. En la globalización capitalista - imperialista no hay lucha local que no tenga un carácter internacional. Cada internacional es local y cada local es internacional.

El Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social apoyará y trabajará con otros movimientos y luchas progresivas ya sea por demandas inmediatas o a largo plazo, localmente, nacionalmente e internacionalmente. Nuestra meta principal es abolir la pobreza e injusticia por medio de educación, participación y acción directa. Intentamos alcanzar un nivel colectivo de conciencia que permita a la gente oprimida, pensar socialmente y actuar políticamente para alcanzar justicia social por cualesquiera sean los medios necesarios.

- Translated by Claudio Ekdahl

The Fire This Time Movement For Social Justice Basis of Unity

Humanity today is threatened by war, economic crises, starvation, poverty and crime: all created by the drive of capitalists to maximize their profits at the expense of the people of the world. To oppose each of these crimes against humanity, we must focus all our work and action to build a foundation for and advance the interest of an overall struggle against international capital, its tools of working class division and its local institutions. The fundamental principle of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice is the unity and active solidarity of all poor and working people, locally and internationally. We must recognize that this principle is meaningless without active struggle because the pursuit of this principle goes sharply against the interest of the ruling class and they will use whatever means they have at their disposal to keep us divided and hostile amongst ourselves.

Fire This Time is a politically based action organization committed to building the social and political power of poor and working people in BC. We believe the only way to effectively challenge and threaten the government and their corporate agenda is through the organization of masses of people in motion in workplaces and in the streets. We are dedicated to mobilizing and unifying poor and working people against the Liberal Government and their anti-poor, anti-working people legislations and policies. We are committed to organizing with working and poor people from the most attacked and exploited communities in the lower mainland and beyond: communities of colour, immigrants, refugees, "illegals", low-wage workers, disabled people, queer people, indigenous

communities, unemployed people and low-income families. We oppose all forms of oppression and exploitation: from sexism to racism, from homophobia to colonialism and all other institutions, thought, beliefs, actions and behaviours that humiliate and demean people to bring hostility and division amongst us.

The goal of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice is to build a broad based movement to defeat the BC Liberal Government. Our work is to provide the tools necessary to unify and activate the working class in BC to build a strong and effective broad-based movement to oppose the BC Liberals and their attacks on poor and working people. This movement must be integrated in the wider revolutionary context of international struggle against capitalism and imperialism; although we are mainly engaged in local politics, in essence the scope of our work is internationalist. Supporting the struggles of oppressed people abroad weakens the hegemony and power of the capitalist class in other lands and consequently weakens their rule at home, therefore aiding the battles of oppressed people in Canada. In addition, the practice of international solidarity solidifies the co-operation essential in building a world movement for social justice. The Liberal Government's agenda is part of a global restructuring program known as "neo-liberalism". To fight the BC Liberals is to fight neo-liberalism and global capitalism. We must expand on this both implicitly and explicitly to make the connections relevant to peoples daily domestic struggle, to overcome geographic division, and to make it clear that when we engage in struggle we do not struggle alone

L'humanité est incessamment menacée de guerre, famine, crises économiques, pauvreté et crime, suscité par les capitalistes et leur recherche du profit au détriment de tous les peuples du monde. Afin de combattre ces crimes contre l'humanité, nous devons concentrer nos efforts sur la création et l'avance d'une lutte contre le capitalisme et les autorités locales capitalistes, dans le but de détruire les instruments qui divisent le prolétariat. Les principes fondamentaux du Mouvement Fire This Time pour l'Équité Sociale sont la solidarité et l'unification des pauvres et des ouvrier(ère)s aux niveaux local et international. Il faut bien comprendre que ces principes sont dénués de sens sans une lutte active concomitante, car les capitalistes ne

but alongside millions of working and poor people around the world. Within capitalist and imperialist globalisation there is no local struggle that does not have an international character. Every international is local and every local is international.

The Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice will support and engage with other progressive movements and struggles whether for immediate or long-term demands, locally, nationally and internationally. Our main goal is to end poverty and injustice through education, participation and direct action. We seek to reach a collective level of consciousness that allows oppressed people to think socially and act politically to achieve social justice by any means necessary.

Le Mouvement Fire This Time pour l'Équité Sociale: L'Union fait la Force!

nous donnerons pas la victoire sur un plateau d'argent – la poursuite de nos objectifs est à l'encontre des intérêts capitalistes et ils utiliseront les moyens les plus grossiers dans le but de nous vaincre. Alors la solidarité s'impose!

Le Mouvement Fire This Time est une organisation politique activiste qui s'engage aussi à édifier le pouvoir politique des pauvres et des ouvrier(ère)s de la Colombie-Britannique. Nous avons tout lieu de croire que la seule façon de contester le gouvernement et ses ambitions politiques est par une résistance organisée dans la rue et dans nos lieux de travail. Nous nous engageons à mobiliser et à unifier les ouvrier(ère)s et les démuni(e)s des communautés les plus exploitées de la région métropolitaine de Vancouver et au-delà. Tous et toutes contre le gouvernement Libéral et ses politiques anti-pauvres et anti-ouvrières!: les personnes de couleur, immigrant(e)s, réfugié(e)s, "illégaux(ales)", les économiquement faibles, handicapé(e)s, trans/bi/homosexuel(le)s, peuples autochtones et chômeur(euse)s. Nous nous opposons à tout genre d'oppression et d'exploitation: sexisme, racisme, colonialisme, homophobie et tous les institutions, crédos, actes et comportements qui nous avilissent et nous divisent.

Notre objectif est de bâtir une base politique diverse et de mettre le Parti Libéral de la Colombie-Britannique en déroute. Nous forgeons les outils qui démanteleront l'abominable monstre Libéral! De plus, ce Mouvement s'intégrera dans une lutte révolutionnaire internationale contre le capitalisme et l'impérialisme – quoique l'essentiel

de nos engagements politiques est au niveau local, l'envergure de notre entreprise est internationaliste. Par force de soutenir la lutte internationale contre la classe dirigeante, nous affaiblissons l'hégémonie des capitalistes en Afrique, Asie, au Moyen-Orient, etc., et par conséquent nous rendons vulnérable leur autorité ici aussi, au Canada. En outre, l'existence d'un mouvement internationaliste pour l'équité sociale exige la solidarité et le soutien de nos camarades à l'étranger. Les objectifs du Parti Libéral font partie intégrante d'un projet mondial économique connu sous le nom de néolibéralisme. La lutte contre le Parti Libéral de la Colombie-Britannique est donc aussi la lutte contre le néolibéralisme et le capitalisme mondialisé. Nous tenons à préciser que nous résistons au capitalisme bras dessus bras dessous avec des millions d'autres ouvrier(ère)s et démuni(e)s dans le monde entier. Dans l'enceinte de la mondialisation capitaliste et impérialiste, les luttes régionales et locales font immanquablement partie de la lutte internationale.

Le Mouvement Fire This Time pour l'Équité Sociale appuiera et s'unira aux autres mouvements progressistes pour leurs/nos revendications immédiates et à long terme, soit aux niveaux municipal, national ou international. Notre but essentiel est de mettre fin à la pauvreté et aux injustices par l'entremise de l'éducation, la coopération et l'action directe. Nous envisageons une conscience collective qui permettra aux personnes et peuples opprimé(e)s de penser et d'agir politiquement et par la suite, d'atteindre l'équité sociale, à tout prix.

社会正义斗争联盟的群众基础和宗旨

人类社会今天面临着种种威胁：战争，经济危机，饥饿，贫穷，犯罪。所有这些，都是由于资本主义者为了在人民身上榨取最大的利润而造成的。为了与这些人类的罪恶作斗争，我们应当建立一个群众基础，提高人们对资本主义制度做斗争的重要性的认识。社会正义斗争联盟的基本宗旨是要把贫困的劳动人民团结起来，不但是本地区的，而且是国际上的。我们应当认识到，没有积极的斗争，我们的目标将毫无意义。由于我们的团结，威胁到统治阶级的利益，他们必然会利用他们所掌握的一切工具，在我们内部产生敌对，并分离我们。

社会正义斗争联盟是一个政治组织。我们的责任是要在卑诗省内壮大贫困劳动人民的社会和政治力量。我们相信，唯一能有效地影响政府行为的途径是通过组织广大人民群众，在工作场所或大街上进行抗议和游行。我们将致力于发动和团结广大贫困的劳动人民反对自由党政府，反对他们的剥削劳动人民的立法和政策。我们将组织和团结低陆平原以及其他地区各社区的最受剥削的广大贫困的劳动人民。这些社区包括：不同种族的社区，移民，难民，所谓非法居留者，低收入工人，残疾人，同性恋者，原居民社区，失业者以及低收入家庭。我们反对任何行式的压迫和剥削：从性别歧视到种族歧视，从殖民主义到各种制度，信仰以及各种使人们相互仇视和敌对的行为。

我们的目标是要通过发动一场浩大的群动运动来打败卑诗自由党政府。这场斗争必须与国际上反对资本主义和帝国主义的斗争联系起来。虽然我们的工作重点在本地，但本质上我们工作的范围是国际间的。支持海外人民的斗争，可以削减资产阶级在国际上的霸权和力量，从而援助加拿大人民的斗争。国际间的团结合作对建立世界正义运动是十分必要的。卑诗省自由党的议程是世界新自由主义计划的一部分。与卑诗自由党作斗争，是与世界新自由主义和资本主义作斗争。因此我们清楚地看到，我们并非孤单地斗争，全世界千百万的劳苦人民和我们并肩战斗。在资本主义者和帝国主义的全球化主义下，任何一个本地的斗争都带有国际的特征。每一个国际斗争是本地的，而每一个本地的斗争也是国际的。

社会正义斗争联盟从事，参与和支持各种进步运动和斗争，不论是当前的或是长期的，不论是本地的或是国内的或国际上的。我们的目标是通过教育，参与和直接行动，来消灭社会贫穷和社会不公正。我们寻求唤起每个人的觉悟，引起被压迫人民的社会思索和采取政治行动来达到社会公正。

- Translated by Joe Chou

Fire This Time Basis of Unity (Farsi)

روزگار انسان و انسانیت، در هر لحظه با جنگاوری، بحران‌های اقتصادی، تحلی و گرسنگی، قتل و -تایه تهدید می‌گردد. همه این‌ها ناشی از چپان مردم توسط سرخپه‌ان این وحشیانه -اوردن حداکثر سود به -مدعی و بی‌مردمی انسان است. برای معاش و رفاهتی بودن نامیر این جنایات ضد بشری ما باید همه نیرو و توان‌مان را جهت ایجاد بنیادی از زحمتکش و ستمکشندگان در تقابل با سرمایه جهانی و نمایندگان و موسسات محلی‌شان و همه ابزار و روش‌هایی که آنها برای تفرقه ما به‌کار می‌برند، متمرکز کنیم. اصول اولیه‌ای گروه ما بر اساس اتحاد و همبستگی فعالان با مردم زحمتکش علیه فقر و بی‌سامانی، چه در سطح محلی و چه در سطح جهانی، تشکیل یافته است. البته، بر همه ما باید روشن باشد که بدون شرکت و حرکت فعال مردم، این اصول مشتق کلیات بروی کاغذ بیش نیستند. چرا که استمرار این مبارزه علیه منافع طبقات حاکم محلی و جهانی سرمایه‌داری است، و آنان بی‌شاد از هر امکان و وسیله‌ای که در دسترس دارند استفاده خواهند کرد که ما را به جان هم انداخته و ما که تولید کنندگان واقعی ثروت و پیشرفت

مردمیم. ۱. به ... نیکو ... و ... مبارزه. Fire This Time -انسانی -عاشق بود که بر اساس ارزش‌های سیاسی، اخلاقی -مبتنی بر عدالت، خواهان اتحاد مردم زحمتکش و فقیر برای ایجاد سازمانها و ارگان‌های توده‌ای آنان است. ما ستم‌ها، راه‌های محلی و قابل -امرا -جهت منافع -حاکم -مدت دولت لیبرال بریتیش -تلقا به حقوق مردم در زمینه های اقتصادی، اجتماعی و سیاسی، و اقدامات توتالیترالیستی-سرمایه‌داری آن، برقرار ساختن ارگانهای توده‌ای و مستقل مردم می‌باشد. ما با هر گونه استثمار و استثمار، و عقاید نژادپرستانه، سکسیسم، ضد همجنس‌گرایی، و هر گونه ایده‌ای که شکاف و بدبینی را در صفوف زحمتکش و ستم‌دیده‌گان تشدید کرده و مانع اتحاد انقلابی آنان گردد در اساس و بنیان مخالف بوده و علیه آنان مبارزه می‌کنیم. سازمان ما متحد است که با شرکت در مبارزات کارگران، زنان، جوانان و تمامی ستم‌دیده‌گانی، که متحمل زبان‌های مالی و حقوق انسانی و دمکراتیک گردیده‌اند، صفوف آنان را مستحکم نموده و از این طریق، چالش و بدیلی اساسی در مقابل سیاست‌های ضد مردمی دولت لیبرال بریتیش کلمبیای، که انتشار ضربه‌پذیر جامعه، از جمله پناهنده‌گان، مهاجرین غیر سفیدپوست، زنان، جوانان، معلولین، بومیان کانادا، همجنس‌گرایان، بیکاران و خانواده‌های نده -آمد را مدد قرار داده، اتحاد کنیم. در ضد -کلام، مدت -عاشق ما در این برهه، اتحاد معنی مردمی و تمام -ولای -مدت -دولت، ترویج -سرگرم -مربط -کلیا -است.

ما سرمایه‌داریست و به امری‌توجه -مستقیم، ما را بر سر و سرورنا، از هر حرکت -معنی -بیراموز -مب -استثمار و امپریالیسم پشتیبانی می‌نماییم. چرا که همبستگی بین‌المللی، مبارزه همگانی لازم برای ایجاد یک حرکت جهانی در جهت برقراری عدالت اجتماعی را -سهمین و -سکس -بسیاید. ما -بیبایدید

- Translated by Nasim Sedaghat

The Struggle Against Police Harassment and Brutality

From page 7

him by the office of the Police Complaints Commissioner for further investigation.

Although it is independent of any policing body in BC, the inability of the Commission to effectively monitor the investigations of the VPD on themselves was further hampered by BC Liberal government cuts in 2003. When the new Police Complaints Commissioner took over in 2003, his office had received a 30% budget cut, resulting in the elimination of the post of the Deputy Commissioner and the reduced capacity of the Commission to effectively process complaints.

End Police Harassment And Brutality!

As this paper goes to print, the results of the investigation of VPD actions at the demonstration at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in 1998 have come in. This external investigation, carried out by the New Westminster Police Department, has found that the beating of people sitting and standing on the sidewalk outside of the police line was not in any way the fault of the police.

This investigation, as with all investigations into police wrongdoing, is the result of conscious complaints and pressure against the VPD. In order to challenge all police brutality and hold all police officers accountable for their actions, we must extend the demand for investigations into cases of police brutality to a demand for a fully independent complaint and investigations process. As long as police are the only ones investigating the police, the findings of these investigations will remain overwhelmingly in favor of the police and

the ruling class. Those rare investigations that result in the rightful dismissal of abusive and violent officers will remain token examples used to prove the myth that police violence is the exception, rather than the rule in the VPD.

While the firing of two of the Stanley Park 6 police officers is an important precedent, on its own it is not a solution to the plague of police misconduct and brutality in Vancouver. At the root of this problem is the conflict between the rights, securities, and freedoms of poor and working people in BC and the pursuit of profit by capitalists and their BC Liberal government. The violence that is carried out every day against working class people in the form of cutbacks, labour deregulation and reactionary legislation must first be ended in order to finally end police brutality.

As the Canadian ruling class steps up their reactionary attacks on people both at home and abroad, their police forces will also step up their campaign of harassment and brutality against us as well. As we build a movement to end the violence of poverty against poor, working and oppressed people in BC and internationally we must also fight for an end to police harassment and brutality. In the short term this means the establishment of a fully independent complaints and investigations process and the firing and punishing of all officers found guilty of violent misconduct. In the long term this means that poor and working people must build a movement against all systemic violence at the root of police brutality: racism, sexism, colonialism, poverty and all attacks against us by the capitalist government.

www.fire-this-time.org

What is GRFPPM? Que es GFAPPM?

The Group of Relatives and Friends of Political Prisoners in Mexico (GRFPPM) is a Vancouver-based organization that works in solidarity with four social activists serving time in Mexican jails. Jacobo Silva, Gloria Arenas, Fernando Gatica, and Felicitas Padilla were arbitrarily detained in October 1999, tortured, and accused of being guerrilla leaders, since then, they have been held prisoners. The case of these four Mexican political prisoners has been internationally denounced; however, the Mexican government continues violating the prisoners human rights. Currently, a hunger strike of over three hundred and fifty prisoners is taking place in La Palma maximum security prison to demand the Mexican government:

- 1) To bring back the prisoners to jails closer to where their families live.
- 2) To improve the living conditions inside the jail, namely, medical service, food, etc; stop the repression and harassment to which they are constantly subjected.
- 3) To release the prisoners from inside the punishment cells, where they are isolated and not allowed to have any contact with other human being for long periods of time.

If you would like to help and/or to receive more information please contact us by e-mail: gfappm2@yahoo.ca or visit our web page at www.mexprisoners.com

El Grupo de Familiares y Amigos de Presos Poleticos en Mexico somos una organización de apoyo a cuatro luchadores sociales encarcelados injustamente en Mexico. En octubre de 1999, Jacobo Silva, Gloria Arenas, Fernando Gatica y Felicitas Padilla fueron detenidos arbitrariamente, torturados y acusados de ser dirigentes guerrilleros, desde entonces, ellos se encuentran presos. Este caso ha sido denunciado internacionalmente, sin embargo, el gobierno mexicano continua violando los derechos humanos de los detenidos. En este momento, mas de trescientos cincuenta presos de la carcel de máxima seguridad de La Palma se encuentran en huelga de hambre solicitándole al gobierno mexicano:

- 1) que los prisioneros que han sido transferidos sean regresados a cárceles cercanas a su domicilio.
- 2) que mejoren las condiciones carcelarias, tales como servicio médico inadecuado, mala comida, etc.
- 3) que pare la represión dentro de las cárceles, ya que los detenidos son sometidos a largos períodos de aislamiento en celdas de castigo.

Si quieres apoyar esta lucha o si deseas recibir mas información, por favor comunicate al correo electrónico: gfappm2@yahoo.ca o visita nuestra página de Internet: www.mexprisoners.com

CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN! US/UK OUT OF IRAQ!
HANDS OFF HAITI!

FREE PUBLIC FORUM

MARCH 28TH
2PM-5PM

A free public forum on the injustice and illegality of the occupation of Iraq, Afghanistan and, Haiti.

BRIFFANNIA COMMUNITY CENTRE
 1661 Napier St,
 off Commercial dr.

organized by: Mobilization Against War and Occupation
www.mawovancouver.org / mawoinfo@yahoo.ca / 604-322-1764

For more information on upcoming MAWO events and activities check out

www.mawovancouver.org

WHAT THE OCCUPATIONS OF

IRAQ,

PALESTINE,

AFGHANISTAN,

CANADA,

AND HAITI

HAVE IN COMMON

FREE PUBLIC FORUM APRIL 10
6:30 PM Collingwood Neighborhood House
 (1 block south of Joyce skytrain stn.)

this event is not organized by collingwood neighborhood house

organized by: Mobilization Against War and Occupation
www.mawovancouver.org / mawoinfo@yahoo.ca
 604-322-1764

CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN!

March and Rally Against the Canadian-led Occupation

Saturday April 24th at 12 NOON
VANCOUVER ART GALLERY
 Organized by MAWO

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