

FIRE THIS TIME



The Newspaper of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice

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FREE

What Solution for the Problem of Iraq Occupation?

Are UN or NATO Troops the Answer?

By Ivan Drury

"It is critical that not only the US but also those countries that opposed the war provide the UN with the mandate and other tools that it needs, since on all counts the UN option is better than any realistic alternative. IGC interviews suggest that, despite strong misgivings, Iraqis are far more likely to accept a UN than a US role." - From "Iraq's Transition: On a Knife's Edge" International Crisis Group report, April 2004

The real motivation for the US-led war on the people of Iraq had less to do with Iraq itself, and more to do with the sharpening of the competition between the US and other imperialist countries and the decline of the international capitalist economy that molded that rivalry.

From the beginning of the war drive, in September 2002, the US appealed to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and NATO for support in the war that President Bush promised would come, with or without them. It was not surprising that these proposals were opposed and blocked by the same countries that the US was (and still is) speed racing with for the control of the resources and strategic territory of



Iraqis protest in Baghdad against US-led occupation the day after the so-called 'handover' of sovereignty, June 29th 2004.

the most oppressed people of the world. On March 5th, two weeks after the failure of their proposal to intensify UN action in Iraq and establish the country as a UN protectorate and ten days before the US-UK bombing of Iraq

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International Struggles

No Light at the End of Tunnel For Sharon

Israeli Government Collapses While Political Crisis Deepens

By Mike Krebs

"It is not triumph that can be felt in Israel today, but depression and a grim realism." - Roger Cohen, journalist, New York Times, July 20th 2004

Since Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced back in March that his government would be pursuing a unilateral 'disengagement' from the part of Palestine known as Gaza, the Israeli military has so far been fully engaged in an all-out massacre of Palestinians in Gaza on a daily basis.

This includes the bulldozing of houses, routinely firing missiles into Palestinian neighborhoods, conducting campaigns of house to house searches and harassment,

and the deaths of dozens of Palestinians and hundreds of injuries in the last week of July alone. All of these are being carried out, so far unsuccessfully, to crush the continued struggle of the Palestinian people against the Zionist occupation of their country.

At the same time, the Israeli government is in the international spotlight over the destruction inflicted against Palestinians by the Apartheid Wall that Israel is building through the West Bank. On the one hand, the construction of this wall is fueling outrage among oppressed people all over the world for this latest insult against their brothers and sisters in Palestine. On the other, under

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BC Struggles

The Britannia 9 Final Sentencing, a Victory for Working People

By Shannon Bundock

From October 3rd 2002 to July 5th 2003

On Monday July 5th, with final sentencing, the long and drawn out trial of the Britannia 9 came to a close. One of the two young activists who were found guilty of "attending an illegal assembly" and "obstruction" was Ivan Drury. Ivan is a well-known, long-time social justice activist in Vancouver and an organizer with Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice and Mobilization Against War and Occupation.

On October 3rd 2002 a demonstration took place at the Britannia Community Centre to protest an appearance by Gordon Campbell, who was attending the opening of a Public-Private-Partnership at the Community Centre. This demonstration occurred in the midst of the movement of working and poor people against the sprawling and

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The US Presidential Elections

Is There Any Difference Between Bush and Kerry?

By Brennan Luchsinger

Bush and Kerry: Two Faces of Imperialist Rule

As the 2004 US elections approach there is a question growing on the minds of all poor and oppressed people within the US and abroad: Whether George W. Bush will prevail for another four years, or whether US senator John Kerry will become a new power in the White House. The underlying aspects of this question must not be seen simply from the perspective of party or regime change, but from the perspective of the agendas of both candidates. Do John Kerry and the Democratic Party truly have an agenda different from that of the Bush Administration? The answer to this question can be found in an examination of the events leading up to the 2004 presidential election as well as the positions and approaches both candidates have adopted on key issues.

Even in these early stages there

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UN-NATO Occupation: Not a Solution for the Iraqi people

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would begin, France, Germany and Russia released a joint statement against the war. This statement read, "We will not let a proposed resolution pass that would authorize the use of force. Russia and France, as permanent members of the Security Council, will assume all their responsibilities on this point."

George Bush responded to this by announcing that the US would prepare for war, whether or not a UN authorization was won. However, the US-UK did not give up on winning any sort of UN concession, introducing three more resolutions in the UNSC in the ten days left before war began. All of these proposals were met with opposition and were dropped.

At that time, a popular slogan in the anti-war movement was, "No war on Iraq, with or without UN support."

Today, 18 months later, UN or NATO troops are being brought up as the solution to the US's quagmire in Iraq by everyone from George Bush and John Kerry to major voices in the anti-war movement. Even France and Germany have changed their tune and resolutions for a "UN role" in the construction of elections and stabilization (UNSC resolution 1546) in Iraq and for NATO taking on the training of Iraqi soldiers.

However, running a so-called constituent assembly (which would never be possible under occupation anyway) and training soldiers is not the "international" solution that the US is looking for. As John Kerry explained in his acceptance speech as the presidential candidate for the Democrats, "I know what we have to do in Iraq. We

US imperialism has reached a critical point; if they do not 'share the spoils' of war to 'internationalize' the occupation as a tactic to buy more time against the Iraqi resistance and demoralize and divide the increasingly united resistance, they risk losing it all.

The United Nations

"The Bush administration is turning to the United Nations only because it is in a terrible fix, and the United Nations is the only way it can get out of this fix. The bargaining power of the United Nations has suddenly increased." – Gustave Feissel, former UN assistant secretary-general

On May 22nd 2003 the UNSC passed resolution 1483, recognizing the US-UK occupation of Iraq. On August 14th 2003, that extended to resolution 1500 that gave the Iraqi Governing Council official international status as a national body, and the October 16th resolution 1511 recognizing the Coalition Provisional Authority timetable-countdown to "elections."

Throughout this time, the UN, faced with attacks on their operations in collaboration with the US last August, physically pulled back from Iraq. It was not until June 8th 2004 that the UNSC unanimously accepted resolution 1546, pledging the UN to "a leading role in assisting the Iraqi people and government in the formation of institutions for representative government." It was this resolution that claimed the occupation "over" and recognized the June 30th "handover" to be one of sovereignty for the Interim Iraqi Government. At the same time, it mandated the US-UK to continue their occupation until "the completion of



Pakistan has won the "right" to stockpile US military hardware, including depleted uranium, as well as access to defense research and development programmes, and an exclusive US loan-guarantee fund.

Full UN occupation, to take over major military responsibility from the US, is not an option that is officially on the table. The US ruling class is still bargaining that they can get away with giving up less profit than they would have to in order to secure a deal with the UNSC, where they would have to completely appease all three of France, Germany and Russia.

These negotiations can be best understood by the discussions had last year over the UN recognition of the occupation when Germany and Russia stalled over the negotiation table with the US. When the US appealed for an end to the sanctions on Iraq, the Russian foreign minister said, "In its current form the draft resolution presents serious problems for our country." The US bought both Russia and Germany's approval with the "right" to bid on reconstruction contracts in occupied Iraq, and the opposition in the UNSC disappeared.

However, John Kerry's promise that he would be better than George Bush at winning "our allies to our side" means that the US ruling class is keeping this option open, and is preparing to give major concessions to their rivals if it is absolutely necessary to not completely lose Iraq.

NATO

At the Group of 8 (G-8) summit June 7 to 10 this year, George Bush tested Jacques Chirac to see how France would respond to dumping NATO completely into Iraq. The discussion turned into an argument over the relief of Iraq's debt. Given that Iraq owes France, Germany and Russia collectively more than \$127 billion, Chirac disagreed with Bush's suggestion that the "vast majority" of Iraq's debt should be relieved.

Speaking at the G-8 summit, Iraqi interim president Ghazi Yawar said that he would welcome NATO involvement in Iraq, "especially if it involves the European community. [But] we do not want to

have a variety of small numbers of forces which will look like a carnival." With Bush and Chirac's differences over Iraqi debt relief, Yawar's idea did not go over well.

Bush conceded, "I don't expect more troops from NATO to be offered up. That's an unrealistic expectation. No body is expecting that." But Scott McClellan, White House press secretary qualified this statement saying, "these discussions are just getting underway."

Instead of bringing a proposal to the NATO summit June 28-29 to send NATO to Iraq, Bush sent Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi. Allawi requested that NATO train Iraqi military and offer technical support. This request was granted.

NATO is substantially different from the UNSC, and easier for Bush to maneuver within, because it is easier for him to make deals with individual or blocks of countries and get NATO to support them in part. Currently, 15 of the 26 members of NATO have troops in Iraq through this sort of dealing. But Bush has yet to win the commitment of NATO forces, and this will not happen until US imperialism is willing to give greater ground.

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John Negroponte addressing the UN Security Council regarding resolution 1546.

need a president who has the credibility to bring our allies to our side and share the burden."

I get by with a little help from my 'friends'

"The US will wait until the situation is a complete mess before passing it on to us." – Senior UN official, May 2003

The situation in Iraq has certainly become a complete mess for the US. Far from swiftly taking over the country and moving on to take on the "democratization" of the whole Middle East, the US has met nothing but the most incredible resistance from the Iraqi people.

Since the war drive began there has been a debate in the ruling class of the US over how much of the profits of Iraq they can afford to give up to buy "allies" in the war and occupation.

the political process." (Paragraph 12 of resolution 1546)

Resolution 1546 also included the mandate for a UN security force of "up to 5,000 troops" (Kofi Annan), separate from the US commanded troops, and specifically to provide protection for the UN team.

Almost two months later, on July 21st, Kofi Annan announced that the UN had not been able to secure the commitment of a single troop towards this 5,000 strong security team. The next day, Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi, affirming his previous statements about UN presence in Iraq being "crucial," set out to petition Arab countries to join this force. On August 6th he hit paydirt. Pakistan, Tunisia and Morocco all promised troops to the operation. In return, the same day, George Bush announced that Pakistan had become a "major non-NATO ally." This status with the US means that

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Editorial Board: Shannon Bundock, Mike Krebs, Ali Yerevani, Nasim Sedaghat, Ivan Drury
Editor: Ali Yerevani
Layout & Design: Mike Krebs
Copy Editing: Tamara Hansen, Aaron Mercredi
Spanish Language Editor: Carlos López

Phone/Fax: (604) 322-1764
 Email: info@fire-this-time.org
 Mail: PO Box 21607
 Vancouver BC
 V5L 5G3

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Iraqi Youth Under US-UK Military Occupation: Is there a Future?

By Tamara Hansen
& Aaron Mercredi

The occupation of Iraq has shattered the lives of Iraqi people. The most blatant and obvious example of this is the impact of the occupation on the future of Iraq- its youth. Under occupation, Iraqi children and young people are growing up in streets where they are constantly under attack, by bombs, tanks, guns, and soldiers. In addition to these dangerous living conditions Iraqi youth are also facing a lack of employment, clean water, electricity, medical care and school closures.

No security under occupation

Underlying these brutal realities of occupation is the fundamental lack of security, which is preventing all Iraqis from meeting their basic needs and carrying out their lives. Like all Iraqis, youth suffer tremendously under the occupation, and live under the constant intimidation and harassment of the occupation forces.

We saw the harsh reality of the U.S. and U.K.'s actions towards Iraqi people with the release of the photos of prisoner abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison, and the subsequent surfacing of other cases throughout Iraq's prisons. What was not in the news until recently was the fact that young people and children, as young as 10 years old, are among the thousands of Iraqis who are still being held without trial or charge in detention facilities throughout the country.

Reports have also surfaced of the existence of a 'children's wing' of Abu Ghraib prison. A UNICEF report found that children in Basra are being arrested by the British army for 'alleged activities targeting the occupying forces.' The majority of these children are being held as 'internees,' which makes them subject to an indefinite holding time without contact with their family or a trial. That same UNICEF report has discovered that over 100 children are being detained, although the actual number is significantly higher since the organization has been denied access to many prison facilities known to be holding children. Inside these facilities, the names of the children being held are not known, nor is how long they have been kept for and what has happened to them during their detention.

The treatment of young Iraqi prisoners is shocking; just as the treatment of adult Iraqi prisoners, but what makes this abuse even more disturbing is that these are children suffering at the hands of adult guards. Accounts of torture, interrogations, rapes and molestations of young people and children have surfaced which have been detailed by reporters, soldiers, and former inmates. In Abu Ghraib, there was the case of a 15-year old boy who was raped by a soldier. The same interrogation methods used on adult Iraqis are being used on incarcerated children. Beyond the beatings and rapes, Iraqi children are being used against their family members. There is the case of a 16-year old Iraqi boy who was arrested, interrogated, and tortured. He was then shown in a physically wounded and humiliated state to his father who was also being interrogated as a way for the interrogators to crack their witness. Young women also make up Iraq's prison population, and as reported by the same agencies they are not safe from humiliation, violence, rape and torture.

Outside of prison, women are still in danger. A report by Human Rights Watch found that since the occupation began, kidnappings, rapes and other violence against young women have dramatically increased. It is also difficult to keep an accurate count on the number of rapes and violence against women since many cases go unreported, and when they are many cases get lost



in the paper-shuffle which is part of the breakdown in police record-keeping. The situation is so severe that young women are being abducted from busy streets in broad daylight. Because of these dangers many young women are forced to stay home from work and school.

From Abu Ghraib to the streets of Iraq, youth are living under occupation. Concretely this means they are living in an insecure and unstable environment, which is preventing them from going to school, going to work and being able to learn and grow as human beings. Living under the fear and humiliation of occupation has stopped the ability of Iraq youth to live normally and has forced them to adapt to these extraordinary and horrible circumstances.

Books of lies and empty classrooms

The dangerous reality of life under occupation is preventing Iraqi youth from going to school.

During the first stages of war and occupation in Iraq schools were closed. However on October 1st 2003 the US officially reopened schools with coalition soldiers handing out pencils and notebooks to children and youth as they went to their first day back in class. In spite of this, most parents chose to keep their children home because of insecurity caused by continued violence.

Baghdad University has also been a major site of violence and controversy. In April 2003 there was a major fight between Iraqi fighters and US military on the same day that US forces took down the statue of Saddam Hussein and Iraq was 'liberated'. Violence and hypocrisy such as this is inhibiting students' ability to work and study as well as inflicting terror upon those who seek education.

The youth who do make it to school will be learning from new next books made by the US occupiers. The new ministry of Education in Iraq under the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) and the US-led coalition removed any 'controversial' events from Texts books including the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf war, and anything considered anti-Israeli, anti-American, and all images of Saddam or members of the Baath party. Textbooks were manufactured in US by a US company eliminating any chance that the creation of the 5 million new textbooks.

The war and occupation of Iraq has brought a lack of security, violence, mental stress and terror to the Iraqi people. These things are all impeding the youth from receiving the education they need to build a successful future for Iraq. The occupation of Iraq is not liberating anyone, in fact it is preventing their learning and growth and is extremely detrimental to their existence as a proud nation.

No Jobs for the Youth

The occupation of Iraq is hindering growth of the youth of Iraq and causing widespread unemployment. Joblessness which is a direct result of the occupation forces who slashed government workers jobs and gave out most reconstruction projects to foreign owned companies, is leading to many problems on top of the lack of security, such as lack of money, food and clean drinking water.

On August 1st, a study by the college of economics at Baghdad University reported that the unemployment level in Iraq reached 70%. With the plans to continue to privatize state industries, more and more Iraqis will be losing their source of income. More Iraqi youth will have fathers and mothers without jobs to provide for their families and more there will be no opportunities for these Iraqi youth when they enter the job market. What makes this drastic situation even worse is that over the next 5 years, the number of young people entering the job market in Iraq will almost double in what some analysts are referring to as a 'youth explosion.'

Of the meagre amount of jobs that are available, many Iraqis refuse to work for the U.S. authorities. Young people who have grown up under the asphyxiating grip of this occupation, see that they are in a position where they need to fight back.



Iraqi children in front of a burning coalition truck, June 9 2004

Youth Health under occupation

With the lack of jobs and mounting violence in Iraq, health is a major concern for all youth living under occupation. Under 13 years of UN sanctions Iraq's healthcare was crippled to the point that much of the medication used in hospitals was being purchased on the black market, the number of hospital beds declined, infant mortality went up and life expectancy decreased.

According to Aljazeera.net, "It could hardly have gotten worse, but it has."

The case of Ahmad, an 8 year old boy who was diagnosed with leukaemia three years ago is one example of the deterioration of access to healthcare. In March 2003 under sanctions doctors were able to wipe the cancer out of his system and he started receiving a monthly treatment of chemotherapy to avoid a relapse. However when occupation forces entered Iraq, they blocked Ahmad's parents from entering Baghdad where he needed to get the treatment. When he and his family were finally able to get to the hospital they had to cut his medication in half due to medication shortages under occupation. Almost a year later in March 2004 cancer has invaded 70% of Ahmad's bone marrow and he is suffering from secondary infections due to his vulnerable immune system.

"They [Iraqis] deserve a country that is united, that's independent, and that is released from years of sanctions and sorrow." – George W. Bush at Camp Lejeune April 3rd 2003

Iraqi youth living with poor health under occupation, such as Ahmad, show how although the sanctions were lifted to supposedly alleviate the sorrow of the Iraqi people the occupation has in fact created a much more desperate healthcare system. Doctors at the main hospital in Baghdad have reported major support from the community in hospitals with people volunteering to use their cars as ambulances. This community support has also been shown by medical students coming in to volunteer at the hospital and replacing doctors and nurses who are unable to leave their houses because of the lack of safety on the streets of Baghdad.

End the Occupation of Iraq!

We must look to the example set by these medical students from the University of Baghdad who are living in the same desperate situation as other youth under occupation. These students along with many other youth recognize their situation and have decided to fight against it by volunteering their time to work with doctors at the hospital to help other youth and their families. Those who volunteer and those who are out fighting directly against the occupying forces are both working towards

a better future for youth in Iraq.

The youth of Iraq need stability and security to be able to establish a better future for their country, one with better education, healthcare and employment, and one without a repressive occupying forces. To be able to establish these positive steps towards better living conditions for all for those in Iraq, the youth of Iraq are demanding US/UK Out Now! Iraq for Iraqis!



No Light At The End of Tunnel For Sharon: Israeli Government Collapses While Political Crisis Deepens

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the auspices of the EU, the UN, and the International Court, Israel is feeling pressure from the European imperialist countries, as engaged in rivalry with the US as these countries attempt to take advantage of the crises in Palestine and Iraq to strengthen their own position in the region.

Unfortunately for the Zionist state of Israel, these are not the only problems the country is facing. Inseparable from these pressures from outside of Israel is the even deeper crisis they are provoking within the state of Israel itself.

'Disengagement' Plan unites and divides Israeli political parties

'Considerable Palestinian suffering might lessen the pressure for additional withdrawals. This is the rationale of unilateralism.' – Efraim Inbar, Director of the Zionist Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies.

As we reported in previous issues of Fire This Time, Ariel Sharon's 'disengagement' plan for Gaza calls for removing all Israeli settlements in Gaza, involving 7500 settlers, in order to focus on defending and expanding its more valuable settlements in the West Bank, where there are almost 400,000 settlers. This plan is also intended to strengthen Israel's stranglehold on the Palestinians living within Gaza, retaining military control over the area's borders and space, as well as maintaining the ability of Israeli occupation forces to re-enter the area 'when needed.'

Though clearly being carried out solely to further the interests of the Israeli government against Palestinians, even the token 'removal' of Israeli settlements from Gaza is being met with fierce opposition from within Israel's own ruling class, which is resulting in a huge political crisis for the Sharon government.

This opposition starts within Sharon's own party, the Likud, which rejected Sharon's initial plan in a referendum last May. From here, Sharon made minor concessions in order to win the support of Finance Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and his other leading opponents within his party.

Sharon was able to finally get support from Netanyahu, but this only created even more problems for his government. Aside from continued dissent within his party, Sharon's pursuit of the 'disengagement' plan caused the major far-right party of his governing coalition, the National Religious Party, to leave.

Faced with a fractured Likud party and no longer having a majority coalition within the Israeli Knesset (parliament), Sharon and his supporters are now pursuing negotiations with two smaller religious far-right parties, Shas



Israel Labor Party Leader Shimon Peres (left) with Ariel Sharon.

and United Torah Judaism, as well as with the 'left' Labor Party.

These current negotiations have shown that, when it comes down to defending the Zionist project of maintaining a racist and exclusivist state at the expense of even the most basic rights for Palestinians, these 'left' and 'right' parties differ only on the issue of what strategy and tactics should be used against Palestinians. For example, the leader of the Shinui Party, a middle class secular party that is part of Sharon's governing coalition, has 'reluctantly' agreed to the negotiations with the religious parties, going against the party's platform of 'never' forming a government with religious parties. This has resulted in division within the Shinui Party itself, from the rank and file right up to some of the major leaders of the party.

More importantly, the current moves by the Labor Party of Israel to join the government coalition in order to save the Sharon government and the disengagement plan is only the latest example of how there is nothing 'left' or even progressive about the particular strand of Zionism that the Labor Party represents. At a recent Labor Party meeting of senior members, Labor head Shimon Peres responded to critics of joining the Sharon government, saying 'they say we are being used. What are they using us for? To bring peace? Should we be embarrassed by that?'

Given the Sharon government's history of brutal war against Palestinians, not to mention Ariel Sharon's decades-long history of leading, carrying out, and ordering some of the worst atrocities ever committed against the Palestinians, to speak of this same government's desire to bring 'peace' exposes exactly what Peres and other 'left' Zionists mean when they talk about 'peace.' The Labor Party's conception of 'peace' is that for Israel's ruling class, not a 'peace' for Palestinians. This is consistent with the policies pursued by the Labor Party the last time it was part of the Likud government from 2001-2002, where they supported the Sharon government through a

division, dissent, and shaky realignments within the Israeli government is only one of the many internal crises facing Sharon's 'disengagement' plan. The plan has resulted in mobilizations of Gaza settlers and their supporters actively campaigning against the removal of the settlements in Gaza, including a human chain from Gaza to Jerusalem of at least 70,000 Israelis protesting the 'disengagement' plan on July 25th 2004.

In the long run, however, Sharon will probably be able to diffuse protests against the 'disengagement' plan from Gaza settlers and their supporters, once it is clear what the true intentions of this plan are. The history of Zionist strategizing shows that the removal of the settlements in Gaza will probably not be carried out in the end, and is simply being used to buy time for the Israeli ruling class to deepen its suppression of Palestinians, consolidate its expansion in the West Bank, and sort out some of its differences. Expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank continues, as does the construction of the Apartheid Wall. Like the numerous 'peace' plans that different Israeli governments have agreed to since the state's inception in 1948, the 'compromise' element of the 'disengagement' plans will likely be killed in the process, and

capitalist economy. Despite the super-exploitation of Palestinian lands, resources, and labour, Israel currently relies on \$4-5 billion dollars annually in US aid, half of which is military aid to use against Palestinians, the other half of which keeps Israel's economy afloat.

Even despite this aid from the US, which now totals almost \$100 Billion since Israel was founded in 1948, the country's economy is still in crisis, and its attempts to combat this crisis by imposing austerity on the poorest sectors of the population are resulting in a huge deterioration in living conditions within Israel. Unemployment is officially at 11%, and a full third of Israeli citizens live below the poverty line, according to a 2003 report by the Adva Centre, an Israeli research group.

The attacks on workers rights carried out by the government have resulted in regular labour strikes and job actions by Israeli workers, including a 20-day port strike which resulted in \$4.5 billion in damages to the Israeli economy. The strike ended on August 5th, with workers being forced to accept plans for privatization of port facilities and cuts to benefits. This labour unrest is sure to continue so long as the attacks on workers rights in Israel deepen.



Palestinian youth in Gaza, August 2004.

by extracting money out of Israeli workers. By forming a coalition with Sharon, who has already stated that under this new coalition there would be no change in the economic policy of Israel, the Labor Party will at best provide a 'left' cover for these attacks on workers within Israel, and at worst they will actively go right along with them.

Other Dimensions of Internal Crisis

The crisis resulting from the

Israel will use its current round of brutality against Palestinians in Gaza as justification for why it can't pull out of Gaza 'yet.'

Crises that 'buying time' cannot fix

Unfortunately for the Sharon government, there are more significant problems within Israel that 'buying time' will not fix. The most important of these is the continued economic crisis and instability that is a fixed feature of Israel's deformed

'Demographic' Crisis

'Reorder the demographics, or start to. Nearly as many Arabs as Jews live in the Land of Israel already, whereas a Jewish state requires a large Jewish majority. Getting rid of Gaza unloads 1.3 million Arabs for a relatively small price, relocating just 7,500 Jews.' – David Margolis, 'A settler in favour of disengagement,' from Israel Insider, June 28th 2004.

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Bolivia: The Mass Struggle Against Colonial Plunder Continues

By Ivan Drury

"Since the sector was privatized, there's been five times more exploitation, but the income for the state is less than half of what it was when it was under the [former state-owned oil company] YPFB. The role of recent governments in Bolivia has essentially been as employees of these oil companies and there has also been a strong pressure from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank." – Marco Gandillas, Centre for Documentation and Information on Bolivia, based in Cochabamba

Last fall, Indigenous, peasant and working people in Bolivia won a major victory in the ongoing struggle against imperialism with the overthrow of US-backed president Gonzalo "the Gringo" Sanchez de Lozada. With only six months in government, Lozada had become the symbol of over 400 years of colonialist-imperialist exploitation of the wealth of Bolivia. The movement that surged up against Lozada was of a united people, workers, farmers, coca growers, mostly of the Indigenous majority, and their organizations, the COB national labour federation, the Bolivian Farmworkers Federation and the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS), the largest and most influential left-political-party in Bolivia. When these forces mobilized in blockades, mass strikes, marches and protests, it was not only against the imperialist figurehead Lozada, it was against the neo-liberal privatization of the second largest natural gas reserves in South America and against the American and European imperialist forces behind Lozada.

The struggle for both Bolivian national sovereignty against imperialist interventions and indigenous self-determination since Lozada's October flight from power to Miami has continued against two major forces intent on controlling Bolivia and its resources: European gas companies; and US imperialism.

These forces have been continuing attacks with neo-liberal policies in Bolivia through the government that replaced Lozada last fall, headed by Lozada's former Vice President, Carlos Mesa. In order for Mesa to partner with imperialism and make profit off the gas for the minority white and mestizo ruling class, the two most critical issues remain the same as before the overthrow of Lozada. First, to suppress the ever-present threat of Indigenous revolution, and second, to defeat that movement's demand for the nationalization of Bolivian gas.

So what is the difference between the Lozada government that tried to suppress the Indigenous movement and sell off Bolivian gas, and the Mesa government that must do the same? The difference is not in what they do, but how they do it. The Lozada government tried to push private exports through with force, and failed. The Mesa government however, pushed a clever "referendum" on the export of gas, crafted specifically to give

people the "feeling" of democratic involvement.

This referendum went ahead on July 18th, with the full support and financial backing of US imperialism, European gas companies and the International Monetary fund. To understand why imperialism was so interested in seeing a referendum pass that claims to raise the taxation levels on foreign companies invested in Bolivian gas and take possession of gas at the "mouth of the well," it is first necessary to have correct information about the situation in Bolivia, why imperialists are interested in the country, and what the struggle for the nationalization of gas means for Bolivians and for South America overall.

Why imperialists are interested in Bolivia

"The conditions Che [Guevara] didn't find are here now. Outsiders want to exploit it." – US Embassy analyst in Bolivia, April 21, 2004



A Bolivian holding a spoiled ballot from recent oil referendum.

The wealth of the natural gas reserves in Bolivia and the global competition between US and European imperialism plus the revolutionary potential of the Bolivian Indigenous movement, makes Bolivia highly important for imperialists on both a strategic and economic basis.

Bolivia is a small, land-locked country with an extremely poor, majority Indigenous population and the second largest natural gas reserves in South America. Seventy-five percent of the people in Bolivia live on less than \$2 a day, and 30% on less than \$1 a day. The income of the richest 10% of the population is 90 times higher than the poorest 10%. Unemployment is over 13% and more than 70% of people work in the "informal," unregulated economy. All this poverty exists despite the wealth of the gas reserves, (and before gas, the silver stolen by Spanish colonialists) because of imperialist interventions that guaranteed that the people of Bolivia would not know the wealth of their country.

The revolutionary potential of the Bolivian people cannot be underestimated. Eleven Bolivian

presidencies have ended in violent death, a fact that Mesa recorded in a book he wrote on the political history of the country before entering politics. Today, with the explosive issue of the nationalization of gas posed against the extreme poverty of the Bolivian people, the other unresolved issues of last year's overthrow of Lozada, plus the fact that 60% of the Bolivian people are under the age of 25, the US cannot afford to allow the movement in Bolivia to go unchecked.

Stealing gas from the poorest people in South America

For the gas companies (British BP and France's Total and Spain's Respol) the interest in Bolivia is largely economic. The extent of the massive gas-reserves were discovered in 1997 through an IMF-recommended Bolivian contract with the Spanish gas corporation Respol. Erwin van Lumich who represents Respol explains, "Bolivia represents

108th Congress, from the US State Department.

While the US is interested in Bolivia from the position of competition against European imperialists in Latin America and for the overall control of Latin America, this interest is approached through political intervention in Bolivia, as part of a long-term strategy.

In the beginning of 2004, the US introduced two important measures against Bolivia: First, the motion already passed by US congress and awaiting approval by the Bolivian government is asking for immunity for US troops in Bolivia. This would stop US troops from being charged with war crimes while "protecting" Bolivia from Indigenous up risings. Second, in order to stop the growth of anti-imperialist and anti-neo-liberal sentiment in Bolivia, the US formed the "Bolivian Support Group" and the "Bolivian Donors Group" to fund

The IMF also made a deal with Mesa, granting a loan of \$120 million contingent on the passing of the referendum.

So why was this referendum so important for the US and the 'international community'? The International Crisis Group (ICG) stated in their 2004 report, 'Bolivia's Divisions: Too Deep to Heal?', "... nationalism will be taken very seriously now that neo-liberal prescriptions have lost some appeal... There is even talk of [Bolivia] joining a giant regional energy company, Petroamerica, controlled by the governments of Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia." The Economist is even more clear; "Bolivia also has a habit of setting political trends. So the referendum may be seen as a sign as to whether - or at least on what terms - energy multinationals have a future in South America."

The ICG report also explains from another perspective, "The protests of the past few years have been noteworthy for their intensity, pro-indigenous tenor, and opposition to US counter-narcotic policies and the nearly two-decade old neo-liberal economic agenda. Such uprisings, and the rhetoric that envelops them, are threatening to outside investors as well as Bolivia's minority white and mestizo elite."

The struggle for nationalization of gas

The referendum itself wound up being very different from the referendum on the nationalization of gas promised by Mesa when he took office. Neither the word nor the sentiment of nationalization could be found in any of the five referendum questions.

The first three questions on the referendum dealt with repealing Lozada's law guaranteeing 82% of profits from gas to imperialist companies, recovering all hydrocarbons 'at the mouth of the well' and re-establishing the state oil company YPFB. The final 2 were based in building a pipeline to the Pacific and exporting gas through private contracts, though raising tax rates to 50% - the level they were before Lozada privatized.

Mesa himself discredited these 'higher tax rates' when he stated that he would not engage in expropriation and would honor the contracts as they stand, at a tax rate of only 18% until at least 2036.

Arguing against expropriation, he said, "It's easy to play the demagogue. It would be easy for me to say, 'yes we will nationalize through expropriation,' and I would probably be the most popular man alive. But I don't govern for popularity, I govern for the responsibility of the state." His statement made it clear who it was important for him to remain popular with, not the poor, working and Indigenous people who brought him to power, but the imperialists who cut his cheques. His problems were not in dealing with the imperialists, who had accepted the referendum as the "best of a worst case scenario"

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Why Palestinian Resistance will Always Create Crisis for Zionist Israel

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Another crisis within Israel for the Zionist state is being brought about by the continued growth of the Arab Palestinian population, both inside and outside of the state's borders, while the growth of the Jewish population within the Jewish state is minimal. This certainly figures into the Sharon government's plans for turning Gaza into a prison camp as a way to prevent a Palestinian majority within Palestine. At the same time, the Israeli government is refining its racist citizenship policy, and recently renewed a law barring Palestinians who are married to Israeli citizens from being granted residency or citizenship status in Israel. These measures will not change the fact that by 2010 there is projected to be a Palestinian majority in Palestine, and the Israeli government's recent moves to increase Jewish immigration from France will not likely solve this.

Main Crisis: the Palestinian People

In the end, all of these problems that the Israeli government is facing stem from one source: its continued occupation of Palestine. The brutal conditions suffered by the Palestinian people as a result of this occupation continue to fuel resistance, and this resistance cannot be suppressed or annihilated without the complete annihilation

of Palestinians as a people.

Rather than 'defeat' the Palestinian struggle for self-determination or reach a 'peace' deal, Israel has always kept Palestinians (and people in the neighboring Arab states) in a constant state of war, and through this deadlock, ensures that the interests in the Middle East of its imperialist supporter, the US, are protected. However, with the current problems that this constant war against Palestinians is creating for Israel both internally and externally, clearly it is becoming more and more difficult for Israel to continue this war.

The resistance of the people in Iraq to the US-led occupation of their country is still a relatively new factor that Israel has to deal with in how it approaches the suppression of Palestinians. The continued Iraqi resistance as a second front against US-Israeli imperialism is creating a shift in the balance of forces in favour of oppressed people throughout the Middle East and Central Asia, which is opening up more space for the Palestinian people to continue their struggle for self-determination.

Long Live the Intifada!

The current developments in Israel under Sharon's 'disengagement' plan show that there can be no peace, let alone justice, for Palestinians so long as the occupation of their country continues. This holds true

whether the Israeli government's waging war against the Palestinian right to self-determination is dominated by 'right' Zionists, 'left' Zionists, or a coalition of various Zionist tendencies. Israel is a state founded on occupation, built as a 'Jewish' state to the exclusion of all non-Jewish Palestinians, and under this occupation, life for Palestinians can only get worse.

The movement in Palestine and the demands of the Palestinian people are the same demands being echoed by the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Haiti. These demands are being echoed by Indigenous people in Canada. This universal demand of oppressed nations globally is simple: SELF DETERMINATION.

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 - 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 'Disengagement under Occupation! No to the Zionist Occupation of Palestine! Yes to Self-determination for Palestine!*



Palestinians carry the bodies of three Palestinians who were killed by a massive explosion in the Southern Gaza Strip, August 3rd 2004.

Bush and Kerry Promise More US-led Wars and Occupations

From page 1

are developments within the Bush and Kerry campaigns that are signatures of the face of US imperialism within the US and abroad. A few of these key developments are exposed through the platforms that are being put forward by Kerry and by Bush; however there has also been a series of developments through actions that reveal the true interests of Bush, Kerry, and the US ruling class. While these key points and actions are attempts to convince Americans that Bush and Kerry are different candidates, what they reveal are that Bush and Kerry can agree on a strategy that benefits the ruling class, but adopt different approaches as to how they will carry that strategy out

The programmatic approach of the two figures running for president is a truly revealing point around the elections. Some of the key issues that have demanded the attention of the public have are national security, the war and occupation in Iraq, and the economy. Through an examination of these debates, it becomes clear that although Bush and Kerry are attempting to establish different approaches, they are both pushing forward the same agenda: imperialist war and occupation and the interests of the ruling class.

The question of national security has drawn both candidates under the scrutiny of the US public. While debates around this issue have become a decisive factor in the election campaigns, Bush and Kerry are very actively in support of policies that are against the interest of poor and oppressed

people globally, as well as within the US.

National Security

"We will bring security to our people, and justice to our enemies" - George W. Bush quote from Bush Cheney 2004 Website

"We may have an election in here in America. But let there be no doubt - this country is united in its determination to destroy you." - John Kerry on homeland security

National Security is a point that Kerry and Bush are pushing from equally oppressive positions. Both candidates promote themselves as leaders that will continue to wage the war on terror, and further expand the era of imperialist domination all over the world. Bush and Kerry are emphasizing that they will be the president that can lead the nation through war times. This is not an argument that can be isolated to electoral campaigns, but must be extended to reveal the approach carried towards legitimising the era of war and occupation. Bush and Kerry agree that a reactive campaign against terrorism is a functional strategy to expand US power through military might, economic dominance, and a strategic position within the powerful imperialist ruling nations of the world. The overwhelming amount of time spent on the issue of "terrorism" and national security is a continuation of the hysteria swept up from the Sept. 11th attack on the World Trade Centre. In response to these attacks the US ruling class found a point to intervene in to expand its dominance over the world, especially among oppressed third

world countries.

Since the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Centre, national security and homeland defence have been used as a tactic to rule within the US and further attack poor and oppressed people throughout the world. The fact that this is a central issue in this election and that neither candidate can clearly define the word "terrorism" without hypocritically exposing US actions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Haiti signify the reactionary agenda Bush and Kerry will continue to promote.

The Ever Expanding Crisis of the US Economy

"The nation has lost jobs in 25 of the 31 months that President Bush has been in office, making for the worst jobs record at this point in a presidency of any administration since Herbert Hoover." - American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations

There is a fundamental point arising in this election around the economic crisis that faces the US and other powerful imperialist nations. The economic crisis currently facing the US has been developing over the last few decades, and is littered with a history of imperialist interventions around the globe. Through the recent years of the Bush administration, unemployment has risen drastically and job security has diminished, posing an even greater threat to the most vulnerable layers of society. On the day that the Labour Department announced a total loss of 115,000 jobs in one month, Bush told reporters, "there's a positive feeling in America about our economy." Over the last ten

years, joblessness has been on the rise in the US, and neither Democrats nor Republicans have been able to prevent this inherent crisis.

The attempts currently being utilized by the ruling class to maintain their position of power require a constantly expanding imperialist agenda. The underlying aspects of occupation are based in the need for powerful nations to continue their plundering of the impoverished nations of the world. As we've seen in the so-called "reconstruction" of Iraq, the US and its imperialist partners have dominated a nation and its resources for the ultimate benefit of the ruling class in an attempt to stabilize the plummeting US economy.

An occupation supported by both Bush and Kerry, Iraq is one of many US initiatives to dominate the global market in order to settle the rising crisis within the US. While Bush has generated the invasion and strategically manoeuvred to maintain the occupation for as long as possible, Kerry has stated that he will extend the US presence in Iraq until 2008 at the earliest. Consistent interventions like those in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Haiti are nothing more than a systemic method of domination that benefits no one but the elite ruling class. While US domination is being carried out across the world, those that suffer are not only the inhabitants of oppressed nations, but also the poor and oppressed within the US.

The War on Iraq and the Crisis of a Two Party "Democracy"

"I will make America's armed

forces even stronger by adding troops so our forces aren't spread too thin around the globe and by making sure our forces have the armor and support they need. But what this administration doesn't understand is that to win this war, we must make the world respect America's other sources of strength: our economic engine, our ideals, and our profound purpose to be the last, best hope of earth." - John Kerry

US Senator John Kerry is running on a platform that fully supports the occupation of Iraq. His track record in the Senate proves not only this, but that he pushed for the war on Iraq as a unilateral invasion. On October 9th, 2002 Kerry voted in favour of the patriot act, and in turn, the invasion of Iraq in spite of UN disapproval. Kerry has shifted his approach towards the war and occupation in Iraq on the basis of two main points. First, Kerry has shifted strategy to gain the support of soft-imperialists during the election and sees the UN as a body that can provide him with a soft-imperialist cover. The second point is that the conditions of the invasion of Iraq have changed. With the recent "handover" of power on June 28th to the Iraqi Interim Government the face of occupation has changed, allowing Kerry to pursue a multilateral approach. While Kerry voted for the invasion of Iraq out of necessity, it is now possible for him to distract from that tactical move and implement a new tactic in the overall strategy of imperialist domination. His past position was one that reflected his

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Canadian and Mexican Governments and the New Propaganda Offensive Against Cuba

By Kira Koshelanyk

At a meeting of the UN General Assembly on September 26, 1960, Fidel Castro, President of the Cuban government and representative of the Cuban people, delivered a speech titled "The Problem of Cuba and its Revolutionary Policy". In this speech, Fidel outlined the "problem" that the revolutionary people and government of Cuba pose for the U.S. and other imperialist countries. Cuba is a problem because, since the revolution in 1959, Cuba ceased to be a nation and a people available for exploitation and the profit of dominant, advanced industrial capitalist countries. Today these colonialist countries find themselves deep in economic crisis and today the "problem" of Cuba and her revolutionary policy has become too great for imperialist powers.

Cuba represents an example for the people of the world; the Cuban people have shown the world that there is an alternative to arrogance, war, genocide, hatred, egotism, hypocrisy and lies. In such a time as this, when capitalism is in decline, what Cuba represents becomes even more of a threat to countries like

the US and Canada. As this dagger of the failing economy is buried deeper and deeper into the side of global capitalism, every country must decide how they're going to deal with it. Both Mexico and Canada are in this same position as to how to deal with economic difficulty and the imperialist competition and aggression that have characterized the world political situation today. Sadly, both have responded by embarking on a full-scale propaganda offensive against the revolutionary Cuban people and government. Both Mexico and Canada have shamefully taken the offensive against the oppressed people of the world with the goal of protecting the ruling class interests at home.

Mexico and Cuba: Deterioration of Decades of Friendship

"I think the U.S. has faith in Mexico. It's shown itself to be a proper ally." – Richard Pascoe, former Mexican ambassador to Cuba, 2001.

The deterioration of the relationship between Mexico and Cuba over the last 3 years, parallel to the Presidency of Vicente Fox of the conservative "National Action Party" (PAN), signifies the government of this

third world country buckling under pressure from the U.S. and also a shift in alliances in Latin America.

Mexico and Cuba have had a historically fraternal relationship. Nearly a half-century ago, Fidel Castro, in political exile from Cuba, planned the overthrow of the Batista puppet government on Mexican soil. Since then Mexico is one of only two countries on the continent that did not break diplomatic ties with Cuba after the victory of the revolution in 1959. Mexico has consistently and vocally supported Cuban sovereignty and has always been against the US economic blockade of the island.

In 2000, Vicente Fox was elected as president of Mexico in the first defeat of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in 71 years. Relations with the US government under Bill Clinton were described as "thriving" in the years prior to the 2000 election by then PRI president Ernesto Zedillo.

PAN and Fox have led Mexico decidedly further to the right in domestic and international policies since election as well as developing an even closer relationship with the US. This

became more obvious two years ago before a vote in the UN Human Rights Commission when the White House declared that Mexico would be voting against Cuba. Fox denied that Mexico had made its decision, but two days later voted against Cuba for the first time. In the 2003 and 2004 votes Mexico continued to vote against Cuba. And in the recent diplomatic split between Mexico and Cuba in May 2004, the US, mere hours after Mexico had removed its ambassador to Cuba, defended Mexico's move and viciously attacked Fidel Castro. US Secretary of State Colin Powell then stated he presumed to "challenge free and independent nations that made their own choice to properly condemn him [Castro] and his regime for its actions."

Battle Lines Drawn in Latin America

For the US, it is clear why close ties and influence with Mexico serve their interests. The US is now working actively to overthrow the Cuban government. In particular, the cooperation between Cuba and Venezuela under Hugo Chavez has been particularly threatening for the US. Washington is now trying to isolate Cuba and Venezuela

from other nations to prepare for further attacks on them. The capitulation of the Mexican government, one of Cuba's oldest and most loyal allies, is valuable to the US in achieving this end. For Mexico, the ruling class in that country will enjoy some concessions and some protection from the US imperialist onslaught for their part in this betrayal. The US is increasing pressure on all countries in Latin America and the world, to enlist their support in attacks on the Cuban revolution and the Cuban people.

Canada: Friend or Foe for Cuba?

"There are two reasons for Canadian businesses to be in Cuba: 1) because the US is not there and; 2) because the US will be there." – Julia Sagebien, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, 1998

Canada's image and activity as an imperialist player on the world stage present a contradiction. The main characteristic of Canada's image on the world stage is that of a benevolent "peacemaker" that translates in Canada's actions as being "cloak and dagger" imperialist; a smiling face with

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Bush, Kerry, and the Myth of the 'Left' Inside the Democratic Party



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interest in protecting the ruling class at any cost. However, now in hopes of gaining the votes of the masses that are against the Bush Administration, Kerry is promoting the US' ever-expanding imperialist agenda through a multilateral point of view. According to Kerry invasion and occupation should be carried out through the battleground of imperialist nations, the UN.

Early polling shows that Bush is leading Kerry by 2% on how to "handle" the issue of the occupation of Iraq. Both candidates are fighting to prove to the ruling class that they can most effectively wage the war on terror and continue the occupation of Iraq. Bush has the support of the ruling class, and Kerry is fighting to win them over by changing the tactic used to carry out imperialist strategy. As the US falls deeper and deeper into the quagmire in Iraq, it becomes more and more difficult for the US to maintain control, which puts the US agenda of plundering at risk. Kerry and Bush are both attempting to convince the ruling class that their tactics can best protect those interests within the Middle East, and throughout the world. The US is

sinking further and further into economic crisis, and they must pull themselves out at the expense of the Iraqi people.

The true crisis facing the people of the US in this upcoming election is that neither party represents their interests, however they may attempt to convince poor and working people of this. The most important aspect of Kerry's campaign is convincing people that he is different from George W. Bush, and his efforts through his election campaign show this. Bush and Kerry have disagreements within their campaigns as to how the US will be run, differences in their approach to healthcare, education, national security and homeland defence. These disagreements only scratch the surface of the points that Bush and Kerry agree on. They both protect the interests of the ruling class and will continue to implement policies and legislation that attack poor and working people. The grey area is how the two candidates approach such issues and Kerry is currently riding on a wave of discontent with George W. Bush putting him in a stronger position to argue that he has a different strategy. In reality he has nothing other than what George Bush and his predecessors have put in place and promoted over the last few decades.

The Myth of the "Left" Inside the Democratic Party

Another aspect of the elections, are the effect they have had on the antiwar movement and other "progressive" movements within the US. Kerry has received support from many "progressive" circles giving birth to an "Anyone But Bush" movement strictly devoted to ousting Bush from leadership while placing Kerry, an even equally dangerous force into power. The importance of identifying this sort of reactive and desperate campaign comes down to a fine point: Kerry has little

to offer other people in the US other than taking advantage of the masses of American people angry at their current leader.

The dangers of such a movement were seen recently at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) where Democrats with open antiwar stances rallied their support behind John Kerry before any critical discussion of his pro-war stance took place. This effectively left any debate around war and occupation out of the democratic platform. Through the efforts of such "leaders," their "leaders" have undermined many grassroots organizations that worked on issues of war and occupation by placing their support behind a pro-war candidate.

Throughout the early stages of Kerry's campaign he has relied heavily on his past as a Vietnam veteran. Currently this is used to promote himself as a wartime leader, and a voice of objective dissent. Through his 20 years in the senate, he has consistently voted on decisions that conflict with his façade of speaking on behalf of antiwar sentiment.

Historic Example of Democrats

We also must not forget the historic example of Democrats that have led the US into war and used state terror to benefit ruling class interests. Look to the example that Truman (also a Democrat) has provided us. The first atomic weapon ever used on civilians in the history of our existence was used during a time when Truman and the Democratic Party held the White House. Look to the years of the Carter administration, when Baby Doc Duvalier was embraced as a dictator in Haiti, when the Democratic Party signed an agreement to refuse Haitian refugees entrance to the US.

Both Bush and Kerry have no other option but to support and continue to wage war and occupation throughout the world, especially in Iraq. As representatives of the



ruling class they have a simple task before them: to protect the interest of imperialism, and fight the economic crisis affecting the US.

Anyone But Bush

The efforts of a campaign based on "Anyone but Bush" has become a significant aspect of Kerry's campaign can only undermine the interests of poor and oppressed people in the US. By building momentum for the election of Kerry based on the bad aspects of the Bush regime, it gives way to a greater problem: the possibility of a Kerry regime.

If Kerry is elected, it can be guaranteed that he will implement policies that are fundamentally the same as those of the Bush administration. Attacks on poor and working people will continue, along with war, occupation, and the slashing of social services. Seen through his repeated support for war and occupation, and lack of independent working class politics, Kerry is not a viable opposition. He is merely another option for ruling class domination at home and abroad.

In a broader sense there are aspects to this

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US and All Imperialist Hands off Bolivia! Bolivian Gas for Bolivia!

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(Respol representative), but were instead with the movement that had already overthrown one president for making the same moves.

The suppression of the movement:

"One of the key challenges to the government of current president Carlos Mesa has been how to best handle relations with indigenous groups. Some fear these groups could play a role in overthrowing the government and president Mesa is attempting to avoid that by creating channels for the expression of indigenous wishes through the democratic system. The principal challenges are to prevent the political class from cannibalizing itself and to persuade the disaffected indigenous majority to buy into the more socially responsible project the president has put on the table." – CSIS Bolivia Working Group, sub-committee of the Washington-based right wing think-tank

Mesa's announcement of the referendum for July 18th resulted in a series of protests and disruptions against the terms of the referendum, but nothing of the scale of the previous fall. Following a week of student protests, the COB national labour federation and the Bolivian Farmworkers Federation called for a general strike at the beginning of May that resulted in three weeks of sporadic strikes, occupations, protests and roadblocks. Then, through the Coordinating Committee for the Defense of Gas and Autonomous Social Movements, the movement called for a boycott of the 'nationalization-free' referendum.



Demonstration in Bolivia against the referendum and for the nationalization of gas.

Left moves to the right

However, the strongest point of the 2003 mobilizations - unity between all major Indigenous, peasant and workers organizations - had been broken by Mesa's maneuvering, and by the support of these maneuvers by the influential Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) and Bolivian congressman and coca growers leader Evo Morales.

Previously, in the 2003 movement against Mesa's predecessor Lozada, MAS was a central player, key to the unity of the movement of oppressed people in Bolivia. However, MAS's position in the struggle changed at the same time that the US embassy's position towards MAS changed from one of hostility towards them as a leftist-pro-indigenous party to "recognizing that without MAS support, the Mesa government would fall." (ICG report)

The Movement Towards Socialism

(MAS) and Evo Morales backed the referendum, declared unconditional support for Mesa, and denounced the COB boycott, calling for the arrest of COB and Farmworkers Federation leaders. COB responded by expelling MAS and Morales from COB and denouncing him as a traitor and a scab.

The government suppressed the weakened boycott movement by declaring that voting was compulsory, and that abstention was punishable by fines, restrictions on the right to open bank accounts or to get passports. Anyone who campaigned for boycott could face up to five years in jail. Further in this intimidation campaign, Mesa sent 30,000 troops and 20,000 police into the Antiplano region, home to Indigenous peasants critical to October's uprising.

On the strength of the suppression of the boycott movement and the

divide of the movement overall, the referendum went ahead. Although there was up to 50% abstention, it received the 50% plus 1 participation needed to be legitimate. The questions about export barely passed even by those who voted.

Nevertheless, the referendum was trumpeted as a success by the companies and by Imperialism because:

- i) It does not affect the 78 existing foreign gas-contracts, even those with 40 years left in them;
- ii) It rules out expropriation of imperialist gas companies by the Mesa government and;
- iii) It buys time against the anti-imperialist movement for nationalization and Indigenous self-determination by dividing that movement and therefore stabilizing the Mesa government.

The struggle continues:

"The referendum is a positive fact that only helps to normalize the internal situation in Bolivia. It provides more tranquility to fulfill existing contracts and those in development" – Ildo Sauer, gas and energy director of Brazil's Petrobras, the main consumer of Bolivia's gas

"The mother of all battles will be fought from today onwards." – Leading Bolivia newspaper, "La Razon" editorial the day after the referendum

For the same reasons that the referendum was a success for capitalists and imperialism, it was a failure for the task of stabilizing the situation in Bolivia.

The export of gas under the conditions of imperialism will deepen the problems of poverty, joblessness and oppression for 80% of the population of Bolivia, resulting in a sharpening of the class conflict and the rise of the movement. The US, the European gas companies and the IMF have bought time with this referendum, but in the end, this time, like the time bought with the installation of Mesa after the overthrow of Lozada, will run out.

In the mean time, Mesa plans to continue with the promised constituent assembly in May 2005 to draft a new Bolivian constitution. Whether this constitution reflects the needs of people in Bolivia (like the Bolivian constitution in Venezuela) or the desires of imperialism will be determined by the struggle between Bolivians and imperialism in the year leading up to that assembly.

The Bolivian movement against imperialism and neo-liberalism through the struggle for the nationalization of gas has hit a setback with the "success" of the referendum and the split of the MAS away from the COB but the struggle continues. This struggle has special significance for all poor and working people faced with neo-liberal privatization programs, and the strength and courage of the Bolivian Indigenous and worker movement must be a lesson and an example for us.

The demands of the Bolivian people were not heard in this referendum, but in the mass movement that shook Lozada out of Bolivia last fall. These demands were not just for a "better deal," they were for the rightful control and ownership of the rich resources of Bolivia by the Indigenous people and workers of Bolivia. This movement is still alive and its demands must be supported by all poor and working people in the world, no matter where we are, as we recognize these demands as our own. The defeat of the imperialist and neo-liberal strategy in Bolivia would be a defeat for US imperialist plans for all of Latin America as it would strengthen the movement for self-determination and freedom against US total domination. As the struggle mounts in Bolivia in the coming weeks and months, we must join in and support the demands: US and all imperialist hands off Bolivia! Bolivian gas for Bolivia! Independence and freedom for all of Latin America!

The Crisis Facing the US Two-Party System

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move that are even more alarming. The fact that Kerry is being promoted as opposition to Bush above all other aspects of his campaign leaves a great amount of room for filibustering and political manoeuvres to gain power while not clearly laying out a program that benefits poor and oppressed people in the US. To have Kerry come to power on a campaign devoid of a program would mean another four years of attacks for oppressed people all around the world.

Cancelling the November 2004 US Elections: Ruling Class Manoeuvres to Manipulate Social Unrest

The Bush Administration has recently looked into the official procedure involved in cancelling or postponing (for an indefinite amount of time) the elections. The overwhelming significance of a strategic move of this capacity so early in the electoral race clearly illustrates one point on behalf of the Bush Administration: the levels of social unrest and political discontent have reached new levels in the US.

Seen through the outpouring of an international antiwar movement, as well as escalating struggles for

social justice within the US, the level of dissent in the US has risen over the past few years. Largely this is a response to the overall shift to the right that has taken place within the electoral arena. With the Bush administration implementing aggressive neo-colonial policy that attacks working people abroad, as well as at home, the most vulnerable layers of US society are a large part of this social unrest. Even within the last ten years we've witnessed the US government become increasingly aggressive in their attacks, and less shameful in their attempts to conceal these attacks. This shift to the right is seen all across the board, from Bush's political manoeuvres, to the recent Democratic National Convention, where so-called "progressive" candidates rallied their support for the pro-war, pro-imperialist democratic candidate John Kerry.

This strategy of cancelling the elections by hyping up Americans for an alleged terrorist attack, must be seen as nothing other than a response on behalf of the ruling elite to this unrest affecting poor and working people the world over. This is not the first time that the US government has relied on anti-terrorist propaganda and sentiment to unilaterally

impose its will on behalf of all of America. The proof of this is in the very recent past. Just look to the invasion of Iraq and it's clear how the US has used allegations of "terrorism" and "weapons of mass destruction" to whip the US into a frenzy and legitimize the unjust, atrocious invasion of Iraq.

The Bush Administration has made this attempt public as a tactic to "test" how the ruling class shall proceed with its strategy of US expansion and domination. Kerry on the other hand has not yet made a public statement on the cancellation of elections, due an overwhelming need to prove to the ruling class that he can protect their interests. How can he gain the much-needed support of the ruling class if he is not able to protect their interests during his campaign? With these recent reports we must follow closely the advancements of ruling class politics, and the far-reaching hands of imperialism, for as they develop their strategy, we must fight back.

There Is No Option But to Struggle: Educate, Organize and Mobilize

While this battle of ruling class candidates is played out to its full extent we will witness one aspect of the two-party democracy

within the US electoral arena: the theatrical approach that Kerry and Bush will employ to convince masses of Americans that they represent anything other than the elite ruling class. The crisis of the US two party "democracy" must be seen in this context. Bush and Kerry together represent the ruling class, and their tasks are to convince working people that they do not. The tactics they are proposing through their campaigns may differ, but they can truly agree on one point, that the strategy of imperialism must continue on its steadfast course. War and Occupation must continue for the ruling class to remain in power, and nothing will defeat these efforts but the united efforts of all poor and oppressed people. As the attacks of the ruling class escalate throughout the world and social unrest grows more and more people will oppose US hegemony. As they continue with their strategy of imperialist war and occupation, the only thing that will bring around a change in the balance of forces are the masses of poor and oppressed people. With an independent working class program these masses across the world in motion will be moving more and more to the centre of politics for a decisive change.

Those who are willing to die have no fear of your enormous power, of your unbridled rage, nor of your dangerous and cowardly threats against Cuba! By Fidel Castro

Speech made by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, at the ceremony for the 51st anniversary of the attack on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Cespedes fortresses. Ernesto Che Guevara Square, Santa Clara, July 26, 2004.

Dear fellow Cubans;
Distinguished guests:

On this 51st anniversary of the attack on the Moncada fortress on July 26, 1953 I shall address a sinister character that keeps threatening, insulting and slandering us. This is not a whim or an agreeable option; it is a necessity and a duty.

On June 21, at the Anti-imperialist Forum I read Epistle Number Two to the president of the United States, responding to an infamous State Department report on trafficking in human beings, one of those reports the government of that country usually issues, as if it were the supreme moral judge of the world. In that document Cuba is accused of being one of the countries that promotes sexual tourism and child pornography.

Hardly two weeks went by, and instead of keeping a decent silence about the irrefutable truth contained in the Epistle, the wire services brought news of an election speech by Bush in Tampa, Florida containing new, more perfidious accusations and insults, the clearly aimed at slandering Cuba and justifying the threats of aggression and the brutal measures that they had just taken against our people.

The French press agency AFP reported the following from Tampa on July 16:

"President George Bush launched a harsh attack on Cuba when he defined it as 'a major destination for sex tourism' and said that the United States has a special duty to lead a world struggle against human trafficking for forced labour or sexual purposes."

"Cuba is one of the 10 countries cited by the State Department in a report issued in June in which it lists the governments which tolerate human trafficking or fail to fight this crime."

"The regime of Fidel Castro has turned Cuba into a major destination for sex tourism replacing Southeast Asia as a destination for pedophiles and sex tourists from the United States and Canada," Bush claimed.

"At a conference in Tampa, Florida, the president pointed to Cuba as one of the worst offenders in this area."

"Sex tourism is a vital source of



Fidel Castro.

hard currency to keep his corrupt government afloat," he claimed.

"Bush said that putting an end to human trafficking will be an essential part of his foreign policy."

"The traffic in human beings brings shame and suffering to our country and we shall lead the fight against it," he promised.

"You are in a fight against evil, and the American people are grateful for your dedication and service," he told those at the conference.

"Human life is the gift of our Creator and it should never be for sale."

A dispatch from the Spanish press agency EFE indicated:

"We also face a problem only 90 miles off our shores, Bush said in Florida."

"He quoted a study which found that Cuba has 'replaced Southeast Asia as a destination for pedophiles and sex tourists.'"

"As restrictions on travel to Cuba were eased during the 1990s, the study found an influx of American and Canadian tourists contributed to a sharp increase in child prostitution in Cuba."

"My administration is working toward a comprehensive solution of this problem: The rapid, peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba."

"We have put a strategy in place to hasten the day when no Cuban child is exploited to finance a failed revolution and every Cuban citizen will live in freedom."

"Bush said that 'Human life is the gift of our Creator and it should never be for sale.'"

"It takes a special kind of depravity to exploit and hurt the most vulnerable members of society. Human traffickers rob children of their innocence; they expose them to the worst of life before they have seen much of life. Traffickers tear families apart. They treat their victims as nothing more than goods and commodities for sale to the highest bidder."

And to top off this odd news, the same press dispatch added some words spoken by John Ashcroft in his speech introducing Bush to the National Training Conference on Human Trafficking:

"In the 19th Century President Abraham Lincoln held firm to a vision of freedom for all and was rightly called the great emancipator."

"In the 21st Century we have a great leader who has made us see that liberty is not a gift from the United States to the world but a gift to humanity from the Almighty."

Another wire report from the English news agency Reuters read:

"Friday, the US president accused the Cuban president of having turned his Caribbean island into a sex tourism destination and of contributing to the world problem of human trafficking"

The Italian press agency ANSA reported:

"The regime in Havana is adding to its crimes: it welcomes sex tourism", said Bush who even repeated a supposed quote by Castro, 'Cuba has the cleanest and most educated prostitutes in the world.'"

Later, wire services have reported that the quotation of something I supposedly said on this subject, which the US President used in the Tampa speech I just mentioned to back up his serious accusations, was taken from a paper on Cuba written by Charles Turnbull a law student from Vanderbilt University in the United States who has emphatically stated that Bush's speech misconstrued the real meaning of a sentence included in his work, and clarified this and other matters in the following way:

"Prostitution boomed in the Caribbean nation after the collapse of the Soviet Union..."

"Castro, who had outlawed prostitution when he took power in 1959, initially had few resources to combat it. But beginning in 1996, Cuban authorities began to

crack down on the practice."

"Although it still exists, it is far less visible and it would be inaccurate to say the government promotes it"

On Monday, July 19, Bush administration officials admitted they had no other source for the quote except the paper written by the aforementioned student.

Given the fact that it was shown that the US President had launched an extremely grave accusation based on a sentence found in a paper written by an American student, who himself refuted the deliberate way Bush misconstrued it, it's hard to imagine a more bizarre response than that given by a Whitehouse spokesperson when told about this refutation.

According to the news agency report, the spokesperson simply, *"...defended the inclusion [of the sentence] arguing that it expressed an essential truth about Cuba"*, in other words, for the White House *"the essential truth about Cuba"* is anything that the president conjures up in his mind whether it has anything to do with reality or not.

This is exactly the kind of fundamentalist approach that the President constantly resorts to when there are more than enough data, arguments, truth, reasons, and facts on a particular subject but the only determining factor is the idea he has in his mind or the idea that suits him: anything becomes the absolute and irrefutable truth simply because Mr. Bush imagines it to be so.

Many people in the world who know very little about the Cuban Revolution might fall victim to the lies and tricks the US government spreads through the huge media available to it.

But there are many others, especially in poor countries who are aware of what the Cuban revolution is about, of its marked dedication, from the very beginning, to provide education and healthcare services to all its children and the whole population; its spirit of solidarity that has led it to cooperate selflessly with dozens of Third World countries; its strict adherence to the highest moral values, its ethical principles, its lofty concept of the dignity and honour of its homeland and its people for which Cuban revolutionaries have always been willing to give up their lives. There is no doubt that these many friends, all over the world, will be wondering how it is possible that such unspeakable, foul slander is hurled against Cuba.

This obliges me to give a most serious and honest explanation

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¡Los que estamos dispuestos a morir no tememos a tu enorme poder, tu ira irrefrenable ni tus peligrosas y cobardes amenazas contra Cuba! Por Fidel Castro

Discurso pronunciado por el Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz, Primer Secretario del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba y Presidente de los Consejos de Estado y de Ministros, en el acto por el 51 aniversario del asalto a los cuarteles Moncada y "Carlos Manuel de Céspedes", efectuado en la Universidad Central de Las Villas, el 26 de julio de 2004, "Año del 45 Aniversario del Triunfo de la Revolución"

Queridos compatriotas;

Distinguídos invitados:

En este 51 aniversario del asalto a la fortaleza del Moncada el 26 de julio de 1953, dedicaré mis palabras a un personaje siniestro que nos amenaza, nos insulta y nos calumnia. No es un capricho o una opción agradable; es una necesidad y un deber.

El día 21 de junio en la Tribuna Antiimperialista leí la epístola número dos al Presidente de Estados Unidos, respondiendo a un infame informe del Departamento de Estado sobre el tráfico de seres humanos de los que suele hacer, cual supuesto juez supremo moral del mundo, el gobierno de ese país, en el que se acusa a Cuba de estar entre los países que promueven el turismo sexual y la pornografía infantil.

Pasaron apenas dos semanas y, en lugar de guardar decoroso silencio ante verdades irrefutables contenidas en la epístola, los cables trajeron noticias de un discurso electoral de Bush en Tampa, Florida, con nuevas y más alevosas acusaciones e insultos, que tenían el claro propósito de calumniar a Cuba y justificar las amenazas de agresión y las brutales medidas que acaba de tomar contra nuestro pueblo.

La agencia francesa de prensa AFP comunicaba el 16 de julio desde Tampa lo siguiente:

"El presidente George W. Bush lanzó un duro ataque contra Cuba al definirla como 'principal destino del turismo sexual' y afirmó que Estados Unidos tiene el deber de liderar la lucha mundial contra el tráfico de personas para trabajos forzados o fines sexuales."

"Cuba es uno de los diez países citados por el Departamento de Estado en un informe divulgado en junio, en el que se señala a los gobiernos que toleran el tráfico humano o fallan en luchar contra este delito."

"El régimen de Fidel Castro convirtió a Cuba en el principal destino del turismo sexual' reemplazando al sudeste de Asia como destino favorito de los pedófilos de Estados Unidos y Canadá, afirmó Bush."

"Durante una conferencia en Tampa, Florida, el mandatario señaló a Cuba como uno de los peores violadores en la materia."

"El turismo sexual es una fuente vital de divisas para mantener su gobierno corrupto a flote", acusó.

"Bush indicó que terminar con el tráfico de seres humanos será parte esencial de su política exterior."

"El tráfico de seres humanos trae sufrimiento y vergüenza a nuestro país y lideraremos la lucha contra ello", prometió.

"Estamos en una lucha contra el mal, los estadounidenses están agradecidos por su dedicación y servicio", les dijo a los presentes en la conferencia. 'La vida humana es un regalo de nuestro Creador y nunca debe ser vendida.'"

Un cable de la agencia española EFE señalaba:

"Tenemos un problema a apenas 150 kilómetros de nuestras costas", dijo Bush en el estado de Florida."

"Citó un estudio según el cual Cuba 'ha reemplazado al sudeste asiático como sitio para los viajes de pederastas y turistas que buscan sexo'."

"Cuando se aflojaron las restricciones para los viajes a Cuba en los años 90, el estudio encontró que el flujo de estadounidenses y canadienses había contribuido a un agudo incremento de la prostitución infantil en Cuba."

"Mi gobierno trabaja para una solución completa de este problema: la transición rápida y pacífica a la democracia en Cuba."

"Hemos puesto en marcha una estrategia para acercar el día en que ningún niño o niña cubana sea explotado para financiar una revolución fracasada y todos los cubanos vivan en libertad."

"Bush dijo que 'la vida humana es el don de nuestro Creador y jamás debería estar a la venta'."

"Se requiere una clase especial de depravación para explotar y herir a los miembros más vulnerables de la sociedad."

"Los traficantes de personas roban a los niños su inocencia, los exponen a lo peor de la vida antes de que hayan visto mucho de la vida. Los traficantes separan a las familias, y tratan a sus víctimas como bienes para la venta al mejor postor."

Para colmo de noticias extrañas, ese mismo cable añadió frases de John Ashcroft, en el discurso de presentación de Bush ante la Conferencia Nacional de Instrucción sobre Tráfico Humano:

"En el siglo XIX el presidente Abraham Lincoln definió una visión de libertad para todos, y con justicia se le llama el gran emancipador."

"En el siglo XXI tenemos un gran líder que nos ha convocado a una comprensión de la libertad no como un regalo de Estados Unidos al mundo sino como un don del todopoderoso a la humanidad."

Otro cable de la agencia inglesa REUTERS comunicaba:

"El Presidente de Estados Unidos acusó el viernes al Presidente cubano de haber convertido su isla caribeña en un destino de turismo sexual y de contribuir al problema mundial del tráfico de personas."

La agencia italiana ANSA informaba:

"El régimen de La Habana está agregando más crímenes: da la bienvenida al turismo



July 26th demonstration in Havana, Cuba, 2004.

sexual', dijo Bush, quien incluso repitió una presunta cita de Castro: 'Cuba tiene las prostitutas más limpias y educadas del mundo.'"

Cables posteriores han dado cuenta de que la cita de una supuesta frase mía sobre este tema, que hace el Presidente de Estados Unidos en su mencionado discurso de Tampa para sustentar sus graves acusaciones, se basa en un documento sobre Cuba escrito por Charles Trumbull, alumno de Derecho de la Universidad norteamericana de Vanderbilt, quien declaró enfáticamente que el discurso de Bush tergiversa el verdadero significado de una frase incluida en su trabajo, añadiendo entre otras las siguientes aclaraciones:

"La prostitución tuvo un alza repentina en la nación caribeña posterior al derrumbe de la Unión Soviética."

"Castro, que declaró ilegal la prostitución al asumir el poder en 1959, inicialmente contó con pocos recursos para combatirla. Pero alrededor de principios de 1996 las autoridades cubanas comenzaron a tomar medidas severas sobre la práctica."

"Aunque aún existe, es mucho menos visible y sería inexacto decir que el gobierno la promueve."

El lunes 19 de julio funcionarios de la administración Bush reconocieron que no tenían otra fuente para referirse al tema, que no fuera el trabajo del mencionado estudiante.

A pesar de que quedaba demostrado que el Presidente de Estados Unidos había formulado una gravísima acusación a

partir de una frase contenida en el trabajo de un estudiante norteamericano, cuya intencionada tergiversación fue desmentida por el propio autor, la respuesta del vocero de la Casa Blanca, enfrentado a este desmentido, no pudo ser más inusitada. Simplemente, según el propio cable, "...defendió la inclusión [de la frase] argumentando que expresaba una verdad esencial sobre Cuba", o sea, que para la Casa Blanca "verdad esencial sobre Cuba" es cualquier cosa que el Presidente imagine en su mente con independencia de que se corresponda o no con la realidad.

Este es exactamente el tipo de enfoque fundamentalista a que el presidente Bush recurre constantemente, donde los datos, los argumentos, las verdades, los razonamientos, las realidades sobran, y lo único determinante es la idea que él tenga, o le convenga, sobre un tema en particular: algo se convierte en una verdad absoluta e irrefutable simplemente cuando el señor Bush lo imagina.

Hay muchos en el mundo que conocen muy poco de la Revolución Cubana y pueden ser víctimas de las mentiras y engaños que el gobierno de Estados Unidos difunde a través de los enormes medios de divulgación de que dispone.

Pero hay también muchos, especialmente en los países pobres, que conocen lo que es la Revolución Cubana, el esmero con que se consagró desde el primer instante a la educación y a la salud de los niños y de toda la población, su espíritu

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Fidel Castro July 26th Speech Continued

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of the causes, which in my view, give rise to these inconceivable, irresponsible statements by the President of the most powerful nation on the planet, the same who is threatening to wipe the Cuban revolution from the face of the Earth.

I shall do this as objectively as possible, making no arbitrary statements or shamelessly misconstruing other people's words, sentences and concepts. I shall avoid any petty sentiment of vengeance or personal dislike.

A theme that has been widely documented in several books by outstanding American scientific authors and other personalities is the current US President's alcoholism which lasted two decades when he was between 20 and 40 years old. This feature has been rigorously and impressively dealt with, from a psychiatric point of view and using scientific criteria, by Dr. Justin A. Frank in a now famous book called "Bush on the Couch".

Dr. Frank begins by saying that it is important to scientifically define whether Bush was an alcoholic, or if he still is one. He has literally said:

"... the more pressing question involves the influence his years of heavy drinking and subsequent abstinence still have on him and those around him". (p.39)

He goes on to explain and I quote verbatim:

"Alcoholism is a potentially fatal, lifelong disease that is notoriously difficult to arrest permanently" (p. 40)

Later, referring to the man who is now President of the United States, he says:

"Bush has said publicly that he quit drinking without the help of AA (an organization dedicated to helping alcoholics) or any substance abuse programme, claiming that he stopped forever with the assistance of such spiritual tools as bible study and conversations with the evangelist Billy Graham".

On page 40 of the book he recounts that, according to ex-presidential speech writer David Frum, when Bush took over the Oval office he summoned a group of religious leaders, asked for their prayers and told them:

"There is only one reason that I am in the Oval Office and not a bar... I found faith, I found God. I am here because of the power of prayer".

Dr. Frank thinks that this statement might be true and goes on to say the following:

"...surely all Americans would like to believe that the president no longer drinks, even if we have no way of knowing for certain. If so, he fits the profile of a former drinker whose alcoholism has been arrested but not treated".

He then adds:

"Former drinkers who abstain without the benefit of the AA program are often referred to as 'dry drunks', a label that has been bandied about on the Internet and elsewhere in reference to Bush.

"Dry drunk" isn't a medical term, and not one I use in a clinical setting. But even without labelling Bush as such, it's hard to ignore the many troubling elements of his character among the traits that the recovery literature associates with the condition, including grandiosity, judgmentalism, intolerance, detachment, denial of responsibility, a tendency toward over-reaction and an aversion to introspection." (p. 41)

Dr. Frank insists that he personally has treated alcoholics who held their addiction in check without proper treatment but that they

daily Bible readings, and limited office hours. A healthy person is able to alter his routine; a rigid one cannot". (p.43)

"Of course" -the eminent US doctor goes on, and I quote- "we all need rest and relaxation, time to regroup, but Bush appears to need it more than most. And this is hardly a surprise -among other reasons, because the anxiety of being president might pose a real risk of leading him back to drinking." (p. 43)

"Along with rigid routines go rigid thought processes -another

for countless others' lives, not an alcoholic accustomed to taking dramatic measures to protect his own."

Continuing his analysis, Dr. Frank indicates:

"Two questions that the press seems particularly determined to ignore have hung silently in the air since before Bush took office: Is he still drinking? And if not, is he impaired by all the years he did spend drinking? Both questions need to be addressed in any serious assessment of his psychological state". (p.48)

With regard to the first question, he points out the possibility that Bush is managing his anxiety with medication to keep him off alcohol and he makes special reference to his strange behaviour at press conferences. On this point he says:

"In writing about Bush's halting appearance in a press conference just before the start of the Iraq War, Washington Post media critic Tom Shales speculated that "the president may have been ever so slightly medicated".

"More troubling though, are the appearances that arouse suspicion not because of how he talks but what he says. He has repeatedly engaged in confabulation, filling in gaps in his memory with what he believes are facts -most notably on July 14, 2003, when he stood next to Kofi Annan and made up the idea that America had given Saddam "a chance to allow the inspectors in, and he wouldn't let them in". (As the Washington Post noted, "Hussein had, in fact, admitted the inspectors and Bush had opposed extending their work because he did not believe them effective". Confabulation is a common phenomenon among drinkers, as is perseveration, which is evident in Bush's tendency to repeat key words and phrases, as if the repetition helps him remain calm and stay on track." (p. 49)

And Dr. Frank concludes his analysis of these two questions with the following words:

"Even if we assume, moreover, that George W. Bush's drinking days are behind him, the question remains how much lasting damage may have been done before he stopped -beyond the considerable impact on his personality that we can trace to his untreated abstinence. Any comprehensive psychological or psychoanalytical study of President Bush would have to explore how much the brain and its functions are changed by more than twenty years of heavy drinking. In a recent study out of the University of California/San Francisco Medical Centre, researchers found that heavy drinkers who do not call themselves alcoholics reveal that "their level of drinking constitutes a problem that warrants treatment". The study found that the heavy drinkers in its sample were "significantly impaired" on measures of working memory, processing speed, attention, executive function and balance. Serious research about long-term recovery from alcohol abuse is still underway. Science has established that alcohol itself is toxic to the brain, both

to its anatomy (as the brain gets smaller and fissures between and around the hemisphere get larger) and to its neurophysiology. But recovery does occur with continued sobriety, extending over a five-year period for many alcoholics. Bush claims to have been sober for more than fifteen years, and very well may have improved to pre-alcohol levels. However, even chronic alcoholics who recover their compromised mental functions often suffer lingering damage to their ability to process new information. Important neuropsychological functions are impaired: The new information is essentially put into a file that is lost in the brain.

"Former heavy drinkers often have trouble distinguishing between relevant and inconsequential information. They also may lose some of their ability to maintain concentration. All one has to do to observe Bush's inattention is watch him listening to a speech given by someone else, watch his behaviour at times on the campaign trail, or consider the obviously desperate effort he makes to retain focus in every speech he gives." (p.50)

Finally, Dr. Frank points out that Bush would reduce the fear of many Americans by submitting himself to psychological tests that could scientifically measure the effects of alcoholism on his brain function and warns:

"Otherwise, we are left to suspect -with reason- that our president may be impaired in his ability to make sense of complex ideas and briefings" (p. 51)

And he ends up by saying:

"We all may be a little afraid to find out: after all, he has already held office for three years and has led our nation into war. But if we fail to do so, the consequences may indict every one of us". (p. 51)

Another aspect discussed in depth and in detail by Dr. Justin A. Frank in this book, "Bush on the Couch", is that of President Bush's religious fundamentalism.

Dr. Frank explains how, in trying to find relief from the internal chaos that drink sometimes appeased but eventually intensified, Bush may have found in religion a source of peace, not totally different from that given by alcohol, as well as a set of rules which help him to manage both the external world and his inner spiritual world.

He suggests that an analysis of the role of fundamentalism in Bush's life would show that one of the many ways that Bush employs religion as a defence mechanism is by using it as a substitute for illegal substances and says that Bush uses religion to simplify and even replace thought so that, to a certain extent, he does not even need to think. He adds that Bush, by putting himself on the side of good -on God's side- places himself above mundane discussion and debate. Religion serves as a shield to protect him from challenges, including those that he himself would otherwise create.

Dr. Frank wonders how Bush reached this point and then



Mayday in Havana, 2004.

are generally not very successful in learning to control the anxiety that they once tried to suppress by drinking and he explains that:

"Their rigid attempts to manage anxiety make any psychological insight hard-won. Some can't even face the anxiety of admitting their alcoholism.

Dr. Frank then goes on to say:

"Without that admission, I have found, even former drinkers cannot truly change, or learn from their own experience".

And then referring to Bush specifically he argues the following:

"The pattern of blame and denial, which recovering alcoholics work so hard to break, seems to be ingrained in the alcoholic personality; it's rarely limited to his or her drinking. The habit of placing blame and denying responsibility is so prevalent in George W. Bush's personal history that it is apparently triggered by even the mildest threat"

"... The rigidity of Bush's behaviour is perhaps most readily apparent in his well-documented reliance on his daily routines -the famously short meetings, sacrosanct exercise schedule,

hallmark of the Bush presidency. We see it in the stubborn, almost obsessive way in which he holds on to ideas and plans after they have been discredited, from his image of himself as a "uniter, not a divider" to his conviction that Iraq held weapons of mass destruction (or, in absence of such weapons, that somehow "America did the right thing in Iraq" nevertheless). Such rigidity of thought is not motivated by simple stubbornness; the untreated alcoholic, consumed with the task of managing the anxieties that might make him reach for a drink, simply can't tolerate any threat to his status quo".

And Dr. Frank adds that such intolerance generally leads to responses that are out of proportion to the magnitude of the actual threat.

"This may help to explain the dramatic contrast between George W's response to Saddam Hussein and that of his father, who carefully built a coalition, took action only after Kuwait had been invaded, and then proceeded with prudence and caution once the fighting was underway - the behaviour of a seasoned leader who knew he was responsible

Fidel Castro July 26th Speech Continued

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explains that, the Bush family tradition has long been fuelled by faith, by the belief in a God linked closely to moral rectitude but he makes this distinction:

“Yet President Bush’s religious orientation represents an important departure from his family. Though certain aspects of the family tradition have been maintained -notably the formality of religious participation- his mid-life conversion to a more fundamentalist approach stands in dramatic contrast to the spiritual life of his father...” (p.56)

“And a review of the events leading up to Bush’s conscious embrace of fundamentalism shows that it clearly occurred at a moment when he was reaching for solutions, in a time of almost desperate need.”

Dr Frank goes on to explain that fundamentalist religions narrow the universe of opportunities and divide the world into good and bad, in absolute terms that leave no space for questioning and on this point he argues:

“The view of the self is similarly simplified. Just as fundamentalist creationist teachings deny history, the fundamentalist notion of conversion or rebirth encourages the believer to see himself as disconnected from history. George W. Bush’s evasive, self-serving defence of his life before he was born again displays just this tendency. “It doesn’t do any good to inventory the mistakes I made when I was young”, he has insisted. “I think the way ... to answer questions about specific behaviour is to remind people that when I was young and irresponsible, I was young and irresponsible. I changed...” To the believer, the power of spiritual absolution not only erases the sins of the past, but divorces the current self from the historical sinner”. (p.60)

Dr. Frank makes it clear that there is nothing inherently unnatural in the fact that Bush

him to confront.” (p.64)

“For someone so desperate not to lose his way, clinging to a belief (or even a few key phrases), and sticking to them, is yet another way to protect against falling apart. President Bush’s press conferences have offered disturbing evidence of this ongoing anxiety -evidence so unmistakable that it’s little wonder that the White House has proven so hesitant to schedule such events at all. After one particularly disastrous performance in July 2003, the Slate political columnist Timothy Noah noted that: “Bush seemed jangled”; in a damning editorial the following day, the New York Times noted that the president’s answers were “vague and sometimes nearly incoherent” -suggesting, perceptively, that Bush was “bedazzled by his administration’s own mythmaking”

He gives some examples of phrases Bush used repeatedly during that press conference:

“And so we’re making progress. It’s slowly but surely making progress of bringing the -those who terrorize their fellow citizens to justice, and making progress about convincing the Iraqi people that freedom is real. And as they become more convinced that freedom is real, they’ll begin to assume more responsibilities that are required in a free society...”

“And the threat is a real threat. It’s a threat that where -we obviously don’t have specific data, we don’t know when, where, what. But we do know a couple of things...obviously, we’re talking to foreign governments and foreign airlines to indicate to them the reality of the threat...”

“I don’t know how close we are to getting Saddam Hussein. You know -it’s closer that we were yesterday, I guess. All I know is we’re on the hunt. It’s like if you had asked me right before we got his sons how close we were to get his sons, I’d say, I don’t know, but we’re on the hunt.”



Fidel Castro addresses Cuban people in Havana on July 26th, 2004.

“So powerful are his fears that he can’t even face them. His infamous early advice to Americans less than two weeks after 9/11 -when he told Americans to continue to shop and travel as before, in apparent denial of the radical measures he was at the same time taking in response to the nation’s newfound vulnerability- suggests just how simplistically he viewed the situation, closing himself off to worry and anxiety. Compare his response to that of New York’s mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, who faced his fears, rolled up his sleeves and got to work -making people feel far safer than Bush’s stilted denial ever did.

“Bush has continued to cite divine instruction to explain his actions since assuming office. As reported in Israel’s Haaretz News, Bush said, “God told me to strike at al Qaida and I struck them, and then he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did”.

Finally, Dr. Frank offers these thoughts:

“The Biblical struggle of good and evil has resonated throughout his discourse since 9/11, from his repeated use of the term “crusade” to his characterisation of the terrorists as “evildoers” and grouping of Iraq, Iran and North Korea as the “Axis of Evil”. At the same time, he presents the United States as nothing more than a nation of wholly innocent victims.

“In externalizing evil in this way, while absolving America of responsibility, Bush has transformed his unintegrated infantile worldview into a starkly combative (and primitive) foreign policy.

“Bush’s rhetoric” -Dr. Frank concludes- “highlights how he identifies the concepts of himself as president with both God and America: for him these three appear to have become somewhat interchangeable. Unable to mourn the dead of 9/11 enough to allow for a full investigation of how it happened -and what responsibility we might have had- he blindly attacks the “enemy” he perceives to be everywhere, a terrorist suddenly hiding under rock”.

In his book “Stupid White Men”, Michael Moore points out that Bush exhibits obvious symptoms of not being able to read at an adult level and writes the following as part of an open letter to Bush:

“1. George, are you able to read and write on an adult level?”

“It appears to me and many others that, sadly, you may be a functional illiterate. This is nothing to be ashamed of... Millions

of Americans cannot read and write above a fourth grade level.

“But let me ask you this: if you have trouble comprehending the complex position papers you are handed as the Leader of the Mostly-Free World, how can we entrust something like our nuclear secrets to you?”

“All the signs of illiteracy area there -and apparently no one has challenged you about them. The first clue was what you named as your favourite childhood book, “The Very Hungry Caterpillar”, you said.

“Unfortunately, that book wasn’t even published until a year after you graduated from college.”

“One thing is clear to everyone -you can’t speak the English language in sentences we can comprehend.

“If you are going to be Commander-in-Chief, you have to be able to communicate your orders. What if these little slip-ups keep happening? Do you know how easy it would be to turn a little faux pas into a national-security nightmare?”

“Your aides say that you don’t (can’t?) read the briefing papers they give you, and that you ask them to read them for you or to you.”

“Please, don’t take any of this personally. Perhaps it’s a learning disability. Some sixty million Americans have learning disabilities”.

In his book “Against All Enemies”, Richard Clarke writes that when Bush got to the White House, “Early on we were told that the president is not a big reader”.

Bob Woodward’s book “Bush at War” tells that, in a National Security Council meeting during the Afghanistan war, Bush said: “I don’t read the editorial pages. I don’t --the hyperventilation that tends to take place around those cables, every expert and every former colonel and all that, is just background noise”.

Thus far I have given a very brief summary of what has been said on some points by outstanding Americans, things which help to explain the strange behaviour and aggressiveness of the US President.

I do not want to elaborate now on more sensitive issues like those whose exposure cost his life to J.H. Hatfield, author of the book “Fortunate Son”, and others of great interest analyzed by truly brilliant, brave, eminent authors.

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The Moncada Barracks, site of the historic July 26th attack by Fidel Castro’s anti-Batista forces.

seeks protection from his faith and that, even when this makes him stronger, the rigidity of his thought and speech patterns and of his agenda point to a considerable fragility. He explains that Bush’s fear of everything -from disagreement to terrorist attacks- are sometimes painfully visible, even (or especially) through his denials and that he is a man desperately seeking protection. Dr. Frank wonders: “But what is George W. Bush so eager to protect himself against?” and he answers the question with the following analysis:

“His tightly held belief system shields him from challenges to his ideas -from critics and opponents, but, more important, from himself. Just beneath the surface, it’s hard not to believe that he suffers from an innate fear of falling apart, a fear too terrifying for

“Well first of all, the war on terror goes on, as I continually remind people... The threat that you asked about, Steve, reminds us that we need to be on the hunt, because the war on terror goes on...”

“I just described to you that there is a threat to the United States. There is no doubt in my mind, Campbell, that Saddam Hussein was a threat to the United States’ security, and a threat to peace in the region...”

“Saddam Hussein was a threat. The United Nations viewed him as a threat. That’s why they passed twelve resolutions. Predecessors of mine viewed him as a threat. We gathered a lot of intelligence. That intelligence was good, sound intelligence on which I made a decision... (pp. 65-66)

And Dr. Frank goes on to say:

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de solidaridad que la ha llevado a cooperar desinteresadamente con decenas de países del Tercer Mundo, su apego a los más altos valores morales, sus principios éticos, su insuperable concepto de la dignidad y el honor de su patria y de su pueblo, por los cuales los revolucionarios cubanos han estado siempre dispuestos a ofrendar sus vidas. Sin duda esos muchos amigos, en cualquier rincón del mundo, se preguntarán cómo es posible que se lancen contra Cuba tan incalificables y groseras calumnias.

Esto me obliga a explicar con toda seriedad y franqueza las causas que, desde mi punto de vista, dan lugar a tales inconcebibles e irresponsables afirmaciones por parte del Presidente de la potencia más poderosa del planeta, quien además nos amenaza con hacer desaparecer a la Revolución Cubana de la faz de la Tierra.

Lo haré con el máximo de objetividad posible, sin afirmaciones arbitrarias ni adulteraciones vergonzosas de palabras, frases y conceptos de otros, o guiado por mezquinos sentimientos de venganza u odio personal.

Un tema ampliamente documentado en varios libros de eminentes autores científicos y otras personalidades norteamericanas es la adicción del actual Presidente de Estados Unidos al alcohol durante dos décadas, entre los 20 y los 40 años. Este punto ha sido rigurosamente abordado de forma impresionante con criterio científico y desde el punto de vista psiquiátrico por el doctor Justin A. Frank en un libro ya famoso titulado *Bush en el diván*.

El doctor Frank comienza aclarando que resulta valioso definir científicamente si Bush era un alcohólico o si sigue siéndolo, expresando textualmente a continuación:

“... la interrogante más apremiante es si la influencia de esos años de bebedor empedernido y su abstinencia posterior aún inciden en él y en los que lo rodean.”

Prosigue explicando, y lo cito de forma textual:

“El alcoholismo es una enfermedad potencialmente fatal, un mal de toda la vida que resulta sumamente difícil de detener de forma permanente.” (p.40)

A continuación, refiriéndose ya al Presidente de Estados Unidos en particular, expone:

“Bush ha dicho públicamente que dejó de consumir alcohol sin la ayuda de Alcohólicos Anónimos (una organización dedicada al tratamiento de adictos al consumo de alcohol), ni de ningún programa contra el uso indebido de sustancias prohibidas, y ha afirmado que dejó el hábito para siempre con la ayuda de instrumentos espirituales, tales como el estudio de la Biblia y conversaciones con el evangelista Billy Graham.”

El libro en la página 40 cuenta que, según el ex escritor de discursos David Frum, al llegar a

la Oficina Oval Bush convocó a un grupo de líderes religiosos, les pidió sus oraciones y les dijo:

“Solo hay una razón por la que estoy en la Oficina Oval y no en un bar.” “Encontré la fe, encontré a Dios. Estoy aquí por el poder de la oración.”

Al respecto el Dr. Frank analiza que esta aseveración puede ser verdad, y apunta con sus propias palabras lo siguiente:

“Seguramente todos los estadounidenses quisieran creer que el Presidente ya no bebe, aun cuando no tengamos la forma de saber si es cierto. De ser así, se ajusta al perfil del antiguo bebedor cuyo alcoholismo ha sido detenido pero no tratado.”

Y añade:

“Los antiguos bebedores que se abstienen sin el beneficio del programa de Alcohólicos Anónimos son conocidos como ‘borrachos secos’, etiqueta esta que ha circulado por Internet y por otras partes refiriéndose a Bush.

“He observado que, sin esta admisión, incluso, los antiguos bebedores no pueden cambiar realmente ni aprender de su propia experiencia.”

Y ya refiriéndose concretamente a Bush, hace el siguiente razonamiento:

“El patrón de culpa y negación, que tan arduamente intentan romper los alcohólicos en recuperación, parece estar arraigado en la personalidad alcohólica; raramente se limita a su alcoholismo. El hábito de culpar a otros y negar la responsabilidad es tan dominante en la historia personal de George W. Bush, que evidentemente se dispara ante la más ligera amenaza.

“La rigidez en la conducta de Bush es quizás más evidente en su bien documentada confianza en sus rutinas diarias —las reuniones famosamente breves, el programa sacrosanto de ejercicios, las lecturas diarias de la Biblia y las limitadas horas de

lo que era correcto en Iraq’ de todas formas). Tal rigidez de pensamiento no está motivada por una simple testarudez; el alcohólico sin tratamiento, consumido por la tarea de tener que controlar las ansiedades que pudieran llevarlo a buscar la bebida, simplemente no puede tolerar ninguna amenaza contra su statu quo.”

Y agrega el Dr. Frank que tal intolerancia generalmente trae como consecuencia respuestas desproporcionadas en relación con la magnitud de la amenaza real que percibe.

“Esto pudiera ayudar a explicar el dramático contraste entre la respuesta de George W. a Saddam Hussein y la de su padre, quien cuidadosamente creó una coalición, tomó medidas solo después que Kuwait había sido invadida y, después, procedió con prudencia y cautela cuando se estaba desarrollando la lucha —la conducta de un líder experimentado que sabía

del Washington Post, Tom Shales, especuló que ‘probablemente el Presidente haya estado ligeramente medicado’.”

“Sin embargo, más preocupantes son las comparencias que motivan sospechas no por la forma en que habla sino por lo que dice. En repetidas ocasiones se ha enfrascado en una confabulación, llenando los vacíos en su memoria con lo que él cree son hechos —el más significativo fue el 14 de julio de 2003 cuando se paró al lado de Kofi Annan e inventó la idea de que los Estados Unidos le habían dado a Saddam ‘una oportunidad para permitir la entrada de los inspectores y él no los dejó entrar’. (Como observara el Washington Post, ‘Hussein, realmente, había admitido a los inspectores y Bush se había opuesto a prorrogar su trabajo porque no creía que fueran eficaces’. La confabulación es un fenómeno común entre los consumidores de alcohol, como lo es la perseverancia, que se evidencia en la tendencia de Bush a repetir palabras y frases clave, como si la repetición lo ayudara a permanecer calmado y mantener la atención.” (p.49)

Y concluye el doctor Frank su análisis sobre estas dos preguntas con las siguientes palabras:

“Incluso si, además, asumimos que los días de alcoholismo de George W. Bush quedaron atrás, aún queda la interrogante del daño permanente que pudo haber causado antes de que dejara de consumirlo —más allá del considerable impacto en su personalidad que podemos rastrear hasta su abstinencia sin tratamiento. Todo estudio psicológico o psicoanalítico integral del presidente Bush tendrá que explorar cuánto ha cambiado el cerebro y sus funciones en más de veinte años de alcoholismo. En un estudio reciente realizado por el Centro Médico de la Universidad de California/San Francisco, los investigadores comprobaron que los bebedores empedernidos que no se consideran a sí mismos como alcohólicos revelan que ‘su nivel de consumo de alcohol constituye un problema que necesita tratamiento’. El estudio observó que los bebedores empedernidos de su muestra estaban ‘significativamente incapacitados en las mediciones de memoria de trabajo, velocidad de procesamiento, atención, función ejecutiva y equilibrio’. Aún está en curso una seria investigación sobre la recuperación a largo plazo del consumo indebido de alcohol. La ciencia ha establecido que el alcohol mismo es tóxico para el cerebro, tanto para su anatomía (ya que el cerebro se reduce y se amplían las fisuras entre los hemisferios y alrededor de estos) como para su neurofisiología. Pero la recuperación se produce con la sobriedad continuada, durante un periodo mayor de cinco años para muchos alcohólicos. Bush afirma que ha permanecido sobrio durante más de quince años y muy bien pudiera haber mejorado hasta

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‘Borracho seco’ no es un término médico, y no es un término que yo utilice en un medio clínico. Pero aun sin catalogar a Bush como tal, resulta difícil pasar por alto los muchos elementos problemáticos de su carácter entre los rasgos que la literatura sobre recuperación asocia con el alcoholismo, incluidos la grandiosidad, la naturaleza sentenciosa, la intolerancia, el desapego, la negación de la responsabilidad, una tendencia a reaccionar excesivamente y una aversión por la introspección.” (p.41)

El Dr. Frank insiste en que él personalmente ha atendido a alcohólicos que detuvieron su adicción sin el tratamiento adecuado, quienes por lo general tienen muy poco éxito en aprender a controlar la ansiedad que una vez trataron de suprimir con el consumo de alcohol, y explica que:

“Sus rígidos esfuerzos para controlar la ansiedad dificultan cualquier análisis psicológico. Incluso algunos ni siquiera pueden enfrentar la ansiedad de tener que admitir su alcoholismo.”

Continúa el Dr. Frank:

oficina. Una persona saludable es capaz de alterar su rutina; una persona rígida no puede hacerlo.” (p.43)

“Por supuesto” —continúa afirmando textualmente el eminente especialista norteamericano—, “todos necesitamos descanso y relajación, tiempo para reagruparnos, pero al parecer Bush lo necesita más que la mayoría. Y esto no constituye una sorpresa, entre otras razones, porque la ansiedad de ser Presidente pudiera representar un riesgo real de retornar a la bebida”. (p.43)

“Conjuntamente con las rutinas rígidas vienen los procesos de pensamiento rígido —otra característica de la presidencia de Bush”, sigue afirmando, con precisión casi matemática, el Dr. Frank: “Lo apreciamos en la forma testaruda, casi obsesiva, en que se aferra a las ideas y los planes después que han sido desacreditados, desde su imagen propia como persona que ‘unifica, no divide’, hasta su convicción de que Iraq tenía armas de destrucción masiva (o, en ausencia de dichas armas, que de alguna manera ‘los Estados Unidos hicieron

que era responsable de un sinnúmero de vidas, no un alcohólico acostumbrado a tomar medidas dramáticas para autoprotgerse.”

Continuando con su análisis, el doctor Frank puntualiza:

“Hay dos preguntas que, al parecer, la prensa está decidida especialmente a pasar por alto, y que penden silenciosamente en el aire desde antes que Bush asumiera la Presidencia: ¿Está aún consumiendo alcohol? Y de no ser así, ¿está incapacitado por todos esos años que pasó consumiendo alcohol? Ambas interrogantes tienen que ser abordadas en cualquier evaluación seria de su estado psicológico.” (p.48)

En cuanto a la primera pregunta, señala la posibilidad de que Bush esté calmando su ansiedad con medicamentos para mantenerse alejado del alcohol, y se refiere en particular a su extraño comportamiento en las conferencias de prensa. Al respecto expone:

“Al escribir sobre la apariencia vacilante de Bush en una conferencia de prensa ofrecida precisamente antes de comenzar la guerra contra Iraq, el crítico

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los niveles anteriores al consumo de alcohol. Sin embargo, incluso los alcohólicos crónicos que recuperan sus funciones mentales comprometidas generalmente sufren de un daño persistente en su capacidad para procesar la nueva información. Importantes funciones neuropsicológicas se afectan: La nueva información esencialmente se coloca en un fichero que se pierde en el cerebro.”

“Los ex bebedores empedernidos generalmente tienen problemas para diferenciar entre la información importante y la intrascendente. También pudieran perder parte de su capacidad para mantener la concentración. Todo lo que tenemos que hacer para observar la falta de atención de Bush es mirarlo cuando escucha un discurso pronunciado por otra persona, observar su comportamiento en ocasiones en plena campaña electoral o considerar el esfuerzo evidentemente desesperado que hace para mantener la concentración en todos los discursos que pronuncia.” (p.50)

Por último el doctor Frank señala que Bush aliviaría el temor de muchos estadounidenses sometiéndose a pruebas psicológicas que pudieran medir científicamente los efectos de su adicción al alcohol en el funcionamiento de su cerebro, y advierte:

“De lo contrario, no podemos más que sospechar —con razón— que nuestro Presidente pudiera estar incapacitado en su habilidad para comprender las ideas e informaciones complejas.” (p.51)

Y termina sentenciando:

“Probablemente todos nosotros estaríamos un tanto temerosos de averiguarlo; después de todo, ya ha permanecido en la presidencia durante tres años y ha conducido a nuestra nación a la guerra. Pero si no lo hacemos, las consecuencias podrían condenarnos a todos y cada uno de nosotros”. (p.51)

Otro aspecto tratado con profundidad y detalles en el mencionado libro *Bush en el diván*, del doctor Justin A. Frank, es el referido al fundamentalismo religioso del presidente Bush.

El doctor Frank explica cómo tratando de encontrar alivio al caos interior que la bebida en algunos momentos calmó pero en última instancia intensificó, Bush debe haber encontrado en la religión una fuente de calma no totalmente diferente que el alcohol, y un grupo de reglas que lo ayudan a manejar ambos, el mundo externo y su mundo espiritual interno.

Expone que un análisis del papel del fundamentalismo en la vida de Bush mostrará que la sustitución de sustancias prohibidas es solo una de las varias formas en que Bush depende de la religión como mecanismo de defensa, y afirma que Bush utiliza la religión para simplificar e incluso sustituir el pensamiento, de modo tal que, en cierta forma, no tenga siquiera

que pensar. Agrega que Bush, al colocarse del lado del bien —al lado de Dios— se coloca por encima de la discusión y del debate mundano. La religión le sirve de escudo para protegerlo de los desafíos, incluidos aquellos que de otra forma él mismo se crearía.

Se pregunta cómo Bush llegó a este punto, y a continuación expone que la tradición de la familia Bush ha descansado por muchos años en la fe, en la creencia de un dios estrechamente vinculado con la rectitud moral, pero hace la siguiente distinción:

“Sin embargo, la orientación religiosa del presidente Bush representa un cambio significativo respecto de la tradición familiar. Aun cuando ciertos aspectos de la tradición familiar se han mantenido, particularmente la formalidad de la participación religiosa, su conversión en la madurez hacia un enfoque más fundamentalista contrasta dramáticamente con la vida espiritual de su padre.”

“Un análisis de los acontecimientos que llevaron a Bush a abrazar de forma consciente el fundamentalismo demuestra que efectivamente ocurrió en un momento en que buscaba soluciones desesperadamente, en un momento de imperiosa necesidad.”

Continúa el doctor Frank exponiendo que las religiones fundamentalistas estrechan el universo de posibilidades y dividen el mundo entre buenos y malos, en términos absolutos que no dejan espacio para cuestionamientos, y al respecto explica:

“Igualmente se simplifica el concepto del yo. De la misma forma que las enseñanzas fundamentalistas de la creación niegan la historia, la noción fundamentalista de la conversión o del renacimiento estimula al creyente a verse a sí mismo desligado de la historia. La defensa evasiva e interesada que Bush hace de su vida antes de su renacimiento muestra precisamente esta tendencia. ‘No es bueno hacer un inventario de los errores que cometí cuando era joven’, insiste Bush. ‘Creo que la forma... de contestar las preguntas sobre comportamientos específicos es recordándole a la gente que, cuando yo era joven e irresponsable, era joven e irresponsable. Cambié...’ Para el creyente, el poder de la absolución espiritual no solo borra los pecados del pasado, sino que establece un divorcio entre el yo actual y el pecador original.”

El doctor Frank aclara que no hay nada inherentemente sobrenatural en el hecho de que Bush busque la protección en su fe y que, aun cuando ésta lo hace más fuerte, la rigidez de sus patrones de pensamiento y discurso, y de su agenda, señalan hacia una fragilidad considerable. Explica que los temores de Bush a todo —desde la desavenencia hasta los ataques terroristas— a veces resultan dolorosamente evidentes, incluso (o especialmente) en sus

abstinencias, y que es un hombre que busca desesperadamente la protección. Y se pregunta: “¿Pero contra qué busca George W. Bush protegerse tan desesperadamente?”, dando respuesta a esta pregunta con el siguiente análisis:

“El sistema de creencias que tan firmemente sostiene, lo protege contra los desafíos a sus ideas, de los que lo critican, de sus oponentes y, más importante aún, de sí mismo. Al profundizar en el tema, resulta difícil no creer que sufra del miedo innato a desmoronarse, un miedo demasiado aterrador para que lo pueda enfrentar.”

“Para una persona que trata desesperadamente de no perder el camino, aferrarse a una fe (o incluso a unas pocas frases claves), y ceñirse a ellas, es otra forma de protegerse para no desmoronarse. Las conferencias de prensa del presidente Bush dan muestras alarmantes de esta continua ansiedad—una evidencia tan inequívoca que para nada sorprende que la Casa Blanca dude tanto en programarlas. Tras una particularmente desastrosa conferencia de prensa ofrecida en julio de 2003, el columnista político del Slate, Timothy Noah, observó que ‘Bush parecía discordante’. En un crítico editorial publicado al día siguiente, el New York Times señalaba que las respuestas del Presidente eran ‘vagas y algunas veces casi incoherentes’, sugiriendo perspicazmente que Bush estaba ‘deslumbrado con el mito inventado por su propio gobierno’.”

Pone algunos ejemplos de frases repetitivas de Bush durante esa conferencia de prensa:

“Y por tanto, estamos progresando. Es lento, pero de seguro estamos progresando en hacer que —aquellos que aterrorizan a sus compatriotas paguen, y estamos progresando en convencer al pueblo iraquí de que la libertad es real. Y mientras más se convengan de que la libertad es real, asumirán las responsabilidades que una sociedad libre exige...”

“Y la amenaza es una amenaza real. Y es una amenaza sobre la que evidentemente no tenemos datos específicos, no sabemos cuándo, dónde, qué. Pero sí sabemos un par de cosas... evidentemente estamos hablando con gobiernos extranjeros y con aerolíneas extranjeras para indicarles cuán real es la amenaza...”

“No sé cuán cercanos estamos de capturar a Saddam Hussein. Como saben, estamos más cerca de capturarlo que ayer. Supongo. Solo sé que estamos a la caza. Es como si ustedes me hubiesen preguntado, antes de haber capturado a sus hijos, cuán cercanos estábamos de capturar a sus hijos. Yo diría, no sé, pero estamos a la caza.”

“Bueno, ante todo, la guerra contra el terrorismo continúa, como yo le recuerdo a la gente constantemente... La amenaza sobre la que preguntamos, Steve, nos recuerda que necesitamos estar a la caza, porque la guerra contra



Fidel Castro marching against new measures imposed on Cuba by the US government, May 12th 2004.

el terrorismo continúa...”

“Les acabo de decir que existe una amenaza a los Estados Unidos...”

“No tengo duda alguna, Campbell, de que Saddam Hussein representaba una amenaza a la seguridad de los Estados Unidos y una amenaza a la paz en la región...”

“Saddam Hussein era una amenaza. Las Naciones Unidas lo consideraban una amenaza. Esa es la razón por la que aprobaron 12 resoluciones. Mis predecesores lo consideraban una amenaza. Hemos recopilado mucha información. Esa información era buena, una información sólida en base a la cual tomé una decisión...”

Y continúa el doctor Frank:

“Sus temores son tan poderosos que ni siquiera los puede enfrentar. Su tristemente célebre consejo a los estadounidenses, a menos de dos semanas después de los sucesos del 11 de septiembre —cuando aconsejó a los norteamericanos que continuaran saliendo de compras y viajando como antes, en evidente contradicción con las medidas radicales que estaba tomando como respuesta a la recién descubierta vulnerabilidad de la nación— son prueba de la forma simplista con que analiza la situación, dando la espalda a la ansiedad y la preocupación. Compárese su reacción a la del alcalde de Nueva York, Rudolph Giuliani, que enfrentó sus temores, se subió las mangas y se puso a trabajar, haciendo que la gente se sintiese mucho más segura que con el forzado distanciamiento de Bush.”

“Desde que asumiera la Presidencia, Bush ha continuado

citando las instrucciones divinas para justificar sus acciones. Como apareciera en el Haaretz News, de Israel, Bush dijo: ‘Dios me dijo que atacara a Al Qaeda y la atacué, y luego me instruyó atacar a Saddam, lo cual hice.’”

Finalmente el doctor Frank hace la siguiente reflexión:

“La batalla bíblica entre el bien y el mal ha resonado en todos sus discursos desde el 11 de septiembre, desde su repetido uso del término ‘Cruzada’, su caracterización de los terroristas como ‘malhechores’, hasta el agrupar a Iraq, Irán y Corea del Norte en el ‘Eje del Mal’. Al mismo tiempo, presenta a los Estados Unidos como una nación de víctimas totalmente inocentes.

“Al exteriorizar el mal de esta forma, al tiempo que absuelve a Estados Unidos de responsabilidad alguna, Bush ha transformado su visión desintegrada e infantil del mundo en una política exterior absolutamente combativa (y primitiva).”

“La retórica de Bush”—concluye el doctor Frank— “pone de relieve cómo identifica los conceptos de él como Presidente con Dios y los Estados Unidos. Para él, estos tres conceptos parecen haberse vuelto intercambiables. Incapaz de llorar los muertos del 11 de septiembre lo suficiente como para permitir una investigación exhaustiva de cómo sucedieron los hechos —y qué responsabilidad pudimos haber tenido nosotros—, ataca ciegamente al ‘enemigo’ que ve en todas partes, como si de repente hubiese un terrorista debajo de cada piedra.”

En su libro *Blancos estúpidos*

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Michael Moore señala que Bush tiene claros síntomas de incapacidad para leer al nivel de un adulto, y expone lo siguiente como parte de una carta abierta a Bush:

"1. George ¿puedes leer y escribir al nivel de un adulto?"

"A mí y a muchos otros nos parece que, lamentablemente, pudieras ser un analfabeto funcional. No es algo para avergonzarse. Millones de norteamericanos no pueden leer por encima del nivel de cuarto grado."

"Pero, permíteme preguntar lo siguiente: si tienes problemas para comprender los documentos acerca de la compleja situación que te son entregados como Líder del Mundo casi Libre, ¿cómo podemos confiar algo como nuestros secretos nucleares?"

"Todos los signos de este analfabetismo están ahí —y aparentemente nadie te ha desafiado sobre ellos. La primera pista fue el que nombraste como tu libro favorito de la infancia, 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' (La Oruga muy Hambrienta)."

"Lamentablemente, ese libro no fue publicado hasta un año después que te graduaste en la universidad."

"Una cosa está clara para todos —no puedes hablar el idioma inglés en oraciones que podamos comprender."

"Si vas a ser Comandante en Jefe, tienes que ser capaz de comunicar tus órdenes. ¿Qué sucederá si estas pequeñas equivocaciones continúan sucediendo? ¿Sabes cuán fácil sería convertir un pequeño paso en falso en una pesadilla de seguridad nacional?"

"Tus asistentes han dicho que tú no lees los documentos de instrucciones que ellos te dan, y que tú les pides que se los lean por ti o te los lean a ti."

"Por favor, no tomes nada de esto como algo personal. Quizás sea una incapacidad de aprendizaje. Cerca de sesenta millones de norteamericanos tienen incapacidad para aprender."

En el libro *Contra todos los enemigos*, Richard Clarke relata que cuando Bush llegó a la Casa Blanca "muy tempranamente fuimos advertidos que el Presidente no era un gran lector".

El libro *Bush en guerra*, de Bob Woodward, relata que en una reunión del Consejo Nacional de Seguridad durante la guerra de Afganistán, Bush expresó lo siguiente: "Yo no leo las páginas editoriales. Yo no lo hago. La hiperventilación que tiende a crearse alrededor de esos cables, cada experto y cada ex coronel y todo eso, es justamente ruido de fondo."

Hasta aquí una brevísimas síntesis de lo expuesto sobre algunos temas por importantes personalidades norteamericanas, que ayudan a explicar la extraña conducta y belicosidad del Presidente de Estados Unidos.



July 26th rally in Havana, 2004.

No quiero extenderme por ahora en asuntos más delicados todavía, como aquellos cuya divulgación costaron la vida a J. H. Hatfield, autor del libro *Hijo Afortunado*, o sobre otros temas de gran interés abordados por eminentes autores realmente brillantes y valientes.

Las calumnias y mentiras del señor Bush y sus asesores más cercanos fueron elaboradas precipitadamente para justificar las atroces medidas tomadas contra ciudadanos de origen cubano residentes en Estados Unidos que poseen vínculos con familiares allegados en Cuba.

Tal ultraje, como ya advertimos el pasado 21 de junio, tendría consecuencias políticas adversas en el estado de la Florida, que puede ser decisivo en la actual contienda electoral. La idea de un voto de castigo cobra fuerzas entre miles de cubano-americanos, muchos de los cuales normalmente habrían votado por Bush.

El odio y la ceguera condujeron a la administración a una acción inmoral y estúpida, presionada por la mafia terrorista que le dio a Bush la victoria fraudulenta con un millón de votos menos que su rival en toda la nación y una mísera ventaja de 537 votos en la Florida donde, además de que muchos muertos "ejercieron" el derecho al sufragio, miles de ciudadanos negros fueron impedidos por la fuerza de ejercerlo. Quince o veinte mil electores podrían hundir sus aspiraciones de reelección. A nivel de todo el país las brutales medidas han sido también criticadas.

En su inmensa mayoría esa mafia terrorista, que decidió nada menos que la elección de un presidente de Estados Unidos, está integrada o dirigida por antiguos batistianos y sus descendientes; por grupos que participaron durante décadas en las acciones terroristas, ataques

piratas, planes de asesinato contra líderes revolucionarios cubanos y todo tipo de agresiones armadas contra nuestra patria; por grandes terratenientes y familiares de la alta burguesía afectada por las leyes revolucionarias, que junto a los anteriores recibieron privilegios de todo tipo, y muchos reunieron grandes fortunas y adquirieron influencia en importantes sectores de poder dentro de los gobiernos de Estados Unidos.

Más del 90% de los que emigraron de Cuba desde el triunfo de la Revolución lo hicieron por canales normales y motivados por razones económicas, sus salidas fueron autorizadas por la Revolución sin obstáculo alguno. Pero los cubanos emigrantes estaban obligados a pasar bajo las horcas caudinas de aquella mafia poderosa, de cuya influencia no podían fácilmente prescindir.

A diferencia de los muchos millones de latinoamericanos, incluidos haitianos y caribeños, que legal o ilegalmente emigraron a Estados Unidos y son calificados como emigrantes, a los cubanos sin excepción alguna se los califica como exiliados.

Por otro lado, la absurda Ley de Ajuste ha costado incontables pérdidas de vidas cubanas, al premiar y estimular las salidas ilegales otorgando privilegios excepcionales que no se conceden a los ciudadanos de cualquier otro país del mundo.

Sin embargo, Cuba desde hace años, aun antes del derrumbe de la Unión Soviética y el período especial, a pesar de los riesgos de espionaje y planes terroristas procedentes de Estados Unidos, les fue concediendo a los emigrados permisos para visitar a sus familiares y su país de origen, mientras la administración Bush les cierra abruptamente las puertas, en su fanática obsesión de hacer rendir a Cuba por la vía

de asfixiarla económicamente.

Con el mismo objetivo de privar al país de ingreso alguno, califica la industria turística en Cuba de turismo sexual, y a las personas procedentes de Estados Unidos que visitan nuestro país, como "pedófilos" y "buscadores de placer".

El señor Bush no vacila tampoco en endilgar el mismo calificativo a los turistas canadienses, cuando todo el mundo conoce que en su inmensa mayoría se trata de jubilados y personas de la tercera edad, que acompañados de sus familiares buscan y disfrutan la tranquilidad y seguridad excepcional, la educación, cultura y hospitalidad que encuentran en nuestro país.

¿Cómo calificaría el señor Bush a las decenas de millones de turistas que visitan cada año Estados Unidos, donde abundan los casinos, las casas de juego, los centros de prostitución masculina y femenina y otras muchas formas de actividades relacionadas con la pornografía y el sexo, ninguna de las cuales existen en Cuba y son ajenas a la cultura revolucionaria de nuestro pueblo?

¿Cómo calificaría a las decenas de millones de europeos que visitan España cada año, donde numerosas páginas de prensa se dedican a publicitar los nombres, las direcciones, las características físicas, culturales e intelectuales, las especialidades y dones individuales para todos los gustos de las personas que practican el antiguo oficio de la prostitución? ¿Calificaría las industrias turísticas norteamericana y española de turismo sexual?

Ninguna de las actividades mencionadas tiene lugar en Cuba. Sin embargo, en la mente calenturienta y fundamentalista del todopoderoso señor de la Casa Blanca y sus más íntimos asesores, ahora hay que "salvar" a Cuba no solo de la "tiranía", hay

que "salvar a los niños cubanos de la explotación sexual y del tráfico de personas", "hay que librar al mundo de este atroz problema que tiene lugar a 150 kilómetros de Estados Unidos".

¿Nadie le ha dicho que en Cuba, antes del triunfo revolucionario de 1959, alrededor de 100 000 mujeres por pobreza, discriminación y falta de empleo, ejercían de forma directa o indirecta la prostitución, a las que la Revolución educó y buscó empleo, quedando prohibidas desde entonces las llamadas "zonas de tolerancia" que existían en la república mediatizada y la neocolonia impuestas por Estados Unidos?

¿Nadie le ha dicho que los niños cubanos, cuya salud física, mental y moral constituye el objetivo más priorizado de la Revolución, son protegidos por leyes de mucho mayor severidad que las de Estados Unidos, y están todos escolarizados, incluidos más de 50 000 que por padecer determinadas formas de discapacidad requieren y reciben, sin excepción alguna, esmerada atención en centros de educación especial?

¿Nadie le ha dicho que la mortalidad infantil es menor en Cuba que en Estados Unidos y continúa descendiendo?

¿Nadie se atrevió a susurrarle que Cuba ocupa en la educación un lugar destacado e internacionalmente reconocido; que todos los servicios de educación y salud son gratuitos y abarcan a la totalidad de la población; que en la educación, la salud y la cultura se desarrollan hoy programas que la situarán muy por encima de todos los países del mundo?

La histórica sesión de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular de Cuba celebrada el 1º y 2 de julio desenmascaró y puso en ridículo el grotesco informe de más de 400 páginas en el que se habla amplia y detalladamente de los programas neocoloniales y anexionistas que propone aplicar el grupo fascista que engendró tan repugnante proyecto contra el pueblo y la soberanía de Cuba. No han logrado con ello otra cosa que unir más a nuestro pueblo e incrementar su espíritu de lucha.

Hay que estar rematadamente locos para hablar nada menos que de aplicar programas de alfabetización y vacunación en Cuba, donde hace rato el analfabetismo fue erradicado, la escolaridad mínima alcanza nueve grados y los niños están vacunados contra 13 enfermedades. En todo caso, programas de ese tipo debieran aplicarse a decenas de millones de norteamericanos excluidos, que no disfrutaban del beneficio del seguro médico, o no han ido a la escuela, o son analfabetos totales o funcionales.

Ni siquiera la administración de Estados Unidos se ha atrevido a decir una sola palabra sobre la oferta generosa que hizo nuestro país de salvar, en el breve período de cinco años, una vida por cada

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Fidel Castro July 26th Speech Continued

From page 12

Mr. Bush's lies and slanders and those of his closest advisors were fabricated in a hurry to justify the atrocious measures taken against Cuban-born people living in the United States who have close family ties in Cuba.

This outrage, as we warned on June 21, might have adverse political consequences in Florida which could play a decisive role in this year's elections. The idea of a punishment vote is gaining ground among thousands of Cuban-Americans, many of whom would normally have voted for Bush.

Hatred and blindness have lead this administration to take a stupid, immoral action under pressure from the terrorist mob which gave Bush a fraudulent victory when he had a million votes less than his rival nationwide, and a narrow majority of 537 votes in Florida where thousands of black Americans were prevented from exercising their right to vote whereas many dead people 'exercised' theirs. Fifteen or twenty thousand voters could sink his hopes of re-election. These brutal measures have also been criticized all over the country.

The overwhelming majority of those who are members of or run that terrorist mob -which decided no less a thing than the election of the President of the United States- are former Batista supporters and their descendents; or they are groups who for years have been involved in the terrorist actions, pirate attacks, assassination plots against Cuban revolutionary leaders and all kinds of armed aggressions against our country; or they were big landowners and relatives of the upper middle classes who were affected by revolutionary laws and who previously had all kinds of privileges and many of whom have amassed huge fortunes and have gained influence in important power circles in the US governments.

Over 90 percent of those who have emigrated from Cuba since the triumph of the revolution have done so through normal channels and for economic reasons, their leaving authorized by the Revolution that placed no obstacles. But Cuban immigrants were forced to go under the Caudine Forks of that powerful mafia whose influence they could not easily ignore.

Unlike many millions of Latin Americans,

including Haitians and other Caribbeans, that emigrate legally and illegally to the United States and are called immigrants, Cubans, with no exception whatsoever, are called exiles.

On the other hand, the absurd Cuban Adjustment Act has caused the loss of countless Cuban lives by rewarding and encouraging illegal emigration and giving Cubans extraordinary privileges that are not granted to citizens of any other country in the world.

Nevertheless, years ago, even before the collapse of the Soviet Union and the special period that ensued, and despite the risk of espionage and terrorist plans originating in the United States which the measures entailed, Cuba gave permits to émigrés so they could visit their relatives and their country of origin, whereas the Bush administration is abruptly closing the doors because of its fanatical obsession of bringing Cuba to its knees through economic suffocation.

And, to that same end of depriving our country of any income whatsoever, he labels the tourist industry in Cuba sex tourism and calls those who visit our country coming from the United States "paedophiles" and "pleasure seekers".

Mr Bush does not hesitate either in tarring Canadian tourists with the same brush when everybody knows that the overwhelming majority of them are pensioners and senior citizens who, in the company of their relatives, come to enjoy the exceptional safety and calm, the politeness, culture and hospitality that they find in our country.

What would Mr. Bush call the tens of millions of tourists who visit the United States every year where casinos, gambling dens, areas of male and female prostitution and many other activities related to pornography and sex abound, none of which exist in Cuba and all of which are alien to the revolutionary culture of our people?

What would he call the tens of millions of Europeans who visit Spain every year where many pages in the papers are used to advertising the names, addresses, the physical, cultural and intellectual characteristics and the specialties and individual gifts to suit all tastes of those who exercise the age-old profession of prostitution? Would he call the US and

de 45 años de cruel bloqueo y agresiones por parte de los gobiernos de Estados Unidos.

Y no se trata de armas biológicas, armas químicas ni armas nucleares; se trata de avances científicos que pueden ayudar a toda la humanidad.

¡Ojalá que, en el caso de Cuba, Dios no quiera "dar instrucciones" al señor Bush de atacar a nuestro país, y lo induzca más bien a evitar ese colosal error! El debería cerciorarse de la autenticidad de cualquier mandato bélico divino, consultándolo con el Papa y otros prestigiosos dignatarios y teólogos de las iglesias cristianas, preguntándoles qué opinan.

Excúseme, señor Presidente de Estados Unidos, que en esta ocasión no le escriba una tercera epístola. Habría sido difícil analizar este tema por esa vía. Podría parecer un insulto personal. De todas formas, me adhiero a las normas de la cortesía.

Salve, César, pero esta vez añado: ¡los que estamos dispuestos a morir no tememos a tu enorme poder, tu ira irrefrenable ni tus peligrosas y cobardes amenazas contra Cuba! (Aplausos.)

¡Viva la verdad!

¡Viva la dignidad humana!



Mural in Havana against the US-led war on Iraq painted by Cuban Artists.

Spanish tourist industries sex tourism?

None of the aforementioned activities take place in Cuba. However, in the fevered and fundamentalist mind of the all-powerful gentleman in the White House and in those of his most intimate advisors, Cuba must now be "saved" not only from "tyranny", Cuban children must now be "saved from sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons" "the world must be freed from this dreadful problem which takes place 90 miles away from the United States".

Has no one told him that in Cuba before the triumph of the revolution in 1959 about 100,000 women were directly or indirectly involved in prostitution for reasons of poverty, discrimination and lack of work and that the Revolution educated these women and found them jobs, and outlawed the so-called "tolerance zones" which existed in the pseudo-republic and the neo-colony installed by the United States?

Has no one told him that the Cuban children, whose physical, mental and moral health is the number one priority of the Revolution, are protected by more severe laws than those of the United States and that they all attend school, including more than 50,000 who suffer from mental or physical disabilities and that, without exceptions, receive specialized care in special education centres?

Has no one told him that infant mortality is lower in Cuba than it is in the United States and that it continues to decrease?

Has no one dared to whisper in his ear that Cuba occupies an outstanding and internationally recognized place in education; that health and education services are free and extend to the whole population; that today programs are underway in education, health and culture that will place Cuba far above all the other countries in the world?

The historic session of the National Assembly of People's Power held on July 1 and 2, exposed them and showed how ridiculous is the grotesque over 400-page-long-report which gives an ample account and full details of the neo-colonial and annexationist programs the fascist group which begot this disgusting project propose to implement to the detriment of the Cuban people and their sovereignty. This report has done nothing if not unite our people even more and give a boost to their fighting spirit.

They must be absolutely mad to talk of such things as implementing literacy and vaccination programs in Cuba where illiteracy was eradicated a long time ago, where minimum school attendance is up to grade nine and where children are vaccinated against 13 diseases. Actually, such programs should be applied to tens

of millions of Americans who are left out, who do not enjoy the benefits of social security and who have not been to school or are completely illiterate or functionally illiterate.

The US administration has not even dared to say a single word about the generous offer that our country made of saving, in a short 5 year period, a life for every life lost in the Twin Towers, by providing free health care to 3000 US citizens who have no access to healthcare services that are indispensable for preserving life. Neither have they replied to the question of whether or not those who may decide to come to Cuba to take advantage of this opportunity would be punished.

It is really revealing that on the very same day that Mr. Bush spouted such outrageous slanders and threats, a prestigious American scientific institution from California signed an agreement with the Cuban Molecular Immunology Centre for transferring technology developed in our country for the clinical trials and later manufacture of three promising vaccines in the battle against cancer, which, as you know, kills more than half a million Americans every year.

It is only fair to acknowledge that in this case the US authorities did not set any obstacle.

This fact shows how the fruits of everything I have talked about before are beginning to sprout all over our country, despite 45 years of a harsh blockade and of aggressions by US governments.

And these are not biological weapons, nor chemical weapons, nor nuclear weapons; these are scientific discoveries which could help all humanity.

Let's hope that, in Cuba's case, God does not 'instruct' Mr. Bush to attack our country but that he rather inspires him to avoid this colossal mistake! He had better check on any divine belligerent order by consulting the Pope and other prestigious dignitaries and theologians from the Christian churches, asking them for their opinion

Excuse me, Mr. President of the United States of America, for not writing a third epistle to you this time but it would have been difficult to analyze this subject in that way. It might have been taken for a personal insult and I rather adhere to common courtesy.

Hail, Cesar! I say, but this time I add: Those who are willing to die have no fear of your enormous power, of your unbridled rage, nor of your dangerous and cowardly threats against Cuba!

Long live the truth!

Long live human dignity!

July 26, 2004

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una de las personas que murieron en las Torres Gemelas, atendiendo gratuitamente a 3 000 ciudadanos norteamericanos que no reciben servicios de salud imprescindibles para preservar la vida. Tampoco se ha respondido a la pregunta de si serían castigados o no los que decidieran viajar a Cuba y acogerse a esa oportunidad.

Es realmente revelador el hecho de que el mismo día que tan infames calumnias y amenazas fuesen proferidas por el señor Bush, una prestigiosa institución científica norteamericana de California suscribiera con el Centro de Inmunología Molecular de Cuba un acuerdo de transferencia de tecnología desarrollada en nuestro país para las pruebas clínicas y ulterior producción de tres vacunas prometedoras en la lucha contra el cáncer, enfermedad que, como se conoce, mata a más de medio millón de ciudadanos norteamericanos cada año.

Justo es reconocer que en ese caso no hubo obstrucción por parte de las autoridades norteamericanas.

El hecho demuestra cómo los frutos de cuanto he dicho antes empiezan a brotar en nuestro país por todas partes, a pesar

Gordon Campbell vs. the People of British Columbia

By Shannon Bundock

The BC Liberals are facing a crisis of increasing unemployment, overproduction and inflation. They are attempting to deal with this crisis through a program of privatization, layoffs and cuts; a program that is threatening the lives and security of poor and working people across the province. From women, to youth, to Indigenous people, to workers – no layer of society has been left unaffected in last three years.

Women

Since the Liberals came to power in June 2001, legislative attacks have been launched with increasing severity and frequency. Women have faced the closing of transition houses and women's centres, the elimination of several programs for single parents, reduction in funding to daycare centres and elimination of crisis resources for rape and abuse victims.

By looking at these cuts, one can clearly see the agenda of the BC Liberal government is not in the interest of women. However, if there are doubts, one needs to look no further than Minister of State for Women's Equality, Lynn Stephens and her infamous quote on Feb 15th 2002 in an interview with *Advance News*. On the question of women's inequality, Stephens claimed that this inequality is a result of women's own choices. She

said, "People make choices. This government is not about to say you can do this, but can't do that. From choices flows everything else. You are free to work where you wish, for whatever you wish; you are free to live where you want."

Contrast this apparent "freedom" that Stephens speaks about with the reality of women's lives; where services which once helped to battle wage-inequality, economic-dependence and lower education have been axed. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) criticized the BC Liberals after finding poverty rates for single mothers, Indigenous women, women of color and women who are new immigrants, within in the range of 37% to 54%.

March 31st 2004 was the final day of provincial funding for women's centres across BC, and the effective elimination of a service that has helped to improve the position of women in this province. Rising rates of poverty, coupled with these cuts to services are limiting the independence of women and forcing many to remain in traditional family relationships in order to survive economically.

Youth

The attacks by the Liberals do not end with women. Students and young people have felt the impact of the Liberals economic program

through rising tuition fees, and elimination of services for youth.

According to the Alma Mater Society at UBC "Since the provincial government repealed the tuition freeze legislation 2002, students across British Columbia have faced significant increases in tuition fees. In 2003, British Columbia posted the largest increase in average undergraduate fees, up 30.4% following a 25.7% increase in 2002. Average tuition in British Columbia is now higher than the national average with students paying an average of \$4,140 in tuition, surpassing the national average (\$4,025) for the first time in eight years".

For those who cannot afford post-secondary, however, things are fairing no better. Passed in October 2003, Bill 37 allows children as young as 12 to enter the workforce with only a handwritten note of parental permission. As well, it is young people who are primarily affected by the slashing of the minimum wage to \$6/hour for all new workers. In addition, the axing of employment standards accountability and the introduction of "self-help" guides for dealing with violations doubly affect new workers. As students, as workers and as young people trying to survive, youth have been faced with assaults at all levels.

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March against the BC Liberal agenda, May 25th 2002.

Women's Rights and Women Prisoner's Rights: An Update from the Prisoners' Justice Day Committee

By Phyllis Iverson

Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women (BCCW) Closes

The closure of the Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women (BCCW) has brought many changes for women in prison in BC.

BCCW was a Provincial Prison, under the jurisdiction of the provincial government, it held women who were on Remand - awaiting trial, Provincially Sentenced Women - sentenced to less than two years, and through an Exchange of Services Agreement it held Federally Sentenced Women - sentenced to more than two years.

There were two separate prisons at BCCW; one was a multi level secure prison, that meant that everyone was in a maximum-security setting, it held Remand, Provincially and Federally sentenced women. The other was called the Open Living Unit (OLU) and held up to 28 minimum-security prisoners. When BCCW closed the remand, provincial and federal prisoners were separated. Three new prisons were opened for women in BC. The cell space for women prisoners has increased by over 100 beds.

Provincially Sentenced Women

The BC Liberal Government removed all men from the Alouette River Correctional Centre in Maple Ridge. The prison was remodeled, to hold more prisoners, the internal and external security of the prison was increased, and it was reopened as the Alouette Correctional Centre for Women (ACCW). It now holds

up to 130 provincially sentenced women. It was bad enough when the women were moved to Maple Ridge. This move has resulted in the women being even more isolated from their families, friends and community. As prisons are moved further from urban areas, transportation for visitors becomes a major issue. There are fewer community resources for women in rural areas and this decrease in community support translates to a decrease in release opportunities. However, not all of the women under provincial jurisdiction were transferred there.

Any woman who is being held on remand, immigration hold or classified as maximum-security, is being held in an isolated section of the Surrey Pretrial Centre – a men's lock-up. This is unacceptable, women do not belong in men's prisons. The decision to start holding women in men's prisons is absolutely horrifying and it must be stopped. There are few programs and resources available to women held in men's prisons. The women are being held in virtual isolation, segregated from the programs and treatment that are needed for release. Despite the fact that a new provincial prison for women opened in BC, the majority of women prisoners in this province are being held in a men's prison. You can write the liberals regarding concerns for provincial women prisoners at:

Premier Gordon Campbell
P.O. Box 9041, STN PROV GOVT, Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Minister of Public Safety and

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"We've Accomplished an Awful Lot" Interview with Vancouver City Councillor Tim Louis

By Shannon Bundock

As the global capitalist economy falls deeper into crisis, all levels of capitalist government in Canada are being forced to respond. In the last year, the federal government of Canada has made a clear political shift to the right, and Canada's involvement in wars and occupations in Haiti and Afghanistan are reflections of this shift. In BC, social programs are being gutted, non-unionized and unionized labour is being attacked severely and the past three years have seen the tearing off of collective agreements, back to work legislations, racist referendum on Indigenous rights, mass layoffs, privatization and cuts. Locally, the City of Vancouver has had to deal with rising homelessness, poverty, controversial transit decisions and pressure from provincial and federal levels of government.

In the May 2004 issue of *Fire This Time Newspaper*, we



Tim Louis.

interviewed City Councillor Tim Louis about the overall vision that Councillor Louis has for combating problems and making progress in the City of Vancouver in favor of poor and working people. As well we touched on controversy and differences that had developed in his party - Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE).

On June 31st 2004, in order to update and expand, Shannon Bundock of *Fire This Time*

Newspaper, sat down with Councillor Tim Louis again to discuss the overall picture in municipal politics and the major issues affecting poor and working people in Vancouver.

FTT: Recently Vancouver City Council, after hearing from speakers, approved a modified approach to the Hastings Park Racetrack. It seems that different elements of this issue have provoked a lot of discussion both for and against. Could you explain your position and elaborate a bit on it?

There are two different things, there is the actual park itself and then there is also the slot machines. The slot machines were approved in July and we heard from about 200 speakers. My position is I'm very strongly opposed to gambling expansion for a number of reasons. One it is a very regressive form of revenue generation for a government.

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The Britannia 9 Case and Police Brutality

From page 1

intense legislative attacks by the BC liberal government.

Due to the protest Gordon Campbell never arrived that day. What occurred on October 3rd however, has become known as the 'Britannia Police Riot' as over 50 police officers violently attacked the peaceful demonstration full of school children, parents and community members. Police violently assaulted many members of the community, including their initial provocation and arrest of an elderly minister whose face was slammed into a stucco wall and against a 13 year-old boy who was arrested after being punched in the face and dragged away by his neck.

Throughout the five week long trial earlier this year, it was became clear that police provoked and escalated the protest, beginning with the arrest and assault of Reverend George Feenstra, who was performing a mime-skit. Police then arrested 7 other demonstrators, used pepper spray in the vicinity of elementary school children and continued to physically and verbally harass members of the community who were demanding the release of the unlawfully arrested protesters. Some officers admitted, on the witness stand that there were two decisive turning points in the incident that incited the crowd: the attacks and arrests of Minister Feenstra and the 13-year old boy.

Since the election of the BC Liberal government, the people of BC had been demonstrating in large numbers against cuts to services, the elimination of legal aid, the closing of women's centres, and the attacks on nearly every oppressed layer of society. The Vancouver Police Department's attacks at the Britannia Police Riot were an attempt to set a precedent in order to deter and terrorize the people of BC from uniting and exercising their democratic right to protest against the BC Liberal agenda. Through the failure to establish any true "guilt" came the failure establish their objective of criminalizing the right of the people of BC to defend themselves against vast and deep legislative attacks.

From Attacks in the Street to Retreat in the Courthouse

As a result, despite the "guilty" verdict that was handed down, July 5th's sentencing has shown a clear retreat on the part of government. The crown prosecutor was asking for 60-90 days jail time for the remaining defendants. In desperation, the crown even stated that Ivan Drury, in particular, must be sentenced to jail because of his leadership role in the protest and in order to deter people from engaging in such protests in the future.

Judge Smythe, in his final sentencing agreed with the "extremely important element of deterrence", but was unable to sentence jail time. Due to the lack of any legitimate case against the Britannia 9, and the weak argument on behalf of the crown, the sentence handed out on July 5th was a "Conditional Discharge" of 18 months probation for both Ivan

Drury and Justin Goodman who were convicted of "attending an illegal assembly" and "obstruction of a police officer".

Prior to the final sentencing, on April 2nd Minister George Feenstra was acquitted of all charges against him. In addition, Scott Rohan, was acquitted based on insufficient evidence. Murray Bush, was found guilty of 'assault' and 'attending an illegal assembly' for interfering with the police assault on the 13-year old child. His charges, however, were stayed because of gross infringement on his charter rights after the arrest; being unlawfully strip-searched and held for 26 hours without access to legal counsel.

End Police Brutality!

The entire trial that took place this year was a political attack by the judicial system in defence of the BC Liberal government. However, despite their efforts, they failed to make any solid convictions and were forced to retreat during both judgement and sentencing.

During sentencing, the crown's argument for jail, based primarily on "deterrence" is further proof of the political nature of this trial and the objective of intimidating the

people of BC and criminalizing dissent. Ultimately, in the case of the Britannia 9, the BC Liberals failed to hand down a sentence that would effectively "deter" the people of BC from exercising their democratic right to protest.

The trial of the Britannia 9 further proved that the Vancouver Police Department is engaged in growing and systemic violence, harassment, abuse and abuse against people exercising their democratic right to protest.

The government's final retreat with the sentencing of "Conditional Discharge" shows that the balance of forces in BC is not completely in favour of the BC Liberal government. Through increased pressure, mobilization and unity among people under attack, we can use this victory to expose the VPD and their bosses, the BC Liberals and their undemocratic and criminal actions against working and poor people in British Columbia. Building unity with people under attack will put us one step closer to defeating the BC Liberal government's offensive on all British Columbians and the brutal and unjust system they represent.



Police arrest Minister George Feenstra during the 'police riot' on October 3rd 2004.

Interview With Tim Louis Continued

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It transfers wealth from low-income to higher income. Income taxes are a far better form of generating revenue. Two, it's a very ineffective form of government revenue. Also lots of money lost by people at the slot-machines doesn't even end up in government coffers, it ends up in the pockets of the owner of the facility. And in this case, the owner - the great Canadian casino operator - is a very large multinational corporation. Three, it will eliminate jobs, as it literally removes approximately 100 million dollars per year from the Vancouver economy. Four, the neighbourhood, by a very large majority, are very strongly opposed. Five, it will increase crime rates.

So, all those reasons, combined with the fact that historically COPE, the party that I belong to, has been opposed to gambling expansion, brings me to the position that I took.

And, well, it was approved, which is very unfortunate. When the majority of the citizens spoke against a big-box opening in Kitsilano, City Council listened to the neighbourhood. When a majority of citizens in Hastings spoke against legalized pick-pocketing, the neighbourhood was ignored.

FTT: Further on with transit, on May 7th the Translink board voted for a second time against proceeding with the RAV line. Despite being overturned in a third vote on June 30th, what is the significance of this decision?

In retrospect the decision to not proceed wasn't a very significant decision in the sense that the

decision got overturned, reversed. But had that decision stood, had it remained in effect, it would have been very significant. It would have been a defeat for Public-Private-Partnerships. It would have been a defeat for the agenda of the ruling class, which is to provide massive corporate welfare to multinational corporations, such as Bombardier, and to fund that by cutting bus services. In particular, the 98-line which has received international awards. It would have been a victory for the working class.

But unfortunately, we have people on the board of Translink, masquerading that they're there to talk to people and to the trade union movement. But in reality are there to implement the agenda of the ruling class.

FTT: Why is the RAV project not in the interest of the people of Vancouver?

It is a misapplication of a very significant amount of resources. The same amount of money could be used to provide a massive increase in public transit, through the backbone of the public transit system: buses. And still provide a very, very good system out to Richmond.

The cost of tunnelling, just one mile of RAV - one mile alone: 100 million dollars. That amount of money is sufficient to purchase the entire CPR, that rail-line all along the Arbutus corridor. The rail bed and the rails, all the way from Richmond to False Creek. They could put in a rapid bus system, along Cambie, with bi-articulated buses, with pre-paid boarding. With synchronized lights, so that the buses don't ever have to stop for a red light. Translink estimates ridership would be close to the ridership of

RAV, but it would cost one sixth as much to build that operates and delivers. 300 million dollars, maybe 350 million, to build the rapid bus, and 100 million to buy the Arbutus right of way. A total of 450 million and we would have two, very good, very capable lines from Vancouver to Richmond. So out of the budget that is identified for RAV, of 1.7 billion, there would still be left over about 1.25 billion dollars to beef-up the bus system.

FTT: In last 20 years, Vancouver's poorest faced an 11% decrease in their income. Layoffs and decrease in real income have driven many people to the streets in Vancouver. As a result, homelessness is becoming an even more serious problem and we see that social housing is one solution to this. What plans does city council to tackle this ugly and inhuman problem?

City council does not have any plans at the current time to build a significant amount of social housing. We are proceeding in some limited areas. Woodwards will provide a significant amount of social housing - 200 or 300 units. On the need for social housing, we really do need a provincial approach to that.

FTT: Last time that I interviewed you for the FTT newspaper, we talked about serious differences within COPE, which ended up with COPE divided into two factions if you will. This period was so heated up that the April 3rd 2004 was cancelled due to inability to accommodate the high turnout. Now, with the June 30th AGM, it seems that some agreement and compromise has been made. Can you elaborate a little bit more on this and explain what

were the issues and what was the compromise that has been made?

Well, you're right there were essentially two different groups putting forward slated for the AGM. The group that I'm with (we're often referred to as 'COPE Classic') we had proposed from the very beginning a very principled compromise. We would put forward for a coalition slate five of the eleven to be elected, they would put forward five of the eleven to be elected. And there would be one neutral. Well, unfortunately, that was not acceptable, to the other side prior to the cancelled AGM.

The membership, through their very large turn out at the cancelled AGM sent a very strong message and as a result of that, an agreement was reached. Agreement to what we had been proposing all along, which was five, five and one. This gives most groups equal numbers on the executive.

FTT: Since COPE winning the last municipal election, how would you draw the gains made by COPE?

I think we've accomplished an awful lot. An ethical purchasing policy. The food policy council. More funding to libraries, to keep libraries open year round. The re-establishment of child and youth advocacy. The purchase of Woodwards. The Ward agenda is moving forward very, very well. Lots of good things!

FTT: Do you have any specific message for our readers?

Stay Active! Be Active!

FTT: Thank you very much Tim for taking time to speak with us.

Building a Movement Against the BC Liberal Agenda

From page 17

Workers

In addition to facing, 34, 500 job losses, between January and May 2004, unionized and non-union workers have also seen their rights come under the axe. Workers unprotected by collective agreements have faced major changes in employment standards that allow 'flexibility' for employers and a further shift away from worker protection and job security.

In fighting against privatization, layoffs and cuts and for adequate wages and benefits, as well as job-security, many public sector unions have been forced onto the battlefield against the BC Liberals. The April-May 2004 HEU strike was a good example of how far the Liberals are willing to go to union-bust and win these battles.

With massive propaganda against workers and incredible pressure on the union, the BC Liberals attempted to break the wide support that existed for the HEU strike and pit the people of BC against HEU workers. Despite the fact that this battle was never even fully fought, it still shows us the great potential that poor and working people in BC have when mobilized and fighting in solidarity with each other against the BC Liberals.

Poor People

The latest in the Campbell anti-poor agenda is the introduction, by MLA Lorne Mayencourt, two bills ("Safe Streets Act" and "Trespass Act") that directly target the most impoverished layers of society. These bills make squeegeeing and panhandling illegal and allow parking lot owners to ban people from their property. Minister of Public Safety rich Coleman, says these bills will probably become part of a larger package of "safety laws" that will be introduced in the fall.

Again, this is only the latest in attacks. Since the Liberals came to power, income assistance has been overhauled, leaving fewer people eligible and forcing more people to consistently rely on overextended emergency services – food banks, shelters, soup kitchens etc.

While social housing projects were frozen across the province, Residential Tenancy Offices in both Vancouver and Nanaimo were closed. Changes were made to the Residential Tenancy Act, including sections that indicated only those disabled people receiving "continuous" assistance can be eligible to apply for seniors housing through BC Housing.

Since the election of the BC Liberals, hundreds of indirect and direct attacks have been made on poor people in this province and as a result poverty has deepened. The latest Stats Canada report indicates that Vancouver saw an 11% reduction in its poorest sector.

Indigenous Nations

Another aspect of attacks by the BC Liberals is the political fight that they are stepping up against Indigenous nations. May 2002 saw an attempt to fuel racist divisions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people when the BC Liberals held a referendum on treaty negotiations. This attack, which was one of the most visible to date, was intended to force Indigenous nations to accept less from their fight for the title, rights and resources that have been stolen, and continue to be stolen, from them.

In September 2003, the BC Liberals continued their aggressive program to weaken Indigenous nations with their so-called "reasonable and fair offer" to "give" the Haida nation 20% of their traditional land. The Haida nation refused this "offer" and set a powerful example for other Indigenous nations, and the people of BC, many of whom recognized this attack as one more in a long history of theft and genocide.

In addition to specific attacks on women, youth, Indigenous people poor people and workers, the BC Liberals have also gutted the legal aid program, dismantled the BC Human Rights Commission and closed 113 public schools. Most recently, with the release of



HEU workers rally.

the 2004 legislative package, the people of BC have seen a rise in unemployment rates. According to the *BC Stats Labour Survey May 2004* the net loss of jobs since Dec 2003 was 10,000.

To all intents and purposes, what Gordon Campbell has done for the people of BC is wage a multi-pronged assault on the security and living standards of every oppressed sector of society.

From Fallujah to HEU: Why the Liberals Attack

The agenda of the BC Liberals is not an isolated or unique agenda. Globally, imperialist governments at all levels are facing crippled and failing economic conditions. To deal with this federally Canada is executing the same strategy as other imperialist nations; the US, France, Germany, UK, etc. Concretely, Canada is combating the

crisis through direct military occupation and war on third world nations, with the objective of securing and stealing all natural and human resources possible.

The BC Liberals, though attacking broadly and with sweeping moves, are doing so with planning and accuracy. All cuts to social programs, all moves toward public-private-partnerships and the slippery road to total privatization, all layoffs have been executed with purpose. In a time of increasing overproduction, unemployment and poverty, the only solution for the ruling class in BC is to funnel as much wealth as possible out from the hands of working people.

Thus far the BC Liberals have been saving themselves from drowning in this rough free-market ocean. However, their method of survival is the inhuman and brutal strategy of standing on top of, and effectively submerging, the people of BC. In fact, BC's 2.2 % economic growth going into 2004 was a result, primarily, of a 12% increase in corporate profits.

In addition to draining the pockets of poor and working people, the BC Liberals have also used their attacks to hammer down divisions between working class people and draw attention away from their accountability. For example, as the Liberals layoff tens of thousands of workers, they blame "illegal" workers for taking jobs and increasing unemployment rates. Just as while the Liberals eliminate the Human Rights Commission, they blame the fight of Indigenous nations for sovereignty as BC's biggest threat to "equality" and "fairness".

If effectively divided, the people of BC will pose a lesser threat to the BC Liberals and will be unable to effectively combat this unrelenting agenda of anti-woman, anti-student, anti-worker, anti-poor and racist attacks. Conversely, if we fight to overcome these divisions, we can build a force that is

broad, united and lethally threatening to the interest of the ruling class of BC.

People of BC: Fight Back!

Building a movement against the BC Liberals means we need to recognize that the attacks of the BC Liberals are not isolated to a "current period of tightening our belts" with "brighter horizons around the corner". The shift that we have seen provincially, into a stage of increasingly severe attacks against all oppressed layers of society, is based on the economic crisis that confronts the world today, not the mood or character of Gordon Campbell or any given Premier.

As a result, in order to effectively fight back this agenda, we must use any opportunity to bring masses of people together and organize on issues that unite us. Through focusing on major points of attack and building political awareness and solidarity we can build a movement that fights in defence of the interest of poor and working people throughout BC and goes beyond the certain constituency currently being attacked

We saw an example of this, when tens of thousands of people mobilized in solidarity with the HEU strike in May 2004, and effectively brought the issue beyond an isolated fight of one union. The HEU strike demonstrated the strength of mobilizing around points of unity, and resulted in a sharp polarization with all working people engaged in a political fight against the province.

In the context of the capitalist crisis in BC we must take advantage of their desperate position to push for further polarization. We must rebuild confidence and strength and drive forward with momentum that does exist. With patience and vision we can build the foundations of a movement that will, without a doubt, defeat the BC Liberals and any government that attacks poor and working people.

Prisoners Justice Day Update Continued

From page 17

Solicitor General Rich Coleman
P.O. Box 9055, STN PROV GOVT,
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Federally Sentenced Women Across Canada

omen make up a very small percentage of Canada's prison population, however this population is one of the fastest growing. The number of Federally Sentenced Women (FSW) has increased by 150% in the last two decades, despite decreasing crime rates. This increase can be attributed to a number of factors, the most obvious being the building of new prisons.

With the announced closing of Kingston's Prison for Women five regional prisons were built. These prisons were supposed to incorporate a more holistic approach to women's imprisonment based on empowerment, meaningful and responsible choices, respect, dignity, shared responsibility, and supportive environments. In 1996, after a walkaway escape, slashing and suicide attempts by women in the new regional prisons the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) responded by transferring all maximum-security classified women out of the women's prisons and into isolated sections of men's maximum-security prisons.

For the past 8 years women have been held in isolation in men's maximum-security prisons. On March 8th 2001, the women in Saskatchewan Penitentiary (one of the men's prisons) brought a discrimination complaint against CSC. The Canadian Human Rights Commission agreed to investigate. In January 2004 they found that the Canadian government does discriminate against federally sentenced women based on gender, race and disability. They made 19 recommendations for change to bring

CSC policies into line with the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and other international human rights instruments that Canada has signed.

The report is called 'Protecting Their Rights' details can be found at

<http://www.elizabethfray.ca>

New Maximum-Security Prisons

Rather than moving women out of men's prisons and into the existing women's prisons, CSC has started building Maximum-Security Prisons. Some of these new Max Prisons have already opened, and the conditions under which women now live are still not equivalent to the conditions for maximum-security men; they are much harsher, and more in line with the super maximum conditions in the Special Handling Units. The women are to spend their first six months locked in their cells, only to come out for doctors' appointments and visits. They are not allowed to communicate with any other prisoners, and when they come out of their cells they are in leg shackles, handcuffs and escorted by two or more guards. She can work her way to the next step where there are no shackles; just handcuffs and two guards. If, at any point she exhibits 'inappropriate behaviour' she can be sent back to the first step. When one prisoner is out of her cell all other prisoners are locked up.

This level of security is not justifiable in terms of women's crime or women's threat to the community. Women are at low risk of re-offending and have high needs in terms of treatment and healing from physical/sexual abuse, substance abuse, lack of employment training, and lack of education. The majority of maximum-security classified women are First Nations women and women with mental health issues. The needs of women in society have been turned into risk factors and as result women who are the most

socially and economically disadvantaged are classified as maximum-security.

Federally Sentenced Women in BC

When BCCW closed, the federal government regained jurisdiction over the Federally Sentenced Women. They built the Fraser Valley Institution for Women in Abbotsford (FVI). For FSW the move from BCCW was an improvement, because they have regained their rights as federal prisoners (These rights are lost anytime a federal prisoner is being held in a provincial prison). Despite the fact that FVI already has a maximum-security perimeter, they plan to build a Maximum Security Unit there. Until it is built all maximum-security women are being held at the Surrey Pretrial Centre.

Prisoners' Justice Day Committee

P.O. Box 78005,

1755 East Broadway

Vancouver, British Columbia

V5N 5W1

<http://www.prisonjustice.ca>





“No Benefits...For the Use of Our Land”

An Interview with Chief Garry John of the Seton Lake Indian Band

By Mike Krebs

FTT: Why are the Seton Lake Indian Band and the St'at'mic Chief's council opposing the sale of BC Rail to CN by the BC Liberal Government?

For one, the province, the owner of BC Rail, has not approached the Seton Lake Indian Band nor the St'at'mic Chief's Council about this endeavor. We told them quite plainly and bluntly that they have a legal obligation that is inescapable. As well, there is a proprietary nature of our title and rights to the land and those need to be dealt with, they can't be ignored. The sooner we and the province of BC sit down and have those discussions, then we will see what the possibilities are afterwards.

FTT: What impact will this sale have on the Indigenous people of Seton Lake?

Well, it'll mean that there will be no resolution of the issues that remain outstanding since the taking of the land for the railway. Since the taking of the land, we have suffered because we had already lost the land that the track stood on. In the early 1900's

when the land was taken, they also took the land adjacent to the railway, for sidings and depots. They also took the land for wood lots for the steam locomotives and wood lots for ties. That land has never been returned and it is no longer being used specifically for railway purposes. The land has been subletted in many cases. And there has never been any revenue sharing with the tribe, or the nation, or with our community.

FTT: What actions has the Seton Lake Indian Band taken to oppose this sale?

We have written letters to the Premier and to the Attorney General, once again reminding them of their legal obligation to consult and accommodate us on this particular matter. We've outlined and referenced court cases and outlined their legal obligations and tried to make it as abundantly clear as possible for them.

We've also written the head of CN Rail. When we heard that the federal competition bureau had been asked to review the transaction, we wrote to the federal competition bureau

and said, “you must take into consideration that the Aboriginal title and rights issues that are affected by this transaction have not been dealt with. And until those matters have been dealt with, this transaction cannot go through.”

I guess, on July 14th they inked the deal and on July 15th we took action in the form of stopping rail traffic for two-hours to protest the fact that the province of British Columbia thinks that they can do this kind of thing and ignore their lawful obligations.

FTT: What has been the response from Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations to your actions against the sale?

Well, we have received letters of support from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. We have received letters of support and letters written to local newspapers from some interest groups and have been told by Maude Barlow, the national volunteer chairperson of the Council of Canadians, that the Council of Canadians fully supports our actions.

We're also encouraging trade unions and the labour movement,



Chief Garry John.

as well as activists, social activists, to join us in this protest because we're seeing a crown asset, a crown jewel of the province of British Columbia, a publicly held asset, being sold for a song.

The line has not been transferred to CN rail but that's the one thing that the province of British Columbia is relying upon. They seem to believe that they found an opening, a small niche, to utilize, by not transferring ownership of the land that the tracks sit upon. Therefore they say that they have kept the promises they gave to the people who they were elected by because they are “not selling BC rail.” They are doing similar things with BC Hydro, where they are doing everything short of transferring the ownership of the land the power lines sit on. You can make a direct comparison to it.

FTT: How has the local community in Seton Lake, Indigenous people, been impacted by the BC liberal agenda already?

Well there certainly has been a cutback in services and on a large number of government services: the Ministry of Forest Services has been cutback, health care has been impacted, and passenger-train services have been eliminated. There used to be a daily whistle-stop passenger-train service from North Vancouver to Prince George, it has been eliminated.

It creates a hardship on the community. All the money that is

coming from resource extraction is coming from our territory, St'at'mic territory. Little or no benefits have been seen... no benefits have been seen by our communities for the use of our land, the extraction of our resources since settlers first came to our territory.

FTT: Why is it important for Indigenous people to oppose the sale of BC rail?

At this point in time it seems that the general public has largely been complacent. They seem to have an attitude that there is nothing they can do, or, it seems that perhaps too many people are ashamed that they voted, because *somebody* voted for this government. They got 77 out of 79 seats, the largest majority ever seen in provincial elections in this province. And people seem to be hanging their heads and saying “we didn't think they were going to go this far.”

The fact that Aboriginal title and rights are unresolved in BC is maybe our last opportunity to stop these types of initiatives from happening. So that's why its important for Aboriginal people to step up and defend their title and rights to lands and resources in the province of BC. And that's why its important for people to realize that this a unique opportunity we have.

As well, the courts have said, “for gods sakes, Aboriginal people, government resource users, third party interests in Indigenous



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'Don't Just Sit There and Not Do Anything'

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territories, sit down and work these things out, don't negotiate through the courts."

That's what you try to impress on Gordon Campbell, CN rail, Geoff Plante, Kevin Falcon... We don't want to have to go this route. We're perfectly prepared and willing to sit down and work these issues out, because our unresolved issues have to be worked out. And what they've said is, "we've taken your concerns into consideration." And in their words, our interests have been taken care of, "thank-you very much." So they feel totally justified in doing what they're doing.

FTT: Why is it important for people across BC, non-Aboriginal people who are attacked by the BC Liberal government, why is it important for them to support Seton Lake's fight against the sale of BC Rail?

Well, it's important for a number of reasons. Mostly that defending Aboriginal title and rights allows you a unique opportunity, not just to look after our concerns, not just to look after our title and rights interest in land and resources but, for the general public and it will be hard for the average British Columbian. We've seen it so many times.

Forest Grove is a good example where they're being told that a school is being shut down and parents are standing on the line saying, "we don't want the school to be shut down, it's not justified." The rationale you're applying to this decision just doesn't wash. There's now court injunctions asking them to move, there's legal action being taken by the school board to get them out of there. And the provincial government is largely saying, "we're cutting back your funding so you've got to cut back some costs here and there."



Protest against BC Rail privatization in Prince George, Spring 2003.

If people are able to work together we can accomplish something, but if we're going to continue playing games and we're going to have an "us and them" type situation, then we're going to watch things disintegrate in front of us... and that's largely what we're seeing now.

Where do we go from here?

Well I know we're on a path, and unfortunately it looks like we're largely headed for what's going to wind up being another legal battle, but the courts have already said, "don't negotiate through the courts."

As a result of what we did on July 15th, CN rail, the new kid on the block, or the new operator on the land, they've said that they want to sue us for damages. And they've claimed that myself and the members of the Seton Lake Band threatened, intimidated and trespassed on their land and that we threatened them and interfered with their operations. So we're countering that by signing an appearance notice and we're also calling on the court to order the Provincial Government to hand over the lease agreement and the

Rail Revitalization agreement that they're relying upon.

CN Rail is maintaining that as of July 14th they have been given the right by the province to operate on BC Rail's tracks. We're saying, we want to say to the judge, "Your honor, if CN rail is relying upon an insurance from the province of British Columbia, then we want to see those documents."

We want CN Rail and BC Rail to give us those documents so that we can have a look at them. The agreements, despite what Gordon Campbell, Geoff Plante and Kevin Falcon say, as soon as this agreement is finalized, the documents will be made public. This hasn't happened. So that's our actions for the time being.

I guess that we were hoping that other people would make their displeasure known. Not just by writing letters or calling talk shows, get out there and demonstrate your support, make some signs, phone your MLA, do something. Don't just sit there and not do anything.

FTT: Thanks a lot Chief Garry.

The UN, NATO, and the US-led Occupation of Iraq

From page 2

UN-NATO Occupation: not a solution for the Iraqi people

Interest from rival imperialist countries in supporting the occupation of Iraq has not only picked up because they are now in a better bargaining position than they were a year ago. The bigger factor for their interest lies in the threat that is posed to them by the Iraqi resistance. Through their heroic fight against US imperialism, the Iraqi resistance has emboldened the anti-imperialist movement around the world. The shockwaves that would result from the expulsion of the US-UK forces from Iraq would seriously destabilize the international status quo in the favor of oppressed people against imperialism and threaten the power of all imperialist countries.

There is also no illusion about the danger that other imperialist countries and their organizations, the UN and NATO, would face if they joined the occupation of Iraq. In a BBC poll in February 2004, only 0.6% of Iraqi people thought that the UN should be involved in "security" in Iraq, and in the Coalition Provisional Authority's poll in June, 57% of Iraqis expressed zero confidence in the United Nations.

The origin of this lack of confidence is certainly in the decade of sanctions that the UN punished the Iraqi people with, but this feeling that the UN is not on the side of the people of Iraq has only been confirmed as absolutely true by the UN's support of the occupation up to now.

Nowhere in the proposals put forward for UN or NATO occupation is there any deviation from the path of US imperialism. In fact, all the arguments presented are that the UN and NATO would be better able to carry out the US imperialist agenda in Iraq, as expressed in the timeline towards elections recognized by UNSC resolution 1511.

Whether Iraq is occupied by the green berets or blue helmets makes no difference for the Iraqi people. This is merely an argument between imperialists over how they want to try to divide up the wealth of the people of the world, and how they can buy time to suppress the anti-occupation / self-determination movement in Iraq.

What counts for the Iraqi people is a solution to the occupation of their country, for an end to snipers, tanks, helicopter gunships, blockades, checkpoints and house to house raids. The Iraqi people want jobs and schools and their power and water to stay on. They cannot get this through a UN occupation like the one that is currently crippling Haiti, or a NATO occupation like the one choking and starving Afghanistan. The solution to the problems under occupation is to end the occupation. It is this demand that poor and working people the world over must support, demand and fight for alongside the Iraqi resistance.

NO US-UK OCCUPATION!

NO UN-NATO OCCUPATION!

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRAQI PEOPLE NOW!

Gordon Campbell's Liberal Government Steps Up Old Colonial Practice: Stop Making Profit From Stolen Indigenous Land

By Aaron Mercredi

On Thursday, July 15th, members of the Seton Lake Indian Band set up a temporary blockade of the railway that been handed over to CN Rail the day before, succeeding in blocking a freight train that was trying to pass through the BC rail corridor south of Lillooet. This blockade was set up in response to the BC Liberal government's augmented attacks on indigenous people's inherent right and title to land in the province. This right and title to land has been ignored and recently took form in the sale of the BC Rail to the Canadian National Railway Company.

The St'at'mic Chiefs Council, which represents 11 aboriginal bands including the Seton Lake Indian Band, have been fighting for recognition of their inherent right and title to the territory that the rail line passes through. The BC Liberal government has never reached any form of agreement with the St'at'mic about access to and use of their lands that the rail line runs over.

While the province was making plans to sell the line, the council informed potential buyers that the provincial government was in no position to sell the railway until matters with the St'at'mic were addressed and that any potential buyer who wished to invest in the railway would do so at their own risk.

The construction of the BC rail line was an insult to indigenous people in this province. The line crosses through some of the most impoverished areas of British Columbia, owned by many indigenous people. Of the billions of dollars worth of materials that have crossed through these territories on the rail line, the people who own the territory have not received any benefits of owning land that is of such valuable use to CN Rail.

The \$1-billion, 990-year lease of the rail line cemented the BC Liberal government's stance on the legal rights of indigenous people to land and resources in BC: that they will continue to ignore and suppress them.

One question that arises out of this struggle is why hasn't the BC Liberal government reached an agreement with the St'at'mic? Why is the government afraid to meet on an equal basis to discuss the land use? The reason is that, legally, the BC Liberal government does not have jurisdiction over that land, as it was never signed away by the indigenous nations who look after it. So they rely purely on the same colonial practice of stealing indigenous land that they have been pursuing since contact, except now they are trying to profit off of it by selling the land to a private corporation. The organizing of indigenous people against privatization, like the actions of the St'at'mic against the sale of BC Rail, are fundamental steps towards building resistance against the illegal landgrabs, displacement and genocide that indigenous people have endured for hundreds of years.

**NO SALE OF BC RAIL!
NO PRIVATIZATION OF
INDIGENOUS TERRITORY!**

July 24th Day of Action: US/UK Out! Self-Determination for Iraq!

By Nicole Burton

On July 24th, less than a month after the US/UK “Handover” of power in Iraq, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) held a rally at the Vancouver Art Gallery to demand “US/UK OUT! Self-Determination for Iraq and all Oppressed Nations!” With some participants coming in from Surrey and Greater Vancouver, and being joined by many who came off the streets of Downtown, attendance was dynamic and diverse- mainly youth and people from the third world, but also seniors, students, and members of the Muslim community. The open nature of the rally made it accessible for passers-by to participate and get involved. MAWO organisers Shannon Bundock and Tamara Hansen MC’ed the event, introducing a wide variety of speakers coming from different backgrounds to voice their opposition to the continued occupation of Iraq. Sheila Patterson, an organizer with the Peace and Justice Commission of the Anglican Church and long time human rights activist, was the first speaker. She discussed

the ongoing injustice in Iraq under an illegal, immoral, and illegitimate occupation by the US and UK forces. In addition, she linked these actions with those of the Canadian government and their ongoing occupation of Afghanistan.

Chaudhry Sannulah, Vice President of United Muslims and President of the Pakistani Canadian Association, spoke about the occupation of Iraq from the perspective of Muslim and Pakistani communities. Chaudhry gave a passionate speech questioning the motivations US and UK forces in Iraq, and in explaining the disaster they have created for Iraq’s people, he asked why these forces are not considered ‘terrorists’. His speech was met with cheers and support from the audience.

The next speaker was Laura Nunez, a MAWO organizer and student at Langara, who linked her experience as a student committed to social justice with the experience of Iraqi people and their struggle to live with dignity, and to determine their own future. She emphasized the importance of building a student movement

within the antiwar movement, and fighting in solidarity with oppressed people globally. Amidst cheers from participants, Laura concluded this with a quote from the Latin American revolutionary Che Guevara, who said “We cannot be indifferent to what happens anywhere in the world, for a victory by any country over imperialism is our victory; just as any country’s defeat is a defeat for all of us.”

The MCs then introduced Meegan Maultsaid, a central organizer for Under the Volcano (a Vancouver festival of resistance) and a prominent and long-time Vancouver social justice activist. Meegan spoke from this perspective, challenging the idea of protesting war without connecting it to a larger struggle. She argued the importance of building a movement capable of challenging imperialism, and ultimately capitalism. Meegan was followed by Byungjin Na, a member of MAWO and organizer with the Korean Students Network Against War, who read a spirited letter of solidarity from Korea, where antiwar activists had held a demonstration against the Iraq occupation the previous

day.

Ivan Drury, an organizer with MAWO took to the stage continuing chants. He gave a visualization of the struggle against occupation in Iraq. Ivan linked the resistance in factories and workplaces against private US corporations with the resistance in the streets, and ultimately with resistance around the world, connecting this to the Vancouver antiwar movement. Nasim Sedaghat, an organizer with MAWO, a former political prisoner and long-time social justice activist concluded the day. Nasim emphasised the importance of getting involved in the antiwar movement, understanding the

nature of the struggle against imperialism and linking it to the struggles of immigrants and refugees, women, workers, and all oppressed people.

The effect of MAWO’s July 24th rally was celebratory and far-reaching, with nearly 250 people participating, and many more witnessing the event and being introduced to the politics of the antiwar movement. It was important in exposing the illegitimacy of the “Handover” after June 30th, and establishing that global resistance to occupation in Iraq continues with the unconditional demand for self-determination of Iraqi people.



Sheila Patterson from the Anglican Church speaks at MAWO rally against the occupation of Iraq, July 24th 2004.

We Have Been Lied to Consistently, Constantly

Sheila Patterson’s July 24th speech At MAWO

Anti-War Rally in Vancouver

The invasion of Iraq, now in its second year was organized with lies. Does anyone doubt this anymore? Yet, the lies are still dominant, even though they are named “disinformation” or “intelligence failure” a lie by any other names is still a lie.

This ‘intelligence failure’ must be the most disastrous failure of communication in the history of the US and British intelligence services. Let’s be honest; it wasn’t an intelligence failure and we would be the ones guilty of intelligence failure if we believed that it was. The truth is simply that we have been lied to consistently, constantly, with cunning and a level of deceit that is almost inconceivable, until we take a good look at from whose mouths the lies pour forth. I think it might be very helpful if we met the lies head-on and refute them consistently, constantly and with a level of accuracy, which denies the liars a platform on which to make their defense.

We have had a lot of experience with political obfuscation in this province. We see it on a global level now with regards to the

invasion of Iraq. Let no one refer to it as a war. It is not. The United States simply disarmed Iraq, decimated the general population with crippling sanctions which lasted thirteen years, ignored the findings of the disarmament commission which declared Iraq free not only of weapons of mass destruction, but of any powerful military might at all. This is called pre-emptive war. It is not. It is a preventative war because it is a chosen war masquerading under a cloak of strident stars and stripes nationalism made from a fabric of interwoven lies.

Iraq is harbouring Weapons of Mass Destruction – A Lie.

Iraq purchased Uranium yellow cake from Nigeria for it’s nuclear program – A Lie.

Iraqis piloted the planes on September 11th – A Lie.

Iraqi people welcomed our soldiers with candy and flowers – A Lie.

Iraqi oil will pay for the war – A Lie.

The war will cost no more than one or two billion dollars – A Lie.

The transfer of sovereignty to an interim government in Iraq – A Lie, a monumental fraud.

Worse than the lies is the destruction of honest inquiry. Dare not to ask why the twin towers went down, at least not in the United States. To do so is to invited calumny and crude abuse for your probing mind. But, failure to dissect the cause of war leaves us open for the next installment which could be a nuclear arms race. Let us not be deceived: the use of nuclear weapons is explicitly contemplated in the policies of the Bush administration.

The British created Iraq for their own interests in 1917. Who would expect that the United States in 2004 would ever permit an independent Iraqi government to exist? Especially now that Washington has reserved the right to set up permanent military bases there in the heart of the world’s greatest oil producing region, and has imposed an economic regime that no sovereign country would accept, putting the country’s fate in the hands of Western

corporations. Throughout history even the harshest and most shameful measures are regularly accompanied by professions of noble intent and rhetoric about bestowing freedom or independence.

I quote from an article by Richard Sanders in Canadian Dimension magazine:

Let’s not be wooed either by the idea of Canada as a Peacekeeper. Canadians generally opposed the latest Iraq war and despite much evidence to the contrary, Canadians still naively believe that the Liberal government completely boycotted the war.

They didn’t. The shameful truth is that in several important ways, Canada actually ranked third- just behind Britain and Australia- in supporting the war. Canada commanded the naval task force in the Persian Gulf protecting US warships that launched deadly air sorties against Iraq. Canada provided war planners before and during the war. Canada provided air traffic controllers aboard AWAC aircraft controlling the “safety” of warplanes doing aerial bombardments.

We have been a silent partner in this invasion of Iraq. And that’s the truth.

'An Injury to One Is Injury to All'

A talk by Nasim Sedaghat at the July 24th rally, 2004

Hello sisters and brothers,

I thank and salute all of you for coming today to this protest rally and march and for keeping the spirit of opposition to war and occupation alive. Sisters and brothers, we need to come to this place every month because we need to show to the people of Vancouver, Canada and the world that people here are not indifferent to the killing and destruction of the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Haiti and every people of countries who are under imperialist attack and plunder.

An Injury to One Is Injury to All

The human being is one unit. Being a human being is not just going to work, to eat and to sleep. From very long ago, from the beginning of civilization and social production, it was understood that we are human not by our kind, but by our connection and relationship to each other. We can't afford to be indifferent to other human beings' conditions and problems. As a unit we must all enjoy a prosperous life and therefore as human beings we cannot be silent when members of

of Iraq has created chaos and brought death and destruction to Iraqi people. Since the beginning of the war, the US and UK have killed more than 10,000 and injured more than one hundred thousands Iraqi people. Baghdad was once one of the most beautiful and livable cities in the world is currently ranked the worst out of 215 major cities and capitals in the world. Lawlessness, violence, assassinations and the disruption of the people's social and personal lives have set deep roots since the US-UK invasion and occupation of the country.

Unemployment has soared from around 15 to 20 percent before the war (even considering that Iraq was under UN Security Council US sanctions for more than 12 years), to currently 78% according to UN agencies' estimates. Death and infant mortality rates have gotten 10 times worse due to the lack of medication, health services, clean water and a clean and healthy environment. The irony is that this is occurring in a country such as Iraq that sits on the second largest reserve of oil in the world.



MAWO organizers hold OPERATION: CANADA OUT banner at July 24th rally.

life of Iraqi people but have added to the chaos and instability. These governments were created by the United States and therefore for the United States. No wonder the first step the so-called New Interim Government took last month was to announce the imposition of martial law and just last week they announced that they are forming a new secret police for restoring so-called peace in Iraq. These are the first gifts the interim government gave to the Iraqi people, rushing to establish a police state and tyranny. If you want to know how legitimate and popular this Interim Government is ask the 160,000 US and UK military forces to leave Iraq just for one day, you know well, this interim government would not last even 5 minutes.

Iraq is a Military Base

Sisters and brothers, military occupation is not just about the destruction of every day life for the people of Iraq. It also means occupying military forces have to turn the whole country into a military base. Then what this really means is that it is not important what government they install or institutions they create, we must keep in mind and not forget that in militarily occupied land the ultimate decision making is by generals and military command orders, and they of course follow their government orders and their respective interests. I am asking you: under these circumstances, under occupation what does democracy, democratic rights, human rights and civil society mean for Iraqi people? Who are they fooling? Military rule means violence against the people of the occupied land. It means the persecution, torture and killing of innocent people, and these brutal policies mean humiliating a proud nation

like Iraq and undermining its dignity.

Resistance!

So now you will agree with me why resistance of Iraqi people to this illegal, brutal and vicious occupation is a legitimate and just resistance. It doesn't matter what media call them: insurgents, freedom fighters, Saddam supporters, Shia, Sunni or whatever they call them they are resisting because they are sick and tired of poverty, lack of security, lack of respect, repression and scandal like Abu Gharib prison which pretty much is the symbol of what happening

in all over Iraq today.

And as long as resistance of Iraqi people continues so does our opposition to the war and occupation in Iraq. And our opposition will continue as long as people and nations are occupied by imperialists, whether it is Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, and Haiti or Indigenous land in Canada.

The war is not over!
The occupation is not over!
US and UK out of Iraq!
Self-determination for Iraqi people!
Self-determination for all people under occupation!
Thank you.



Fire This Time and MAWO Organizer Nasim Sedaghat.

this unit are under attack and live in misery. We are here today to show that the spirit of human compassion, human solidarity, human loving and human connection is alive.

Now that we are here, let us review and assess what war and occupation have brought to Iraq.

The American and British government military campaign in Iraq that was called "Operation Iraqi Freedom" promised to bring a democratically elected government, respect for human rights, the rule of law and freedom in all aspects of life, as well as social, educational, political and economic prosperity. Is this the situation right now after more than 16 months of occupation?

Occupation and Destruction

The US-UK war and occupation

Today everything works at its minimum capacity in Iraq due to the total collapse of infrastructure. The collapse of economic infrastructure is a result of the US-UK bombing campaign, military operations and the decision of the occupation administration to lay off more than a million employees who were working for the Iraqi ministries of defense, interior, information, education and other government departments. As a result poverty today in Iraq is an equal problem to that of occupation.

US Puppet and Illegal Government

In addition to all of this, in last 16 months the Iraqi people have lived under two puppet governments, the Coalition Provisional Authority and now the New Interim Government who have not done anything significant for improving the



Chaudhry Sannullah, Vice President of United Muslims and President of the Pakistani Canadian Association, speaks at MAWO July 24th rally against the occupation of Iraq.

Operation: Canada Out! Gains Momentum in Lower Mainland: 6,000 Signatures Against War and Occupation



By Tamara Hansen

In January, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) launched a campaign demanding Canadian troops out of Afghanistan. In March the campaign was expanded to demand Canadian troops out of Haiti. Through this campaign, entitled *Operation: Canada Out!* MAWO is linking the struggle against war and occupation to all Canadians and attempting to challenge the notion of Canada as a peacekeeping country. This challenge is based on Canada's historical and present actions, which expose it as an imperialist-colonial country.

To bring the campaign to people around the lower mainland MAWO has created two petitions, one demanding 'Canadian troops out of Haiti' and the other 'Canadian troops out of Afghanistan'. MAWO also held a rally demanding Canada OUT! on April 24th and has been hosting free public forums around the lower mainland.

Most recently *Operation: Canada*



Mobilization Against War and Occupation CANADA OUT! petition stop in New Westminister, July 10th 2004.

earlier that day of the Britannia 9 case (See Shannon Bundock's article in this issue of FTT). We then showed a documentary on Afghanistan by John Pilger entitled "Breaking the Silence". The first speaker after the film was Chandra

documentary, followed by three MAWO speakers, Kira Koshelanyk, Aaron Mercredi, and Mike Krebs, who presented up to date information and analysis on what is happening in Afghanistan, Haiti and how the antiwar movement is responding, specifically MAWO with our *Canada Out!* campaign.

The discussion after the speakers got many members of the audience involved beginning with the question "If Canada is participating so vigorously in this new era of war and occupation, why didn't it participate in the war on Iraq?" This question drew a major response from people who discussed the strategic role that Canadian Imperialists have played and are playing in the war on Iraq. This discussion was very interesting and important because it made the necessary links between the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and also expanded on notions of what imperialism is and Canada's role in Iraq.

Campaign's Outlook

Operation: Canada out! is succeeding in it's goals to educate and organize, through events such as the petitions stops and forums in both Surrey and New



Mobilization Against War and Occupation CANADA OUT! petition stop in New Westminister, July 10th 2004.

Out! visited Surrey and New Westminister for petition tour stops and forums. The petition stops were held on July 3rd in Surrey and July 10th in New Westminister. Both of the stops were very successful with many MAWO members taking part and collecting over 760 signatures for both our Haiti and Afghanistan petitions. To date MAWO has had over 10 petition stops at campuses and key areas in Vancouver and around the lower mainland collecting more than 6000 signatures against Canadian government's involvement in war and occupation around the world. These signatures show the support that Canadian people have for the antiwar movement and their unwillingness to allow Canadian troops to be involved in killing innocent and oppressed people in other countries.

July 5th in Surrey

On July 5th MAWO held its Surrey forum at the North Surrey Recreation Centre. The forum was opened with an emergency announcement by MAWO co-chair Shannon Bundock about the victory

Murdock a MAWO organizer who gave an update on the affects of occupation in Afghanistan and discussed Canada's major role in maintaining the oppression of the Afghan people. Aaron Mercredi, an organizer with MAWO and UBC's Coalition Against the War On the People of Iraq and Internationally (CAWOPI), was the next to speak, opening with the situation in Haiti and Canada's role as a repressive occupying force. The final speaker was Mike Krebs, a MAWO organizer and member of the First Nations Student Association at SFU, who discussed Canada's imperialist strategy behind these occupations and the anti-war movement's role in fighting against it. The event was wrapped-up with discussion, which engaged the audience in questioning Canada's objectives and interests in these occupations.

July 14th in New Westminister

Just over a week later on July 14th, the free public forum in New Westminister was held at Centennial Community Centre. The forum was again opened with the John Pilger

Westminster. These events also gave the campaign and MAWO a new base of support in these areas, which gives us the opportunity to expand on MAWO's antiwar and anti-occupation mobilizations. The events were also good at establishing new contacts around the lower mainland. We see growing support for MAWO's work not only in forum attendance but also in the 760 signatures that we collected at the petition stops.

MAWO will continue to work on *Operation: Canada Out!* in August and into the fall, with two upcoming petition stops in South Vancouver and Richmond. With these petition stops we hope to further establish MAWO's campaign outside of the Vancouver-core and get more people involved in the worldwide movement against war and occupation.



Mobilization Against War and Occupation CANADA OUT! petition stop in New Westminister, July 10th 2004.



Mobilization Against War and Occupation CANADA OUT! petition stop in Surrey, July 10th 2004.

The Mother of All Our Miseries Today is that We Are Divided

An Interview with Mohammad Malik

By Ivan Drury

Mohammad Malik is a leader in the Pakistani Muslim Community in the Lower Mainland. At the end of May, in response to the beginning of the heavy US military offensive in Fallujah in which over 800 people were killed in one week's time, Mohammad Malik, together with other leaders in the Muslim community organized a rally of over 1,500 Muslims at the Vancouver Art Gallery. This was the first major demonstration of Muslims in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland against the occupation of Iraq since the war began last March.

On July 25th, Fire This Time sat down with Brother Malik in his home to discuss the "war on terror," the impact of imperialism on Muslims as working, poor and oppressed people in the third world and within Canada and the US and what non-Muslim working people can do to fight against these attacks.

FTT: On May 24th, you and a coalition of Muslim groups in the Lower Mainland organized a rally of more than 1,500 Muslims in Downtown Vancouver against the occupation of Iraq. Why are Muslims in Vancouver mobilizing against war and occupation today?

You see; the situation is that the war is a source of destruction and no human being on this earth likes war. War is to destroy.

Islam teaches and promotes love, affection, brotherhood, peace, and moreover, that justice is to prevail. Wherever there is a situation of imbalance, I mean where people are being discriminated against, wherever their rights are being snatched, particularly their human rights, certainly aggression is going to be there.

That is one side of things; the other side is that certain powers want to have an absolute ruling on the other parts of the world. They want to rule the people, they want to snag their rights, they want to force themselves upon them. So that situation leads to a state of war. The war snatches the peoples' rights and makes them slaves.

This is the reason that the Muslim Umah feels that today's superpower, the USA, is working against Muslims, and the war is waged on different countries and in different societies that are Muslim dominated, on one pretext or the other. Since civilians are being killed, innocent people are being deprived of their basic needs and their country is being destroyed and infrastructure is being destroyed, that's why they don't like the situation. This is our reaction against that. That is the reason the Muslims have stood up. That is what we can do, we can protest and invite the attention of the world against this

superpower.

FTT: Is the US at war against Muslims? Considering that the overwhelming majority of Muslim people are working men and women, is it that the attacks on Muslims is used by the US to cover and scapegoat for their war on working and poor people in the Third World, for example, in Pakistan, India, the Middle East and Africa?

Since the dawn of Islam there have been anti-Islamic forces that don't like this divine way of life as given by god, by almighty Allah. This way of life teaches us how to live with different peoples according to the principles, according to the rules and regulations that are set, so that there can be peace, love and affection for life on this world. These rules and principles are set so that every human being on this earth can enjoy this life and there cannot be any discrimination.

Right from day one, these anti-Islamic forces have been working against that because they have a fear that this way of life is going to prevail on the last day of this world, of this universe. They are afraid that it is going to disturb their so-called adopted way of life. They are trying their best to ensure that this religion, this way of life will not flourish, will not develop. The thing is, they are sadly mistaken. It is a divine religion, it is like Christianity, Christianity is also a divine religion, but after the dawn of Islam, all previous religions are to be discarded as the Koran says.



Mohammad Malik.

occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq had on Muslim working people in Vancouver?

We have to find out the cause and effect. Why is there a reaction against the US administration? The people don't hate Americans as individuals, but they don't like the policies of the US government.

In certain parts of the world there is a Muslim majority, particularly with the Palestine situation. The US government, instead of solving these issues seems to be supporting the anti-Islamic forces. The reaction is against that... being a superpower, you are supposed to solve these problems.

In this situation, peace cannot be achieved until justice is done.

that in these countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestinians and in that part of the world, there is a feeling that these are the countries that are working against the interests of the USA, I don't think so.

These are sovereign countries and they have all rights to protect their sovereignty, and it is just natural that if someone is going to interfere in their internal affairs then it would not be liked. America intends to interfere in the internal affairs of these sovereign countries. Islam is a religion of peace, but it does not appreciate aggression. Peace doesn't mean that you should let others be cruel to you. It's peace with equality and justice.

I don't think that these countries can pose any threat to other

super-power.

The reason these anti-Islamic forces are against us is because they do not want any Arab country to be economically strong. Name an Islamic country that is both strong and free from the clutches of the US. The solution lies in all getting united on one platform under the banner of Islam.

FTT: Along with the war going on abroad, there is the accompanying war at home, as we often call it. Has the situation of the racial profiling of Muslims and Immigrants and Refugees in Vancouver changed since September 11th, 2001?

Whatever happened on September 11th was unfortunate, but one should find the root cause. What were the factors responsible for this happening? That needs to be tracked back and that needs to be resolved. Who are the people behind this and what were their objectives and why did it happen? A deep study needs to be done in that instead of declaring it terrorism and instead of declaring that every Muslim living in the US is a terrorist.

As I told you, while Islam is a religion of peace, as well it teaches justice. Islam does not teach us that one should keep bearing aggression at all times. Peace is on one side, but justice is on the other side as well. Why is it taught and being considered that every Muslim living in this part of the world is a terrorist and that they are working against the USA? I don't think so.

I myself am a Muslim and I am not a terrorist. I have never been and neither has my family. Why should we be? The thing is that we all believe in peace because Islam teaches us to love humanity and everyone is a human being regardless of the colour of their skin. The colour of the skin should not determine who is patriotic and who is not patriotic. Our religion teaches us that wherever we live we should respect the laws of the land, we should respect the policies of the government and we should love the people. That is why we are allowed to move to different places.

This impression that is taken by the authorities, that tries to look on every Muslim as a terrorist, is not right. Because of this feeling, many families have been disturbed and, because of the reactions, they have to leave America. Either they went back to their original countries or they sought refuge in Canada.

The question is, why did they seek refuge in Canada? The reason is that Canada respects human rights, Canada respects every human being and is a multi-cultural society. For that matter, America is also a multi-cultural and multi-national society because it is also immigrant



Rally in Vancouver against war and occupation in Iraq organized by local Muslim communities, May 24th 2004.

So these forces do not want this to develop. They are reactions against Islam, to stop its flourishing. That means attacking the Muslim countries and declaring every Muslim almost a terrorist. I feel that these actions are anti-Muslim and anti-Islam.

FTT: What impact has the

Through dialogue we can solve these problems. But through dialogue we should not hide the facts. We should see the hard realities and the root causes of the situation. Those root causes are to be resolved, and only then can we have a permanent peace in the area. It is the US's understanding

countries. They know the meaning of sovereignty and moreover these countries are not that strong. They are not strong in military power and they are not economically strong. I don't see how these countries can pose a threat to other countries, particularly to the West or to a

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June 30th International Day of Action: End the Occupation Now! No 'Handover' Under Occupation!

By Nicole Burton

Wednesday, June 30th, marked the day of the alleged "Handover" of sovereignty in Iraq by US and UK forces. This effort was made by occupiers to further distance themselves from their failure to establish anything in Iraq except misery and destruction. The Iraqi people met June 30th, like every day of occupation before, with resistance. In Vancouver, as part of the International Day of Action against the 'handover', Mobilization Against War and Occupation held a demonstration demanding "No Handover Under Occupation! US/UK out of Iraq!" Nearly 400 people rallied and marched to declare that resistance continues until the occupation ends.

At the Vancouver Art Gallery, the day was opened by Raya Sami, an Iraqi woman, MAWO member, and organizer for Mesopotamian Orphans & Women Education & Welfare Society. She opened by talking about her recent return to Iraq, illustrating the conditions of people under occupation, and the resistance that continues there every hour. Raya's speech was passionate and touching- linking her intimate experience in Iraq with the global antiwar movement, organizing in Vancouver against war and occupation, and working in solidarity with the Iraqi resistance.

Following Sami was a speech by Marlee Oulette, a Vancouver social justice activist, who stressed the importance of channeling energy and thought against war and occupation into effective organizing and action. Kay, a MAWO organizer with the Korean Students Network Against War, spoke about the occupation in light of the recent death of a Korean hostage, who was killed in response to South Korea's decision to send 3000 troops to Iraq. He emphasized that the decision was a result of South Korea's government pursuing a good relationship with the US, and that Korea's people have nothing to gain from their country's involvement in occupying Iraq.

Before the march began, a final speech was given by Nicole Burton, a member of the Langara Students Union and organizer with MAWO. She spoke of the 'handover' and its relation to the global antiwar movement, and how the movement should respond to such a hoax. She related it to May 1st 2003, a "previous hoax", that was stated by George Bush, declaring that the war was over. As war and occupation continues in Iraq, past May 1st and past June 30th, the antiwar movement continues to develop and grow. Nicole led the rally in chanting, "Troops Out NOW!" and "US/UK OUT!"

The march was passionate and energized by the composition of the rally -primarily students, youth, people of colour, immigrants, refugees, workers, and antiwar activists representing a large spectrum of society. This dynamic makeup led many in the street to join in the mobilization, and chanting "US out of Iraq!" "End the Occupation NOW!" Protesters marched to the US and UK consulates, and back to the Vancouver Art Gallery. By this time the rally had grown considerably, with many numbers gained in the street.

The stage was then taken by Mike Krebs, an organizer with MAWO, board member of the SFU First Nations Students Society. He spoke of the 'handover'



MAWO June 30th International Day of Action Against War and Occupation.

and occupation of Iraq in relation to the occupation of indigenous land in Canada, making the essential link with Canada's history of colonialism. Mike emphasized the need to build an antiwar movement that encompasses the demand of self-determination for all oppressed nations, and connecting all our struggles in a global movement against imperialism and colonialism.

The rally was then concluded by a reading of a resolution, led by MAWO organizer

Chandra Murdoch. Each part of the resolution was approved with cheers. Participants stayed until long after the demonstration's "end", following in chants, listening to music, and discussing the politics of war and occupation.

June 30th signified both a political development in the antiwar movement, and in conjunction, resurgence in the movement's momentum. Whereas the May 1st transition from war to occupation was met worldwide with dropping in activities

and numbers of anti-war participants, June 30th's transfer from "occupation" to "sovereignty" is overwhelmingly understood as an imperialist trick to buy time, and gain legitimacy. For many, Iraq's resistance movement -which continues and gives the supposed handover little notice- is seen as a call to action around the world, to build and develop from these events, echoing the demands of the Iraqi people:

All Troops Out NOW! SELF-DETERMINATION for Iraqi People!

Interview with Mohammad Malik Continued

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based. But, after 9-11, the situation has turned. The Muslims living there have started thinking that it is not safe there. We have read through the media, the newspapers, the televisions, the radio, that Muslim families were hurt and thought that, as a result they are not safe, their wives are not safe, their property is not safe, their children are not safe. They were forced to leave the United States and to seek refuge.

FTT: What can non-Muslim working people do to support working and poor people who are Muslim and are under attack by war and occupation around the world and by racial profiling here?

I am a landed immigrant here, what I have gathered is that in this part of the world, there is not a proper knowledge of the religion of Islam, of the teachings, of what a Muslim is... Because the proper dissemination of information is not done, the common person is not well educated about the religion of Islam. So whatever is projected about the Muslims and Islam by the media is just taken as it is by an ordinary person, and they have made up their mind based on that information, which is biased information. They say, "OK the Muslims are like that, the Muslims are terrorists, the Muslims are killers," and that information is passed

like that. But if they had proper knowledge of Islam and proper information about the rules and the conduct of Muslims, if the sufficient and necessary knowledge was spread then I don't think that situation would have arisen.

FTT: What sorts of things are you planning for the future to oppose racial profiling, war and occupation? Do you see any place for unity in these plans for working people who are not Muslim?

We should respect the culture, religious values and customs of the people who are immigrants so that we can all live together. We have to develop a coherent society so people do not feel any threat from any culture, from any customs, from any particular society, from any particular group of individuals. What should be done at the government level, at the NGO level, the NGOs should bring all the people together on one platform to exchange views to try to understand each other's values, religious values and customs so that there cannot be any doubt or any misunderstanding.

The media should play its role effectively and people from different cultures should be given the opportunity to express their views and so they can tell their views, their feelings and their values. All these views and values are for the benefit of the human being, because we are all human beings first before anything else. The

stress should be on being human beings, on humanity, because as human beings we are all the same, we are all equal. There should not be any discrimination on any other aspects, particularly the colour, the creed and the religion. The mother of all our miseries today is that we are divided.

One important thing I would like to strongly mention, we as Muslims, it is our honor and duty to present ourselves as a model of love and peace and brotherhood. We should prove with our actions and our conduct that we are good human beings, in all of our actions, wherever we go. At our workplace, at our social gatherings, we have to prove that we are good human beings and we are Muslims. It is not written on anybody's forehead, who is who. This is my appeal to Muslims that we have to correct ourselves at the same time. We have to live our lives according to the holy Koran and according to the Sunna of the Prophet Mohammad, if we start living our lives accordingly, I am confident that we are going to be respected and we are not going to be looked down upon. The blessings of Allah almighty are going to be with us always. We have to create that difference. It is not only by word of mouth that we share love, peace and the Muslims are better than others... it is our conduct and it is our behavior, it is our attitude that makes us different from others. This is my message to my Muslim brothers and sisters.

JOIN Mobilization Against War and Occupation-MAWO!

By Nicole Burton

Today, the economic crisis of major world powers has led to an era of continuous war and occupation. This struggle for countries such as the US, UK, Canada and France to maintain their power has led to invasions and occupations of oppressed nations- Iraq, Afghanistan, and Haiti. At home, this struggle is made through escalated attacks on society's most marginalized people: immigrants and refugees, people of color, students, youth, women, workers, and indigenous people. To challenge war and occupation means to directly challenge the balance of forces in a world of oppressors and oppressed, exploiters and exploited.

This challenge has led to the beginning, growth and development of a mass movement globally- against war and

occupation, demanding unconditional self-determination for oppressed nations. For the antiwar anti-occupation movement in Vancouver, this has meant resurgence in activity based on education and mobilization. Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) was formed in October of 2003, and has since organized forums, film showings, petition drives and conferences-- and taken the politics of these events to the streets in united demonstrations against the occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Haiti and Indigenous Nations in Canada. Through this activity and other work, MAWO is organizing to build an effective antiwar movement in Vancouver and Canada, led by the most oppressed people in Canadian society: people of colour, immigrants and refugees, students, youth, indigenous

people, women, and workers.

In February 2004, MAWO launched Operation: Canada Out! which has been reported on in this paper. The campaign- that includes two petitions against the Canadian occupation of Afghanistan, and the Canadian occupation of Haiti- is MAWO's major project in our effort to educate and mobilize against Canadian imperialism. This petition has traveled across Canada, into the US and especially all over the Lower Mainland, arriving at nearly every college and university campus, as well as major metropolitan centres like the Vancouver Public Library and Metrotown. Through petition drives, forums and film showings the Canada Out! campaign (the first of its kind in Canada) has led to a response of tremendous support in communities around the Lower

Mainland- with over 6000 signatures to the petition in the last 6 months. It is an essential part of building an antiwar movement in Canada which challenges the nature and tradition of our imperialist government.

Mobilization Against War and Occupation is continuing to build through the summer, with major plans for the fall. At this year's Under the Volcano festival, MAWO will be participating in a workshop on Women and War & Occupation, as well as speaking on the main stage. The day will also be our next major Canada Out! petition drive, connecting the campaign with many young and progressive people, and discuss the politics of Canadian imperialism. After our next demonstration on August 28th, MAWO will be organizing the Student Week Against War and Occupation, where forums, films, speakers and rallies will be organized at campuses across Greater Vancouver. The significance of these events is in understanding the particular role young people have as organizers and leaders in this movement, and the potential they have to build and develop this movement very rapidly.

It is important for us as poor, working and young people to solidify our position in political struggles around the world today, and link ourselves directly to being antiwar and anti-occupation. Whereas after 16 months of brutal invasion, death and destruction, the imperial powers of the world who plunder and destroy, now tremble in front of the people of Baghdad, Basra and Fallujah in Iraq, who refuse to be conquered. As people in Vancouver, we must echo the demands of Iraqis, and build a foundation here upon which we can build a mass movement against war and occupation. This force, united, can challenge the Canadian government and its traditions of imperialism and colonialism. Ultimately MAWO is organizing against war and occupation to unite all oppressed people, who are the majority, to challenge and defeat imperialism, in the spirit of Iraq's resistance. Join us in this struggle!

UNETE a la Movilizacion Contra la Guerra y la Ocupación -MAWO-

Por Nicole Burton

Traducción por
Carlos López

Hoy, la crisis económica de las principales potencias mundiales ha conducido a una era de guerra continua y ocupación. La lucha de estos países como los EE.UU., el Reino Unido, Canadá, y Francia para mantener su poder, han traído invasiones y ocupaciones a las naciones oprimidas - Iraq, Afganistán, y Haití. En casa, esta lucha se realiza a través de ataques escalados contra los sectores sociales mas marginados: inmigrantes y refugiados, gente de color, estudiantes y jóvenes, mujeres, trabajadores, y el pueblo indígena. Enfrentar la guerra y ocupación significa enfrentar directamente el equilibrio de fuerzas en un mundo de opresores y oprimidos, explotadores y explotados.

Este desafío ha conducido al origen, crecimiento, y desarrollo de un movimiento global de masas contra la guerra y ocupación, exigiendo la autodeterminación incondicional para las naciones oprimidas. Para el movimiento antiguerra y antiocupación en Vancouver, esto ha significado el resurgimiento de una actividad basada en la educación y movilización. Movilización Contra la Guerra y Ocupación (MAWO) fue formada en octubre de 2003, y desde entonces ha organizado foros, exposiciones de películas documentales, campanas de petición y conferencias - y ha llevado la política de estos eventos a las calles en demostraciones unidas contra las ocupaciones de Iraq, Afganistán, Palestina, y Naciones Indígenas en Canadá. A través de éstas y otras actividades MAWO organiza para construir un movimiento antiguerra eficaz en Vancouver y Canadá, dirigida por la gente más oprimida en la sociedad canadiense: gente de color, inmigrantes y refugiados, estudiantes y jóvenes, indígenas, mujeres, y trabajadores.

En febrero de 2004, MAWO lanzó la Operación Fuera Canadá! que se ha reportado en este periodico. La campaña - que incluye dos peticiones contra la ocupación canadiense de Afganistán, y la ocupación canadiense de Haití - es el



MAWO banner at this year's Vancouver Pride Parade.

proyecto principal de MAWO en nuestro esfuerzo para educar y movilizarse contra el imperialismo canadiense. Esta petición ha atravesado Canadá y ha llegado hasta EE.UU. y específicamente por todo Lower Mainland, llegando a los campus de universidades y colegios, así como en los principales centros metropolitanos como la Biblioteca Pública de Vancouver y Metrotown. La campaña Fuera Canadá!, -la primera de este tipo en Canadá- a través de campanas de petición, foros y exposiciones de película, ha tenido una respuesta de gran apoyo en las comunidades alrededor del Lower Mainland - con más de 6000 firmas a la petición en los últimos 6 meses. Esto

es una parte esencial en la construcción de un movimiento antiguerra en Canadá para enfrentar la naturaleza y tradición de nuestro gobierno imperialista.

Movilización Contra la Guerra y Ocupación sigue construyendo en verano, con grandes proyectos para otoño. En este año en el festival Under the Volcano, MAWO participará en un taller sobre Mujeres, Guerra y Ocupación, y con un discurso en el principal escenario. Este día será también nuestra próxima mayor campana de ¡Fuera Canadá!, para conectarnos con mucha gente joven y progresista, y discutir las políticas del imperialismo canadiense.

Después de nuestra siguiente demostración el 28 de agosto, MAWO organizará la Semana del Estudiante Contra la Guerra y Ocupación, donde los foros, las películas documentales, los discursos y reuniones serán organizados en recintos universitarios a través de Lower Mainland. La importancia de estos eventos está en el entendimiento del papel particular que la gente joven tiene como organizador de este movimiento, y el potencial ellos tienen para construir y desarrollar este movimiento de forma rápida.

Es importante para nosotros, los pobres, trabajadores y jóvenes; centrar nuestra posición en la escena de la lucha política en el mundo de hoy, y vincularnos directamente contra la guerra y ocupación. Después de 16 meses de invasión brutal, muerte y destrucción, los poderes imperiales del mundo quienes saquean y destruyen, ahora tiemblan ante la gente de Bagdad, Basra y Fallujah en Iraq, quienes rechazan ser conquistados. Para la gente de Vancouver, esto significa hacer eco de las demandas de iraquíes, y fundar desde aquí la construcción de un masivo movimiento contra la guerra y ocupación. Esta fuerza, unida, puede enfrentar al gobierno canadiense y sus tradiciones de imperialismo y colonialismo. Y por último, como MAWO, organizarnos contra la guerra y ocupación significa unir a todo el pueblo oprimido que es la mayoría; para enfrentar y derrotar el imperialismo en el espíritu de la resistencia de Iraq. ¡Unámonos en esta lucha!

Vision, Struggle and Victory for All Working People

Celebrating the July 26th Movement in Vancouver

By Nicole Burton

On July 26, a festival of solidarity took place which reflects an exciting new trend of organizing in Vancouver, against encroaching imperialist aggression in Latin America and specifically Cuba. Around 170 people attended a celebration of "The July 26th Movement and the Cuban Revolution: Why Cuba is Important Today". The event was the second organized by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC), a coalition of groups and individuals only 3 months old. This group came together to bring attention to the increased attacks Cuba faces, and to acknowledge and support the long and rich history the Cuban people have in defending their land, freedom, and dignity. Many Latin Americans, youth, students and workers came to show support, celebrate, and

learn more.

July 26 marks the day of the attack on Moncada barracks by revolutionary forces against the country's dictatorship, and marks the beginning of Cuba's political, social, and economic revolution, which became a reality in 1959 with the overthrow of Batista, the Cuban tyrant installed by the US government. To the world and its people, this meant a complete shift in the relationship of forces, against US imperialism which had imposed the Batista regime, and in favor of the oppressed people of Cuba. This remains established today, as Cuba along with Venezuela, stand as pillars of anti-imperialist resistance. Every year, July 26 is celebrated in Cuba and worldwide as a day of victory and solidarity.

The night began with Emcee Tania

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July 26th celebration organized by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba.



People take turns hitting the 'imperialist' piñata at the Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba July 26th celebration.

Speech at July 26th Event by Shannon Bundock, Co-ordinator of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice

Today we are here to celebrate the 51st anniversary of the attack on the Moncada Barracks that began the revolutionary process in Cuba. This day, which in 1953 was a military defeat, has grown to become an inspiration and a victory for the Cuban people.

On July 26th 1953, Fidel Castro along with some 150 young revolutionary comrades believed in a vision of revolution and with that vision attacked the Moncada garrison. This attack was fought in order to start a movement against the brutal dictatorship of Batista, who was a tyrant and leader of the US-installed puppet government in Cuba.

To many, what Fidel Castro did that day seems like political and literal suicide. But there were also those who believed in a vision of change and revolution in spite of this defeat. Six years later, on January 1st 1959, the Cuban people and the people

of the world were reminded of how right Fidel was in believing in that vision when him, Che Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos and other revolutionary leaders entered Havana to celebrate the triumph of revolution with millions of Cuban people.

Fidel always says that the Cuban people will turn every negative into a positive, every defeat to victory – and the most incredible example of this declaration is July 26th itself.

Therefore, today we are not here in order to simply celebrate the revolution; we are not here to just celebrate the defeat of imperialism and the day that the long process of the creation of the revolutionary government of Cuba started. In essence, we are here today, beside the heroes of Moncada, celebrating the patience, foresight and revolutionary vision of Fidel.

Thank you.

Free the Cuban Five Political Prisoners in US: 2,000 Signatures in Support of Cuban 5 in Vancouver

By Thomas Davies

"From these prison cells you should always know that when we see you standing up strong we are standing right along with you"
– Gerardo Hernandez, one of the Cuban Five, in his July 26th 2004 message

Exactly one year after the first event organized by the Free the Cuban Five Committee – Vancouver (FC5C – Vancouver) on July 26th 2003, the group is still consistently organizing and educating around the case of these Five Cuban political prisoners incarcerated in U.S. prisons. Amidst growing pressure against Cuba by the United States, and as the resolve of the Cuban Five continues to flow from behind prison bars – the committee finds its work all the more important. With 2000 signatures signed demanding the immediate release of the Cuban Five, six public educational events with hundreds of people in attendance, and participation in all major rallies and protests in Vancouver, the Free the Cuban Five Committee continues to build on the base created from a year's work. The committee looks forward to the upcoming year of constant work as the need to defend these five prisoners of imperialism grows, and with it the overall efforts of people worldwide in defense of their dignity, sovereignty, and self-determination.

Arrested for exposing terrorist groups operating openly in the United States, tried without access to an unbiased jury, and convicted without evidence, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, René González and Fernando González remain in United States jails with sentences ranging from 15 years to double life sentences. While



in prison they have faced further persecution and isolation through the denial of visas to family members, limitations on consular visits, and solitary confinement for periods of up to 17 months. As part of an international movement of over 150 different organizations, the Free the Cuban Five Committee – Vancouver has organized directly related to the events as they unfold. Recently we held multiple forums as the Cuban Five's case went to the Atlanta 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in March, and are escalating our work while awaiting a verdict and as new attacks on Cuba by the United were announced by George W. Bush on May 6th 2004.

A continuing and growing campaign to "Free the Five!" is a necessary and effective tool in the fight against U.S. aggression on Cuba, as the case constantly exposes the hypocrisy and brutality of the United States government and its attempt to overthrow and punish the people of Cuba for demanding and winning their self-determination. Through these five resilient men we can understand the real intentions of United States interventions in other countries

– intentions that have nothing to do with claims of "freedom" or "defeating terrorism," but absolutely everything to do with exploitation and crushing opposition regardless of the human consequence. Why else would you imprison five men for presenting you with huge amounts of evidence pertaining to the activities of terrorist groups operating in your own country? The FC5C – Vancouver engages in active work, constantly asking this question and pushing for a real examination of their incarceration and the overall motives behind it.

As Cuban people go head to head with the United States government once again, and the inhumane incarceration of the Cuban Five continues, the role of an international solidarity movement is all the more important. Beginning in Vancouver and always expanding, the FC5C – Vancouver is set on building on the base of last year's activities, and puts forward a call to all people to join in the work of educating and mobilizing around the case to demand justice for the Cuban Five, until they are all free.

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba: A Step Forward in Vancouver to Defend Cuba Against US Aggression

By Thomas Davies

The history of United States intervention in Cuba has been one based on exploitation and attacks. These attacks have escalated in brutality and force ever since the Cuban people overthrew the U.S. imposed dictator Batista in 1959 and organized an independent government based on people's needs and not profit. At each step, from each attack, the Cuban people have met these aggressions head on, in a determined assertion of dignity, self-determination, and true collective freedom. Once again, the United States has increased their campaigns against the people of the island, and once again the Cuban people have risen up in defense of each other, as well as all people under imperialist assault worldwide. Also arising from these attacks has been a new wave of international support and solidarity. In Vancouver this support was created in a new coalition, *Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC)*. As part of this energized movement in defense of Cuba, the coalition continues to organize consistently and passionately around defending Cuba, with a focus on building a long-term movement to effectively challenge and defeat the United States imperialist agenda.

June 26 Rally

On May 6th, US President George Bush announced a new set of measures against Cuba, committing 59 million dollars over the next two years as part of projects which seek to crush the Cuban people and their revolutionary government. This includes money for financing and training mercenaries working for the US in Cuba, and 18 million for purchasing a C-130 Commando Aircraft to be used exclusively for broadcasting radio and television signals aimed at overthrowing Cuba's democratic government. Along with these expenditures, there are harsh new restrictions on remittances Cubans living in the United States can make to family in Cuba, as well as the inhumane new policy restricting visits by Cuban-Americans to Cuba to once every three years, for a two-week period. The reaction of Cuban people was swift and decisive; on May 14th over 1 million Cubans took to the streets to denounce these new attacks in a huge show of support for their government. All around the world, demonstrations and statements of solidarity came from Mexico to Ukraine to Vietnam. In Vancouver, on June 26th VCSC organized in defense of Cuba for the



People dancing to live music at the Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba July 26th celebration.

first time in the Lower Mainland. Under the slogans, "An Attack on Cuba is an Attack to All!" and "Hands off Cuba!" over 300 people came out to denounce the new attacks and show their support for Cuba. With the clear base of support for Cuba demonstrated at the rally, it became the first step in what has become a continued project by VCSC to mobilize and educate in defense of Cuba.

July 26 Celebration

As part of our continued work, VCSC also organized an all-day garage sale on July 18th which gave the group an opportunity to spend a day on the streets engaging with people regarding Cuba and the new US attacks, as well as raise funds for the group's next event: a July 26th forum and celebration of Cuba titled, "The July 26th Movement and the Cuban Revolution: Why Cuba is Important Today." Commemorating the beginning of the Cuban revolutionary movement in 1953, the celebration was another huge success. About 170 people packed the IWA hall to hear representatives from the FMLN as well as Vancouver organizers express their solidarity with the Cuban revolution and its

people. The program also included, poetry, dancing, and musical acts to celebrate the accomplishments of the Cuban revolution, and looking forward to future victories for all oppressed people. The energy created by the event is something the group plans to build on for future actions, and is consistent with the VCSC initiative to build step by step, a solid, spirited Cuban solidarity movement here in Vancouver.

Cuba Siempre!

The next event being organized by the group is an all-day conference titled, "Cuba & Venezuela In the Era of War and Occupation: Why the US is targeting Cuba and Venezuela" taking place on Saturday, August 21st. The conference will focus on expanding US attacks in Latin America, using Cuba and Venezuela as two winning examples of people organizing themselves against Imperialist intervention. The conference will focus on the similarities between the two countries through their

mass, organized, and continuing resistance to build a better future for people within and outside their borders, as well as what we in Vancouver can do as part of this internationally focused movement.

As we see the Imperialist challenge being met at every attempted invasion, at every slander, *at every possible instance* by the people of Cuba, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba is energized to do the same. As a group which has been organizing for less than three months and has already organized two major events and is endorsed by over 30 student, labour, and Latin American groups – the stage is set for a new era of Cuba-solidarity activity in Vancouver. The group calls on all individuals and organizations with an interest in defending Cuba to come together in defense of Cuba for a future united, with Cuba, with each other, and with all oppressed people worldwide against Imperialism and for a new world.

July 26th Celebration Creates Revolutionary Atmosphere

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Ortiz introducing Vancouver Communities In Solidarity with Cuba and giving a background of the Cuban Revolution. VCSC organizer Kira Koshelanyk opened the evening by reading a poem written by Jose Marti, whose revolutionary ideas gave a history of Cuba's long struggle for independence in a world of imperialist domination. Lucy Ortiz, a poet with Poetas Del Sur, then read two pieces, both of which moved the crowd, and in the tradition of Marti, called for the defeat of imperialism. The celebration continued with a greeting to the event from Nedia Dias, International Relations Representative from the FMLN, the most important and strongest working class-peasant political party in El Salvador. She spoke to the audience by phone from El Salvador. Other speakers contributed different aspects of Cuban struggle, including Thomas Davies, a member of

Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver, who explained the case of 5 Cuban men held in US prisons for fighting US-based terrorist attacks upon their country.

This was followed by a screening of "Desafio" ("Challenge"), a Cuban film about the country and the obstacles its people have faced under the US-led blockade, which has lasted nearly 5 decades. It documents the victories Cuba has achieved with Fidel Castro's leadership, and the education, politicization, and mobilization of Cuban people during the 1990s Special Period, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern European Countries, and how that struggle continues today. After the documentary Shannon Bundock, VCSC organizer and coordinator of Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice, spoke. She connected the historical example of Cuba with the current struggles by Cuban people against the US criminal



July 26th celebration organized by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba.

blockade and aggression.

In this light, an evening of poetry, singing and dancing continued, including a special performance by Ramon Flores, a Latin American musician and host of the Spanish radio show "Bus at 7". Raffle tickets were sold, with participants winning t-shirts and piñatas- and one "imperialist" piñata, colored as a US flag, was smashed, covering the floor with sweets.

The atmosphere of the July 26th event was that of revolutionary Cuba: a celebration of people's strength and struggle. It established that July 26th is a day belonging to all oppressed people and their struggle for social justice.

VCSC's next event will be a conference on August 21st entitled, "Cuba and Venezuela in the Era of War and Occupation", 11-5pm at the IWA Hall on 2859 Commercial Drive (at 13th Ave).

Canadian, Mexican Governments Wage Propaganda attacks Against Cuba

From page 7

a loaded gun. Canada's approach to Cuba since 1959 has been to "kill them with kindness". Canada has maintained diplomatic ties and economic cooperation and attempted to influence Cuba by importing "Canadian values and morals".

Canada is the only other country on the continent, aside from Mexico, that did not sever relations with Cuba following the 1959 revolution. Canada and Cuba have had uninterrupted diplomatic relations since 1945. Canada has also always

condemned the economic blockade against Cuba. In the 12th consecutive annual vote in the UN General Assembly in 2003, Canada joined 178 other nations in voting against the US blockade.

Canada's approach to Cuba, with intervention via "strong ties and partnership" has been sold to people in Canada under the banner of this false friendship and also on the basis that it reflects an international policy on Cuba independent of the US. Tied to the notion of Canada as a benevolent force in the world is the dangerous notion of preserving Canadian sovereignty against US hegemony. In reality, the only interests being protected by the Canadian government against the US ruling class are those of the Canadian ruling class. This is a dangerous deception for regular, working people in Canada because it ties their unity with that of the Canadian ruling class instead of with the people of Cuba or the people of Mexico or poor and working people in the US. This is an important tactic for the Canadian government to ensure that oppressed people in Canada do not unite with Cubans based on their objective mutual interests.

Canada's approach to Cuba since the Cuban revolution has also benefited Canada economically. In maintaining a trade relationship, Canada has had access to the Cuban products and markets, taking advantage of the US absence.

In the current era of war and occupation, Canada is emerging as a real contender in the race for control of the world's wealth and resources. Canada has always been imperialist in nature. A glance at the bloody colonial settling of this country and genocide hundreds of thousands of indigenous people dispels any myths to the

contrary. What we are seeing today is an expansion and emboldening of Canada's previous policies around intervention in third world countries. With the occupations of Afghanistan and Haiti under its belt, Canada is now ready to take on even more aggressive tactics.

Canada and Mexico: Propaganda Against the Cuban People

The most recent propaganda attack against Cuba by the Mexican government was the May 3 withdrawal of their ambassador in Cuba. Peru also withdrew its ambassador in Havana though both denied that the withdrawal of the diplomats was caused by Fidel Castro's May 1st speech in which he spoke harshly against Mexico and Peru for voting in favor of the UN Human Rights

Commission resolution on Cuba's "human rights violations."

This three-month diplomatic spat between the two countries received international media attention. The firestorm ended on July 26th, after talks were held between the Cuban and Mexican governments and it was agreed to restore the diplomats to their posts.

Cuba has exposed corruption and Mexico's new pro-US mask publicly several times in recent years. Tensions built in April 2004 around the deportation from Cuba of Carlos Ahumada, a Mexican businessman wanted in Mexico on corruption charges and bribing leftist politicians in Mexico

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MAWO چیست؟
MAWO هدف اتحاد بسیج علیه جنگ و اشغال نظامی
Mobilization Against War and Occupation
 در ونگور است امروزه جهانی که در مقابل جیش ضد جنگ
 قرار دارد این است که چگونه بتوان در این عصر جنگها و
 دحالیهای نظامی امپریالیستی در کشورهای جهان سوم، به
 بهترین و موثرترین روشی به بسیج و ترویج در مختلف با انجام
 علیه کشورهای در حال توسعه و عقب و یا مستقل دست زد.
 این کوشش از اهمیت انفرادی برخوردار است چرا که فعالیتات
 امپریالیستی برای طبقات حاکم این کشورها نیز فرصتی مفید
 ایجاد کرده که حیات داخلی در کشورشان را علیه مهاجرین و
 پانفنگار، و بخصوص رنگین پوستان، مسلمان، اعراب و
 بطور کلی مردم خاورمیانه و جنوب آسیا و یومیان کانادا، و
 بخاره جوانان و دانشجویان نیز کانادایی را تهدید کرده تا از
 این طریق حقوق دمکراتیک آنان را محدود نمایند. ما در اتحاد
 ضد جنگ و اشغال نظامی در ونگور متعهد هستیم که بر خلاف
 پارادایم اشغال در این نوع، بتوانیم فکلیت سیاسی و انسانی
 بخشهای دست ستم را در همه جویات سازماندهی و به خصوص
 در سطوح سازماندهی و رهبری کننده اقدام نمائیم. ما از شما با
 آفرینی باز و مسیحات دعوت می کنیم که با پیوستن به صفوف ما
 هر چه وسیعتر با اتحاد و تقویت خولغان مراجعت اردشهای
 کانادا، ایالات متحده، و انگلستان از خاورمیانه بوده، و برای
 پایان بخشیدن به اشغال نظامی عراق، افغانستان و فلسطین توسط
 این نیروهای امپریالیستی زور و تجاوز نظامی تسلیم.



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

L'humanité est incesamment menacée de guerre, famine, crises économiques, pauvreté et crime, suscitées 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 nous donneront 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 démun(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 affaiblirons 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 démun(e)s dans le monde entier. Dans l'enceinte de la mondialisation capitaliste et impérialiste, les luttes régionales et locales font inmanquablement partie de la lutte internationale.

Le Mouvement Fire This Time pour l'Équité Sociale appuyera 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.

- Translated by Eric Lamour eux

Movimiento Fire This Time Por Justicia Social - Bases de Unidad

Hoy en día la humanidad es amenazada por guerras, hambre, crisis económicas, crimen y pobreza: males creados por el capitalismo y su incesante búsqueda por maximizar sus beneficios a expensas de todos los pueblos del mundo. Para combatir estos crímenes contra la humanidad, debemos concentrar todos nuestros esfuerzos en construir los cimientos para avanzar en una amplia lucha contra el capital internacional, sus herramientas de división de la clase obrera y sus instituciones locales.

Los principios fundamentales del Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social son la unidad y la solidaridad activa de todos los pobres y la clase trabajadora, local e internacionalmente. Estos principios no tienen sentido sin una lucha activa y tenaz, pues en sí estos principios se oponen rotundamente a los intereses de la clase dominante, la cual utilizará 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 en construir el poder social y político de los trabajadores/as y los pobres de Colombia Británica. Creemos que la única manera de desafiar eficazmente y amenazar al gobierno y su agenda corporativa es con la organización de masas en lugares de trabajo y en las calles. Nos dedicamos a movilizar y a unificar a la clase obrera para combatir al Gobierno Liberal, y sus legislaciones y políticas en contra de los pobres y trabajadores/as.

Nos comprometemos a organizarnos junto con la gente pobre y los trabajadores/as de las comunidades más atacadas y explotadas de la región metropolitana de Vancouver y sus alrededores: con las comunidades de gente de color, inmigrantes, refugiados, "illegales", trabajadores/as de bajos ingresos, lisiados/as, trans/bi/homosexuales, comunidades indígenas, y desempleados/as. Nos oponemos a todas las formas de opresión y de explotación: sexismo, racismo, homofobia, colonialismo y a todas las instituciones, pensamientos, creencias, acciones y

comportamientos que humillen y degraden creando hostilidad y división entre nosotros.

La meta del Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social es construir un amplio movimiento de base, fuerte y eficaz para derrotar al gobierno Liberal de C. B., y aunque nos enfoquemos principalmente en la lucha política local, nuestro movimiento se integra en el amplio contexto revolucionario de la lucha internacionalista contra el capitalismo e imperialismo. El apoyo a las luchas populares en otros países debilita la hegemonía y el poder de la clase capitalista en otras tierras, debilitando a la vez su poder local, y por consecuencia esto apoya las luchas populares en Canadá. Además, la práctica de la solidaridad internacional solidifica la cooperación esencial en la construcción de un movimiento mundial por justicia social. La agenda del Gobierno Liberal es parte de un programa de reestructuración global conocido como neo-liberalismo. La lucha contra el Partido Liberal de Colombia Británica es por lo tanto una lucha contra el neo-liberalismo y capitalismo global.

Debemos ampliarlos implícita y explícitamente y hacer las conexiones relevantes a nuestras luchas locales diarias, para poder superar las divisiones geográficas, y dejar claro que no estamos solos, que luchamos junto a millones de personas de la clase obrera y pobres del mundo entero. En la globalización capitalista - imperialista no hay lucha local que no tenga un carácter internacional.

El Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social apoyará y trabajará con otros movimientos y luchas progresistas ya sea por demandas inmediatas o a largo plazo a nivel local, nacional, e internacional. Nuestra meta principal es abolir la pobreza e injusticia por medio de la educación, la participación y la acción directa. Intentamos llegar a un nivel de conciencia colectivo que permita a las personas y pueblos oprimidos, pensar socialmente y actuar políticamente para así poder alcanzar la justicia social por los medios que sean necesarios.

-Translated by Claudio Ekdahl

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 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.

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众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，我们并非单独地斗争，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)

امروزه، انسان و انسانیت، در هر لحظه با جنگ‌افروزی، بحران‌های اقتصادی، فحشی و کمرنگی، اقل و بیابان، جنید می‌شود. همه این‌ها مسبب ما نیستی از بیابان مردم برسد سرمایه‌داران برای بد کردن خداوند خود - سبب شوم، سرمایه‌داری فحش است. برای عطا و رشادت مردم تعالی این جنایات ضد بشری ما باید همه نیرو و توانمان را جهت ایجاد بنیادی از زحمتکش و مستکشدگان در تقابل با سرمایه جهانی و ناپسندگان و مؤسسات محلی‌شان و همه ابزار و روش‌هایی که آنها برای تفرقه ما به کار می‌برند، متمرکز کنیم. اصول اولیه‌ای گروه ما بر اساس اتحاد و همبستگی فعالیت 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 بی‌شک 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 مردم را - به میسر بدس و شمش ساز-

Fire This Time، مبارزایی، سیاسی بوده نه بر اساس آموزش‌های سیاسی یا عملی مستقیم بود. ما خواهان اتحاد مردم زحمتکش و فقیر برای ایجاد سازمانها و ارگان‌های توده‌ای آنان است. ما مستخدم آنها، راه عملی و ذلیل امرها را همه، متوجه ساختن عملاً، مولد لبرال برپوشن آنها - حقوق مردم در زمینه‌های اقتصادی، اجتماعی و سیاسی، و اقدامات تنزیه‌الیه‌ی سرمایه‌داری آن، برقرار ساختن ارگانهای توده‌ای و مستقل مردم می‌باشد. ما با هر گونه استثمار و استثمار، و ظلم زیادپرستانه، سکسیم، ضد همجنس‌گرایی، و هر گونه ایده‌ای که شکاف و بد بینی را در صفوف زحمتکش و مستکشدگان تشدید کرده و مانع اتحاد افلاکی آنان گردد در اساس و بنیان مخالف بوده و علیه آنان مبارزه می‌کنیم. سازمان ما متعهد است که با شرکت در مبارزات کارگران، زنان، جوانان و تمامی مستکشدگان، که متحمل زیان‌های مالی و حقوق انسانی و دموکراتیک کرده‌اند، صفوف آنان را مستحکم نموده و از این طریق، چالش و بدیل اساسی در مقابل سیاست‌های ضد مردمی دولت لبرال برپوشن کلیتاً، که انتشار خربه‌پذیر جامعه، از جمله پناهندگان، مهاجرین غیر سفیدپوست، زنان، جوانان، معلولین، بومیان کالادا، همجنس‌گرایان، بیکاران و خانواده‌های جدید، با حرکت فرا دلاور، اتحاد شرم در به‌دین، عدالت انسانی ما در این برهه ایجاد شدنی مردمی و منطبق برای برکنار ساختن دولت نسوبی لبرال برپوشن کشما است.

ما سرمایه‌داریست و علیه امپریالیسم عقبه سراسر و سرور، از هر حرکت افلاکی براساس، میا استثمار و امپریالیسم پشتیبانی می‌نماییم. چرا که همبستگی بین‌المللی، مبارزه همگانی لازم برای ایجاد یک حرکت جهانی در جهت برقرارسازی عدالت اجتماعی را سهل و سحر بیابان - ما - بیومید

- Translated by Nasim Sedaghat

US Imperialist Hands Off Cuba!

From page 30

City -in particular the Mayor of Mexico City, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, a leading contender in the 2006 presidential race. This increases the Mexican governments animosity toward Cuba, because it exposes the corruption of Fox's government and it's close relationship with the US.

All of this amounts to incredible pressure on the already right-leaning Mexican government. Fox has already made the decision for Mexico whether to ally with the people of Cuba, and ultimately all of the people of Latin America and around the world against the bullying of the worlds strongest imperialist power or to ally with the US and gain some concessions for the ruling class in Mexico. Fox chose to collaborate with imperialism and this means ultimately, the distancing of Mexico from Cuba and any other progressive regimes in Latin America. It also strengthens the position of imperialism in Latin America.

In Latin America, in this new era of war and occupation, alliances are shifting and being consolidated. We have seen the era being opened with the invasion of Haiti, new aggressive measures against Cuba by the US and also the continued propaganda campaign against Chavez in Venezuela. Essentially countries are lining up based on if they're fighting for their rights as independent nations working to ameliorate the lives of their own people or if they're capitulating to imperialist pressure and threats.

In addition to propaganda being generated by the conflict in Mexico, the Canadian mainstream media has recently escalated its untruthful, sensationalist and reactionary reporting on Cuba. In particular, the National Post has featured many stories about Cuba in several different issues during the past few months. Canada has also maintained its old propaganda work against Cuba such as co-sponsoring

the resolution at the UN High Commission for Human Rights condemning Cuba for human rights violations for the 13th year in a row in April 2004.

Canada is doing well in the imperialist chess game with arms in Haiti, Afghanistan and threats toward Iran. Canada is carrying out the program Paul Martin spoke of 6 months ago. He stated his intention for Canada's role on the world stage to increase beginning with a leadership role in the occupation of Afghanistan. Canada's interest in stepping up propaganda against Cuba is in hastening the fall of the revolutionary government and destroying this shining example of humanity and dignity because of the threat it represents to imperialism. Canada is in exactly the same crisis as the US and other imperialist countries, so it has to step up intervention abroad to ensure itself a piece of the worlds riches as they are currently being re-distributed between dominant powers.

Imperialist hands off Cuba! Solidarity with the Cuban people and the Cuban Revolution!

"You can supply billions in foreign aid, as the Russians did, and still have minimal leverage. Ultimately Castro is a nationalist, and he decides what is best for Cuba." - Larry Birns, director of the Council for Hemispheric Affairs, Washington, 1999

"We proclaim the right of people to freedom, the right of people to nationhood; those who know that nationalism means the desire of the people to regain what is rightly theirs, (...) conspire against nationalism." - Fidel Castro, President of Cuba to the UN General Assembly, September 26, 1960.

Imperialists always base their moves on their capitalist interest. The question is always posed "How much profit, gain, capital for the effort of the venture?" The above quote by Larry Birns explains this clearly; imperialists will invest in

Cuba if they are rewarded for it, if they gain from the venture. Castro's defend of Cuban soviegernity, his unity with the masses of Cuban people will always present a block for imperialists This is juxtaposed by the example set by the revolutionary government of Cuba and its policies toward the Cuban people; guaranteeing health care, education, housing and basic necessities. All of this is done with no "reward" or "gain" for the Cuban government at the expense of someone else.

Fidel Castro is an internationalist. But he is the national leader of an oppressed nation. A nation that has been oppressed and blockaded for nearly 50 years and punished for taking action to better the lives of the Cuban people. Larry Birns' assertion is true and was answered by Fidel Castro one day in September 39 years earlier. Fidel Castro will continue to do what is best for the Cuban people based on his unity with them and that he represents no interests but theirs.

Mexico and Canada's reactionary propaganda war against the Cuban people must end. Mexico and Canada cannot increase their shameful aggression toward Cuba based on the necessity of preserving and protecting ameliorating the situation of ruling classes in their own countries. People in Mexico and Canada must rally in support of the Cuban people and in their defense as the Cuban people represent the immense threat of an example for change in the interests of poor and working people everywhere in the world

The "problem" of Cuba and its revolutionary policy will persist, threaten and haunt imperialist nations with the specter of the unmatched power of people united. If we struggle for the victory of the Cuban revolution we are struggling for our own emancipation from the slavery of this decayed capitalist system. **Defense of Cuba, Cuban revolution and Cuban People is defense of all humanity.**



In the era of war and occupation:
Why the US is Targeting Cuba and Venezuela
And what you can do about it

A Free Event! **Saturday August 21st**
IWA Hall
2859 Commercial Dr.
(Commercial and 13th Ave.)
11am - 5pm

Organized By:
Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba
778.889.7664 - cubacommunities@yahoo.ca

A CULTURAL NIGHT AND FUNDRAISER
AGAINST WAR AND OCCUPATION!

THE RHYTHM OF RESISTANCE!

Performers TBA!
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www.mawovancouver.org

SATURDAY AUG 28
Doors at 8:30
Show at 9:00
at **ELCOCAL**
(1037 Commercial Dr.)
ORGANIZED BY
MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR & OCCUPATION
mawoinfo@yahoo.ca | (604) 322-1764

Prisoners Justice Day Events

Tuesday August 10, PRISON JUSTICE DAY MEMORIAL RALLY

7:00 pm Trout Lake Park, Victoria Drive. At the Claire Culhane Memorial Bench (South East end) Bring family and friends. Rain or shine.

Wednesday August 11, FILM DANGEROUS LIVING

A documentary film co-presented with Out on Screen and Amnesty International 5:00 pm Cinemark Tinseltown



www.prisonjustice.ca

RESISTANCE WITHOUT RESERVATION



PROTEST AGAINST SUN PEAKS

BUSES LEAVE SATURDAY AUGUST 28th
10:30am from Safeway parking lot @ Commercial & Broadway demonstration in front of Sun Peaks resort August 29th 2:00pm

bring banners, camping gear and food

FOR INFORMATION OR TICKETS:
Anti-Poverty Committee 604.682.2726 apc.resist.ca
No One Is Illegal noii-van@resist.ca 778.552.2099
Co-op Bookstore 1391 Commercial Drive
Various tables at Under the Volcano

Organized by the Land, Freedom and Decolonization Coalition

**THE WAR IS NOT OVER!
THE OCCUPATION IS NOT OVER!**

US/UK: HANDS OFF IRAQ!



SAT AUG 28 3PM
Vancouver Art Gallery
March & Rally

Mobilization Against War & Occupation
www.mawovancouver.org | mawoinfo@yahoo.ca | 604 322 1764