

# FIRE THIS TIME



**The Newspaper of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice**

Issue 18/19 - September/October 2004 Double Issue

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FREE

# 40,000 Dead Iraqis, 1,000 Dead US Soldiers:

# For What?

Student Struggles

## Welcoming Back Students With More Debt & Poverty

### How Students are Exploited by the Canadian Educational and Financial Institutions

By Tamara Hansen

University and college students around British-Columbia will be returning to school, some happily, others begrudgingly. However, there will be at least some communality for most post-secondary students in BC, which is higher tuition fees and more economic worry and uncertainty.

*"If elected a Gordon Campbell government will serve British Columbians with honour, respect and integrity. We will keep our*

*commitments and our MLAs will always remain accountable to you."* – BC liberals, Election campaign 2001 'New Era' platform brochure, Page 33

Since the BC liberals were elected in 2001 we have seen tuition fees increase, the introduction of a \$6 'training wage', ripped up employment contracts, lowering employment standards, cuts to welfare, and major attacks on British Columbia's workers, students and marginalized people. Especially hard hit

*Continued on page 21*

By Mike Krebs

*'The US will have more levers than you think, and maybe more than the Iraqis think.'*

Back in November 2003, we ran this quote by a senior Whitehouse official, who was explaining that the 'handover' in Iraq would have very little impact on the presence of the US-led occupation forces and their ability to pillage the wealth, resources, and markets of the Iraqi people. Three months after the so-called 'handover' of sovereignty to the US-picked interim Iraqi council, the question is not whether Iraq is still occupied, or whether or not the US still has any 'levers' in Iraq, but whether the US-led occupation forces have handed over a single lever to the 'sovereign' Iraqi interim government.

Since the 'handover,' the major forces in Iraq remain the US-led occupiers on one side, and the Iraqi people on the other, who are fully aware that they are still living under a brutal occupation



by imperialist powers. The 'sovereign' Iraqi government, like every other strategy and justification that the US has put forward in its war, invasion, and occupation of Iraq, has been exposed as being a myth. Like the nowhere-to-be-found weapons of mass destruction, the lie that US troops would be greeted as

'liberators,' and blaming Iraqi resistance on 'Saddam Loyalists and Al-Qaeda,' the last three months in Iraq have been three months of US claims about the occupation of Iraq exploding into the sky and vanishing.

Alongside this crisis of legitimacy

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## International Struggles

### Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Venezuela Hugo Chavez Emerges as a New Revolutionary Leader of the Third World

By Shannon Bundock  
& Ali Yerevani

On August 15th 2004, millions of people sat beside their radios in Caracas, in Havana, in La Paz, in cities and towns across Latin America, waiting with nervous, hopeful confidence for the results of ballots cast in the Venezuelan Presidential recall referendum. In the afternoon of August 15th, hours before polls closed, the National Election Council(CNE) announced the discovery of a recording containing the altered voices of council officials reporting a victory for the recall of President Chavez with a "yes" vote.

Disconcerting? Perhaps. But the poor and working people of Venezuela maintained unfazed strength and confidence. This strength has

grown for the past 6 years with the progression of major social change, which oppressed people have led in

Venezuela with the Chavez on the top of this leadership.

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## The 'Handover' in Iraq, Three Months Later: Is it Working?

From page 1

for the US where each of its lies about the occupation of Iraq are being revealed, the world is also witnessing all of the 'levers' the US has in Iraq bending, malfunctioning, and breaking down.

### The 'handover' and hangover of US occupation

The US never intended to actually give sovereignty back to the people of Iraq. From the beginning, this was a process designed to fail, buying more time for the US and its imperialist allies to establish Iraq as a potential launching pad for further military interventions in the area. At best, this process of 'handover' was intended to provide a cover for the continued occupation and pillaging of Iraq, while at the same time reducing the level of resistance in Iraq to the occupation by suckering Iraqis into the process of 'building democracy.'

In terms of its impact on the resistance of the Iraqi people, the 'handover' has been a complete strategic failure for the US. Currently the US-led forces are facing an average of 84 attacks per day. This is an increase from before the handover, when attacks per day decreased slightly following the April massacre carried out by US forces in Fallujah. Attacks also continue on the few Iraqis collaborating with the occupiers, whether it is the repeated attempts to assassinate members of the Interim government or the

over 800 of which were killed after US president George Bush declared major operations 'over' on May 1st 2003. This politically significant threshold of American casualties has emphasized for working and poor people in the US, who make up the overwhelming majority of those sent to die in Iraq, that the US government's claims of an end to occupation in Iraq or 'progress' for the US mission are simply more lies.

### Cities lost or gained?

One of the biggest crises now facing the US-led occupation is the growing numbers of cities that, according to the US military, have been 'lost.' Fallujah is one of the many cities that the US is now unable to enter at all, or at least is unable to control militarily; also on this list are Sadr City (a suburb of Baghdad), Ramadi, Tal Afar, and Samarra. Coupled with this loss of military control, in the majority of these cities the organs of the 'interim' government are either completely ineffective, have been driven out of the city, or were never established in the first place. In Fallujah, the brigade sent in to retake control of the city from its inhabitants was officially 'disbanded', with its members either having left Fallujah, joined the resistance, or disappeared.

It is of course misleading to describe these cities as 'lost,' as if all of a sudden the US can't find them anymore. To the people who live in these cities, they have been 'gained' as the driving out of US forces have put the people in these



US Marine blockade around the city of Fallujah, September 2004.

forces has also not been 'lost' as the US military continues to conduct daily bombing raids and massacres against them. September 13th, for example, was a particularly bloody, but nonetheless typical day for the cities, when over 100 Iraqis were killed in these 'lost' cities alone by US bombs, missiles, and gunfire, mostly from helicopter gunships flying overhead. The US is carrying out escalated attacks against these 'lost' cities in a vain attempt to punish the people who live in them for participating in or supporting resistance to the occupation.

### 'Reconstruction': US fans flames of discontent

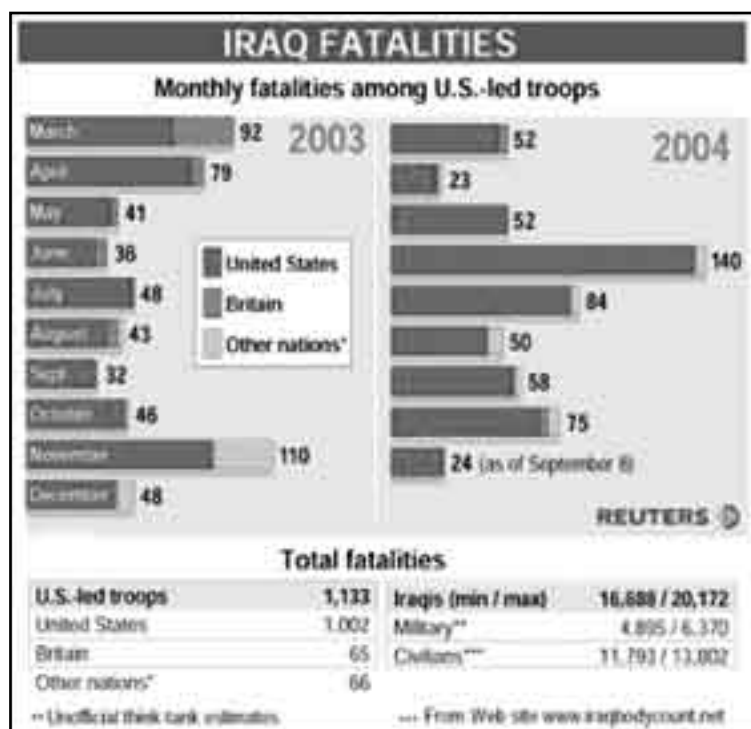
Coupled with this escalation are plans to divert \$3.37 Billion from the US State Department's funds for Iraq 'reconstruction' and use the money instead for the training of Iraqi police and military forces. This plan, drafted by John Negroponte, head of the largest US 'Embassy' in the world in Iraq, reveals the depths to which the US is losing its ability to claim interest in 'winning the hearts and minds' of the people in Iraq. Not only is the US relying more and more on brute force to maintain its grip on the Iraqi people, but this diversion of funds reveals even further the sham of 'reconstruction' in Iraq.

This \$3.37 billion that is being diverted comes from a fund of \$18.4 billion that was allocated in November by the US Congress supposedly for water, sewage and electricity projects. Since its establishment, however, this fund has been largely unspent, despite the horrific living conditions facing Iraqi people because of the destruction brought down on their country after over a decade of sanctions and two US-led wars.

It was hypocritical for the US and its occupying allies to destroy a country and then claim that they want to 'rebuild' it. Now, after

18 months, 'reconstruction' has proven to be yet another myth put

*Continued on page 6*



bombing of police stations set up by the occupying forces.

This continued resistance under the fake 'handover' pushed the number of US troops killed in Iraq since the March 2003 invasion past the 1,000 mark,

cities, and people throughout Iraq, in a better position to fight for their self-determination and deepens the quagmire the US-led occupation is sinking into.

The location of these cities and what they mean for occupation

This is the newspaper of the  
**Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice**

- ISSN 1712-1817 -  
www.fire-this-time.org

September/October 2004

Issue 18/19

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**One year subscription outside the Lower Mainland, make cheques payable to "Fire This Time"**  
(Canada \$15, USA \$20, International \$30)

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

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

# Shutting Down Media in Iraq

## American Military Democracy in Action

By Ivan Drury

*"The self-discipline, self-censorship among the war correspondent was surely moral and patriotic but it was also practical in a sense of self-preservation. Some subjects were taboo. Certain people could not be criticized or even questioned. The foolish reporter who broke the rules would not be printed at home and in addition would be put out of the theatre by the command, and a correspondent with no theatre has no job."* – John Steinbeck, in the introduction to his book 'Once there was a war,' a chronicle of first world war-time correspondence from the frontlines

*"[The banning of al-Jazeera is] a positive step to protect the Iraqi people from the poison being broadcast by the channels. We won't let them broadcast footage of US soldiers being ripped apart."* – Entifadh Qanbar, spokesperson for Chalabi, explaining why Al Jazeera was banned from government offices and news conferences in September 2003

Before the US started bombing Iraq in March of 2003, they issued a warning to independent journalists that all television signals that stretched their arms up to satellites above Baghdad would be 'fired on.' Kate Adie, a BBC reporter, (hardly to be considered truly 'independent' news in the same way as Fire This Time)), said that she asked the Pentagon whether they considered that there would be journalists at the base of those signals being 'fired on.' The Pentagon responded, "Who cares? They've been warned."

There is a saying that echoes back to the first recorded imperialist wars that 'truth is the first casualty of war.' In Iraq, truth was sacrificed on the altar of the foundation of the war and lack of truth, cover-up and straight-up lying have been the most consistent base of operations for imperialism in Iraq.

The international spread of information media has led to US signals reaching the Middle East and stations like al-Jazeera being viewed in the US as well. Media has become a weapon both at home, and on the frontlines.

In order to carry out their disinformation campaign successfully, imperialists have had to eliminate opposing views in the media while creating a monopoly on the spread of information. In the past, this has not been very difficult because the bourgeoisie media has controlled the flow of information for as long as there has been a bourgeoisie, but the rise in imperialist rivalry, and splits and differences between competing national-ruling-classes has been reflected in the media as well. This has been particularly



Mazen al-Tumeisi, a Palestinian journalist for Al-Arabiya News, was killed by a US missile attack on a crowd of people in Baghdad, 12 September 2004.

difficult for the US when it has come to bourgeoisie-Arab news media sources. Channels like al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya are owned by Arab capitalists whose national interests are in many ways different from the interests of US imperialists. (, and of course without reflecting some political interest of Arab population under imperialist attack is not able to sell any ad time)). Consequently, their TV stations, newspapers and websites have expressed different views of the 160,000 troops occupying Iraq.

The US-UK have responded to the operation of al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya with blackouts, shut-downs, bannings, arrests, torture, bombings and shootings of the stations and their correspondents. For poor and working people around the world, including in the US and Canada (where, in July, the CRTC approved al-Jazeera for broadcast, but with heavy censorship restrictions that will likely keep it off the air by default), media opposition to the racist-imperialist stories of CNN and CBC are increasingly important. Even if we never see the news, the very fact that it is being broadcast challenges the lies of imperialist media and breaks the stranglehold that Steinbeck's War Effort / Home Front media holds over the spread of information. Al-Jazeera reveals that the struggles of the oppressed people of Iraq against imperialist occupation is a struggle that we, as working people under an imperialist government, must follow, learn from and support as our own.

**Embedded in imperialism or in the walls of the Palestine Hotel?**

*"Democracies, we are expected to explain; we cannot tell lies in the*

*way that dictatorships tell lies all the time, both about themselves and about us."* – Alastair Campbell, British government director of communications

*"[Al-Jazeera] takes every opportunity to slant the news and present it in the most outrageous way possible for the purpose of inflaming the world and appealing to the basest instincts."* – Colin Powell, US Secretary of State

On August 9<sup>th</sup> the great truth-tellers, George Bush, Tony Blair and co. banned al-Jazeera from filming or broadcasting in Iraq for one month. On September 8<sup>th</sup>, that ban was extended indefinitely and the al-Jazeera office in Baghdad was sealed with red wax. The soldiers who performed the operation told the journalists that if they took pictures, they would be arrested. Al-Jazeera correspondent Tayseer Allouni, who was arrested last year on 'terrorist-related' charges explained this repression in an interview with the Guardian, a British newspaper:

*"The American troops didn't like us because we contradicted through images and words what the Americans said. The*

contradictions were much in evidence in Fallujah where the Americans one day announced there was a truce that was beginning at 12noon. Then al-Jazeera [which had journalists in the city] would transmit images of American jet fighters bombing the city and breaking the truce."

Al-Jazeera insists that the charges against Allouni are trumped up and meant to intimidate other journalists and the station altogether.

The US has targeted al-Jazeera above all other media because they have been the most effective in exposing the lies of the occupiers because of their popularity throughout the Arab world and beyond, and their heavy investment in covering the war and occupation. The station has as many as 100 people in its Iraq bureau and has distributed hundreds of cameras and phones to people throughout Iraq to report on unfolding news. Allouni recounted a tip al-Jazeera had gotten about an attack in al-Meria, a town north of Baghdad. Al-Jazeera was refused access to the town by the US military, but CNN was allowed in. "CNN had

*Continued on page 6*

## US-led Assaults on Arab Media Sources: A Brief Chronology

The targeting of al-Jazeera and other predominately Arab media networks independent of the US forces has increased in direct relation to the deepening of the quagmire that the occupying forces are stuck in; directly in proportion to the imperialist's need to lie. The following list of attacks on journalists in Iraq is by no means complete:

**March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2003 - Four days after the war began:**

Al-Jazeera banned from entering the New York Stock exchange for its position on the Iraq war.

**April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003:**

US announces that al-Jazeera is to be banned from Iraq, and then immediately retracts the ban.

**April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003:**

US tanks fire on the Palestine Hotel, the de facto base for non-embedded journalists in Baghdad. Four Reuters staff were injured in the blast and two journalists killed. After one hour, the US declared a 'cease-fire' on the hotel, claiming that there were snipers on the roof. No journalists heard any sniper fire. Colin Powell called it a 'mistake' and claimed he didn't know there were journalists inside the hotel, even though the Pentagon had been informed of their position in the hotel.

After the Palestine Hotel 'ceasefire,' the military moved on and bombed the separate offices of al-Jazeera and Abu Dhabi Television, killing one al-Jazeera journalist. An al-Jazeera spokesperson denounced the attack; "It couldn't have been a mistake. We've told the Pentagon where all our offices are in Iraq and hung banners outside them saying 'TV.'"

**September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003:**

**The newly founded Iraqi Governing Council bars al-Jazeera and the Saudi Arabia-based station al-Arabiya from government offices and news conferences for two-weeks for their views on the occupation. Al-Jazeera responded, "We don't have views, we just report what is happening on the ground. We are not enemies here. We are not part of the conflict. We try to achieve objectivity and we always will."**

**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003:**

Al-Jazeera camera operator Saleh Hassan is arrested while interviewing people at the site of a roadside bombing attack on a US-convoy in the eastern Iraqi town of Dialah. He was accused of knowing in advance about the bombing and replied that he had arrived 30 to 40 minutes after the attack. "They told me I was a liar," said Hassan.

He was transported to a military base, bound and hooded and held for four days in two different bathrooms and then shipped to the Abu Ghraib prison. There, he was stripped naked and forced to stand outside all night, kicked by soldiers who called him only "al-Jazeera," "boy," or "bitch."

He was not released until December 18<sup>th</sup> after his employer hired a lawyer, and a judge released him because of a total lack of evidence. Another al-Jazeera correspondent, who was held in a cell just down the hall from Hassan, arrested on November 18<sup>th</sup> was not released until January 25<sup>th</sup>, again for lack of evidence. Dozens of al-Jazeera staff have been arrested and subjected to such treatment in Iraq.

**November 2003:**

Al-Arabiya station forced out of Iraq and not allowed to return until it

promised in writing that it would not 'encourage terrorism.' Al-Arabiya got the attention of imperialists when they covered the US' brutal massacre of people in a wedding party in Afghanistan.

**February 2004:**

Al-Jazeera office in Baghdad closed down for one month for 'disrespecting' prominent Iraqis.

**August 2004:**

Iraqi police seize 60 journalists at gunpoint from a hotel in Najaf and take them to the police station. Media included BBC, the Guardian, the Independent, the Times and the Telegraph.

**August 9<sup>th</sup> 2004:**

Al-Jazeera office in Baghdad closed down and the station banned from operating in Iraq for 30 days for "showing a lot of crimes and criminals on TV, and [sending] a bad picture about Iraq and about Iraqis and encouraging criminals to increase their activities." (Iraq's interior minister, Falah al-Naqib) Al-Jazeera was told that they were being given a month to "readjust their policy against Iraq."

Al-Jazeera responded that the move "was contrary to pledges made by the Iraqi government to start a new era of free speech and openness." And, "We don't need to give anything in writing because we don't support terrorism, that's a given. Gagging the media is not the way to deal with the media. If the request is that al-Jazeera will compromise its independence, that is a request that will not be entertained."

**September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004:**

Al-Jazeera banned indefinitely from all operations in Iraq.

# Resistance! Resistance! Resistance!

## Vietnam Syndrome Then, Iraq Syndrome Now

By Thomas Davies

A year and a half into their brutal occupation and the world's largest imperialist army has still been unable to find even one safe corner within Iraq, and yet they would still have us believe that the forces beating them back in all areas are only "isolated militants". Giving simple consideration to the conditions Iraqi people live in under occupation: widespread lack of basic services, widespread bombings, shootings, murders, widespread detentions and torture - it would be ridiculous to assume that the reaction and resistance to these conditions would not also be widespread. The resistance takes many forms - daily demonstrations around Iraq, workers organizing into trade unions, work stoppages, student organizing, as well as armed elements - but all point in the same direction: "US OUT!" Together, they all point out of Iraq and demand that the occupation forces leave immediately so the people of Iraq can begin the real reconstruction of their lives, dignity, and country.

### False divisions wear thin

Despite the diverse and widespread nature of the Iraqi resistance, it still faces a virtual ban by western media sources regarding anything but armed conflict. Shaikh Mahdi al-Sumaidaie, a Muslim cleric and the Secretary-General of al-Irshad and al-Fatwa Association in Iraq recently slammed world media stating, "If media provides one hour of honest coverage to what the Iraqi resistance are doing on a daily basis, I bet you the mothers and sisters of US soldiers in Iraq will pour into

town of Fallujah. The polarization in Iraq today is definitely not one based in religious tendencies, it is between two groups: the people, and the occupiers along with their collaborators.

### Workers: backbone of resistance

The organization of workers has also played a huge role in the resistance. Most of Baghdad was shut down over the weekend of April 10th-11th, as residents heeded a joint call by Sunni and Shiite clerics for a general strike to protest the occupiers' brutal attempt to retake Fallujah. The occupation forces kept Saddam's laws which outlawed independent trade unions - and then on January 28th, 2004 the Iraqi Governing Council passed resolution number 16, which endorses the executive bureau of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions-IFTU as the official and legitimate representative of the labour movement in Iraq. This means that all other trade unions and labour organizations, which came as the result of free election by workers, are illegal and unofficial. This attempt at state control of workers' organizations is immensely important for the coalition in laying the groundwork for foreign firms to come in and exploit a desperate population. Despite this, workers have been organizing themselves and winning major victories around Iraq, and refuse to let the coalition forces posturing that "Iraq is open for business" go unchallenged.

The Interim government's attempt to recognize the IFTU is a demonstration of the immense pressure they are under by the



Demonstration in Iraq against the US-led occupation, September 2004.

al Najif, Babel and Mesan). This is again, despite being outlawed and persecuted by occupation forces and the Provisional Government.

### Youth against occupation

Young people and students also came to the head of the anti-occupation movement. This surge in resistance is met with the brutality typical of occupation forces. During a demonstration in Fallujah outside of a school which had been taken over by over 100 American soldiers, troops opened fire on 200 unarmed protesters. 13 civilians were killed immediately. Ahmed al-Essawi, aged 15, who was shot in his arm and leg, said he saw no evidence of weapons in the demonstration, "All of us were trying to run away. They shot at us directly. The soldiers were very scared. There were no warning shots, and I heard no announcements on the loudspeakers." The crime of these young demonstrators? Demanding that the U.S. occupation forces leave the school and allow them to continue their studies.

Young Iraqis desperate for employment have also been a target for coalition forces in their attempts to recruit and train a police and military force, yet occupation forces again find stiff opposition and complications in this task. On April 21st, General Martin Dempsey, commander of the US Army's 1st Armored Division, told *Associated Press* that about 10% of the US-recruited Iraqi security forces "actually worked against" US troops during the recent upsurge of resistance attacks, and an additional 40% had deserted their posts. These deserters were now militarily trained and armed, posing another front against the occupation force.

### By any means necessary

"I know the Americans have better weapons. They have better plans. They have uniforms that cost \$3,000, and we have only our clothes. But I have principles. I have holy land to defend. I have family to protect, so I feel stronger than them. The occupation forces are nothing but mercenaries who fight for money, so I feel stronger." - Eisa, 34 year Najaf resident who

previously worked in a graphics shop designing business cards and stationery

The increasing number of Iraqis who have taken up arms against the 160,000 occupation troops is an indication of two things: the severity of the violent repression under which they live, and the resolve of Iraqi people in the face of the coalition forces. There is between 40 and 60 reported attacks on coalition troops daily comprising all areas in Iraq. This is consistent with Iraqi people's history of anti-imperialist resistance - even within the last 50 years- when they overthrew British Imperialists in 1958.

12 Years of United States and United Nation sanctions have recently crippled their ability to resist, but we see now in the constant activity against coalition forces that they are driven to fight these foreign instigators of violence until all have left and Iraqis are able to dedicate their energy to the rebuilding of their lives and families.

The armed resistance's ability to grow and be effective has always been dependent on the support of the population, and while we may see images from Fallujah, Baghdad and Najaf most often - it certainly does not end there. In Baquaba, Coalition forces have also fled, as resistance grew against them, with one resident explaining simply, "The freedom fighters took control of everything here and kicked the Americans out of the city".

### Inside and Out: More than one crisis for imperialists

"The coalition's inability, or unwillingness, to fully characterize what it is up against suggests that it has not achieved the understanding necessary to defeat the resistance." - The *Middle East Quarterly* (a pro-Imperialist think-tank) on August 3rd.

Occupation forces now face two full blown crisis', first in trying to contain the mass Iraqi resistance, and secondly attempting to explain their complete failure to do so to the American public. This has led to deep divisions within the leadership of the United States ruling class. Secretary of State

Colin Powell comments at a recent press conference demonstrate the United States' desperation in trying to minimize the damage done by the popular resistance which finally forced American troops to leave Najaf, "In this case, the violence is being perpetrated by outlaws and by former regime elements and by terrorists who respect no truce, respect nothing except force. And as long as those individuals don't understand the spirit of peace and reconciliation, are not willing to work for democratic, free Iraq, they have to be dealt with. And so your question really should not be addressed to us. It should be addressed to those who are causing the violence, who are setting off the bombs, who are destroying the hopes of the Iraqi people."

Unfortunately for the Imperialists, to characterize or to understand the resistance in Iraq would mean the realization that they are fighting a losing battle in Iraq, as well as around the world. The Coalition forces crisis of legitimizing in Iraq continues, as a June 17th survey published in *The Independent* newspaper cites that a meagre 2% of Iraqis regard the occupying forces as liberators. The Iraqi people have shown themselves perfectly capable of understanding who really is the biggest obstacle to the "peace", "reconciliation" and the "democratic, free Iraq" of which Mr. Powell blusters, and even more capable uniting against occupation forces.

Faced with this deep resistance, the occupation troops are now forced into a new strategy: all out aggression with the intent of demoralizing and crushing the Iraqi people's resolve. It isn't working - as a diverse and widespread network of resistance continues to grow against each attack. With Iraqis of all backgrounds, of all sectors, under one common goal "Occupiers Out!" the Iraqi resistance is uniting and winning. It is now the job of the worldwide anti-war/anti-occupation movement to take the leadership of resistance in Iraq and apply it to our own work in its persistence, in its diversity and mass base, and in its unity with the demand, "END THE OCCUPATION!"



Demonstration in Baghdad against the US-led occupation after car-bombing, 15 September 2004.

the streets of America screaming at Bush to pull the troops from Iraq." The tired emphasis of supposed divisions between Sunni and Shia wear thin as huge contingents of both joined together all around Iraq during the March 20th International Day of Action against the occupation. This is on top of every other day when there are protests of the unemployed, working poor, and brutalized. The occupation's conditions and cluster bombs do not discriminate based on religious beliefs; everyone is a target. Graffiti praising the "valiant uprising" of Shias in Najaf appeared on mosques and government building walls in the Sunni city of Ramadi, and the whole world watched as Shias collected and ferried food and medicines to Sunnis besieged in the

workers movement. Formed on May 16th, 2003, the Iraqi Federation of Workers Trade Union has achieved many important victories against the odds. In just over a year, 12 national unions in key sectors of Iraq's economy have been established. The IFTU now includes the following unions: The Oil and Gas Union, the Railway Union, The Transport and Communication Union, the Mechanics, Printing and Metal Union, The Textile and Leather products Union, the Construction and Wood Workers' Union, the Electricians' Union, the Service Industry Union and the Agriculture and Food Staff Workers' Union.

These unions organise in Baghdad and across Iraq's 15 provinces (such as Basra, Kirkuk, Mosul, Kurbala,

# War Resisters: Why Working and Poor People in Canada Should Support Them

By Ivan Drury

*"Some folks inherit star spangled eyes,  
Ooh they send you down to war,  
Lord,  
And when you ask them, How much should we give?  
Ooh, they only answer More!  
More! More!"* – Creedence Clearwater Revival, *Fortunate Son*

On Sunday September 12<sup>th</sup>, a story played on CBC radio comparing Vietnam-era draft dodgers who fled the US war-machine for refuge in Canada to War Resisters Jeremy Hinzman, Brandon Hughey and Dave Sanders fleeing the murderous Iraq war today. The story was sympathetic to draft dodgers and the tradition that Hinzman, Hughey and Sanders are continuing with their refugee claims in Canada. The question that CBC did not answer convincingly is: 'why should we support the War Resisters?' Why is in the interests of poor and working people in Canada to support the flight of US soldiers?

The Canadian-imperialist decision of whether or not to grant refugee status to Hinzman, Hughey and Sanders will have great implications for these three young men, their families, and also for US imperialism. This trio of War Resisters represents many more people than themselves. Between 1996 and mid-2003 over 20,000 US soldiers have deserted from the military. If US soldiers can claim refugee status in Canada rather than go off to kill people in Iraq, then many, many more will choose to come north.

This is a problem for the US because, in order to maintain the occupation of Iraq, US imperialism needs more than a massive military budget; it needs the cooperation of people in the US, both civilian and military. It is this critical factor that they are losing more and more every day.

## The impact of deserters on the 'war effort'

*"Those who don't offer our armed forces their unconditional support are to all intents and purposes helping the communist enemy, during a time when the US army is carrying the heaviest load in defending peace and freedom in the world."* – AFL-CIO statement, June 1966

*"The morale, discipline and battleworthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at any time in this century and possibly in the history of the United States. By every conceivable indicator, our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and non-commissioned officers, drug-ridden and dispirited where not near-mutinous. Elsewhere than Vietnam, the situation is nearly*



War resister Brandon Hughey.

*as serious."* – From "The Armed Forces Journal," 1971

Throughout the course of the Vietnam War, more than 50,000 young Americans left the US for Canada in order to evade the draft. These 'draft dodgers' were a very small part of the US military that refused to fight, and an even smaller portion of the people in the US who were against the war in Vietnam. In 1971 alone almost 100,000 US soldiers deserted from the army (went AWOL for more than 30 days).

On top of those who refused to fight in the war were the soldiers involved in active combat who refused to carry out orders, who mutinied, or killed ('fragged') their officers. The US army documented 600 confirmed 'fraggings' between 1969 and 1973, and noted that more than 1,400 died in 'suspicious' circumstances. In the army, the killing of an officer by a soldier was only considered 'fragging' if done by a grenade, so these numbers overlook all those officers killed by shooting, stabbing or any other means.

The growth in draft dodging, desertion, soldiers gone AWOL, fragging and refusal of orders grew alongside the antiwar movement at home in the US. In 1965, 25,000 people marched against the Vietnam War in Washington DC. Six years later, a march with the same demands boasted 500,000 to 750,000 people. Together, all of these factors amounted to a massive shift in consciousness against the war amongst working people in the US that spread throughout the soldiers in the military as well. It was this shift in consciousness, which the ruling class refers to as a 'lack of political will,' that assisted the Vietnamese resistance in ending the Vietnam War in favor of oppressed people all throughout the world.

In the Vietnam-era, draft dodgers were an important part of this 'lack of political will' of working people

to take part in the slaughter of the Vietnamese people. Throughout the history of imperialist war, there are examples of the same: During World War I, in Austria in 1907, army recruits were sent off with funeral marches and all the walls along the streets plastered with posters declaring, "You will not shoot at the people!" Fifteen



War resister Jeremy Hinzman.

soldier's unions formed in the army in Belgium at that time and when troops were ordered to fire on strikers in France, the soldiers refused and declared their allegiance with the workers.

Historically, the weakening of the 'political will' of soldiers to fight the wars of the ruling class has meant that the army has become polarized, unstable and unreliable for imperialism to carry out its wars and occupations. This 'political will' is replaced with another sort of political will, the

will to struggle against war and occupation and for the rights of people in the occupied country. Most terrifyingly for the capitalist-imperialist class, this translates into a political will to fight for the rights of poor and working people at home as well.

Although it is still in its early stages today, this new sort of political will is beginning to destroy the will of soldiers to fight for the occupation of Iraq.

## Why Soldiers Refuse to Fight

*"If you want to support the troops, demand their return from Iraq."* – Sgt. Kelly Dougherty, Iraq veteran

On September 7<sup>th</sup>, the US military recognized that US soldier deaths had crossed the 1,000 mark in Iraq. Since the June 30<sup>th</sup> 'handover' of power, the resistance and attacks on the occupying forces have increased, with 65 deaths and over 1,000 wounded in August alone. One hundred and forty-eight US troops have been killed since June 30<sup>th</sup>; ten more than died from the initial invasion of Iraq up to May 1<sup>st</sup> 2003 when Bush declared the war 'over.'

But it is not fear of dying that is propelling the movement of War Resisters in the US, it is that, as War Resister and Canada-refugee applicant Brandon Hughey says on his website, "under no

'Bring them Home Now,' (www.bringthemhomenow.org) 'Veterans for Peace,' (www.veteransforpeace.org), and 'Iraq Veterans Against the War,' (www.ivaw.net- formed in July 2004) are a sign of this spreading consciousness. These groups of soldiers, veterans and soldiers families are speaking out, organizing against and refusing to participate in the occupation of Iraq because they see that the war is no good for people in Iraq, and no good for poor and working people in the US.

There is a collision of interests at play in the US war-machine. The capitalist ruling-class needs to go to war in order to guarantee their continued theft of the wealth of the people of the world, but the occupation of Iraq holds nothing but further hardship for poor and working people in the US. War Resisters are only the tip of the 'bunker-buster' bomb for the US. Their bigger problem is that they cannot convince anyone to enlist in the military.

## The Hearts and Minds of potential recruits

*"My concern, honestly, is the impact this [occupation] is having on the American people and our ability to be strong in this war."* – Spec. Joseph Roche, a 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division soldier who recently returned from more than a year in Baghdad

circumstances would I allow myself to become complicit in the illegal occupation of Iraq."

Following a period of complicity with the occupation of Iraq ("We might as well finish what we started...") a growing segment of US soldiers and their families, along with masses of working people throughout the country, are opposing the occupation of Iraq and refusing to participate.

Groups like 'Military Families Speak Out,' (www.mfso.org),

In 2001, at the beginning of the announced US 'war on terror,' an anti-desertion bill was passed that returned deserted soldiers directly to their fighting unit, rather than to court and jail. This change, was even denounced by military officers because it returns soldiers to the front who do not want to be there. This move reflected the beginning of the desperation the army is feeling for willing soldiers.

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# 'Iraq is Worse Than it Ever Was in Vietnam'

From page 2

forward by the US-led occupying forces to hide the realities on the ground for the people of Iraq.

In a September 2004 report, the failures of the 'reconstruction' process to meet basic living and health standards in Iraq were documented and compiled by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based right wing think tank. The paper, entitled *Progress or Peril? Measuring Iraqis Reconstruction*, reports that in the areas of 'Security, Governance and Participation, Economic Opportunity, Services, and Social Well-Being,' based on both data and interviews with Iraqis about their day-to-day experiences, no substantive 'reconstruction' in Iraq has taken place.

This situation exists because the US-led occupation forces are unable to provide even the most basic improvement for the people in Iraq, and clearly they aren't interested in doing this either. The deteriorating conditions of life under occupation that 'reconstruction' is not solving, including over 70% unemployment, a lack of basic services including clean water and electricity, and the mounting destruction of Iraqi cities

due to continued US bombing. These are the conditions that fuel the resistance to the occupation. It is this general resistance, the daily mass resistance of workers and oppressed people in Iraq, demonstrating on the streets demanding jobs and basic necessities, that is threatening the ability for the US-led occupation to maintain its presence in Iraq. It is worth mentioning that in the 1991 first Gulf War, the US bombed Iraq for 42 days. The level of destruction of infrastructure in Iraq was at least three times more than in 2003 and 2004 altogether. Back then it took the Saddam regime only less than six months to bring back Iraq to normal situation. How come after 18 months of 'reconstruction' of Iraq, people still suffering from shortage of tap water, electricity and medical help?

**Military Solution: the only solution the US has**

*"Strategically and politically, the situation in Iraq is worse than it ever was in Vietnam."* – Richard Holbrooke, former US ambassador to the United Nations

At the same time that the US is betting more and more of its cards exclusively on the strategy of military suppression and brutality, high-ranking officials of the US ruling class and military are pointing out how much of a crapshoot this military



A house damaged during US bombing raid in Fallujah, September 2004.

strategy is. A September 16th article in the Manchester Guardian quotes several US military experts pointing out that the military strategy for the US in Iraq has been a 'disaster':

*"The idea that this is going the way*

*these guys planned is ludicrous. There are no good options."* – General Joseph Hoare, former Marine Corps commandant and head of US Central Command.

*Continued on page 11*

## Lift the Ban on the Media in Iraq Now!

From page 3

been in but did not transmit [a story] even though several people had been killed and almost 400 arrested."

**Creating news that doesn't exist for an occupation that shouldn't exist**

The US relies on two institutions they have created in order to counter the 'negative impression' that the pictures of the occupation give people. For the audience at home, they have embedded journalists who must play strictly by the rules of the War Effort and the Home Front, reporting nothing less and nothing more than the army commanders decide for them.

Michael Wolff, a former embedded reporter for the New York magazine wrote about his experiences in General Tommy Franks' million dollar press centre for embedded reporters at the beginning of the war in an article called 'You know less than when you arrived.' In it he said:

*"The other shock is that this warehouse is it. If you are in Doha, this is where the second Gulf war will take place. These are your confines. You are shut in. War is dehumanising and excessively air-conditioned. War is hermetic. Up to 20 hours a day inside isn't unusual waiting for information.*

*"It takes about 48 hours to understand that information is probably more freely available at any other place in the world than it is here. Eventually you realize that you know significantly less than when you arrived, and that you are losing more sense of the larger picture by the hour. At some point you will know nothing.*

*"This may be the plan, of course. There are two kinds of forward reporters: the official embeds with units on the ground in Iraq, who know only the details of the action they see, and those posted to military press centres in Kuwait or Qatar (as close to Franks, the presumptive conqueror of Baghdad, as it's possible to get), who know only what they are told. "*

These reporters serve imperialist media,

and only the news that fits into the narrow little world of imperialist war gets danced up to the satellites and over the seas to the US and Canada.

The new initiative of the US war-machine is an 'alternative' Arab news station. Al-Huda ('The Free One') was launched in February of this year with a broadcast of a pre-recorded interview with George Bush. It is a feeble attempt to capture the 'hearts and minds' of young people in Iraq and throughout the Arab world with a slick annual budget of \$62 million, and Colin Powell on the Board of Directors. On this Arab TV station, there is no occupation, only terrorists and insurgents killing the liberators... just like at home.

**Bush Lies, People Die: End the occupation now!**

People in Iraq and poor and working people all around the world oppose the occupation of Iraq because we know what is happening. Refusing to show the bodies of soldiers or the shooting of crowds in Iraq does not hide the truth it just obscures it.

The US cannot fix the problem with their propaganda war or by suppressing independent, non-embedded or disloyal reporters any more than they can fix the problems of the occupation by brutally suppressing the rising of the Iraqi people. The truth is that our sisters and brothers in Iraq are being murdered so that the US can continue with their imperialist strategy to control the people, resources and politics of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the world. Even a camera-lens-filter as dense as a shower door cannot hide that.

Poor and working people in Canada must demand to know the truth of what is happening in Iraq, we must demand that the ban on al-Jazeera and al-Arabya be lifted and we must demand:

**LIFT THE BAN ON THE MEDIA NOW! END THE OCCUPATION NOW! US-UK OUT OF IRAQ! SELF-DETERMINATION FOR IRAQI PEOPLE NOW!**

## Bring All Troops Home Now!

From page 5

The White House and the Pentagon have responded to this troop crisis and the need for a constant flow of new troops to fill the spots of dying ones with an accelerated recruitment drive. This has included expanding on the 'great success' of the US Army produced video game "American Army". Which has been called "a fantastic recruiting opportunity," by Lt. Col. John Gillette at a video game show that he attended with recruiters at the door. "We would like to sign up as many as possible." This game, specifically targeting young people for pre-enlistment (as happened with War Resister Brandon Hughey), has been used as the basis for development of an Army video game studio to develop further games glorifying the lives of soldiers.

However, trickery is not enough to convince young people to go to Iraq, and in August the military boosted it's recruiting bonus from \$6,000 to \$15,000 to rope in their usual market: poor-working people. Singled out amongst those most likely to recruit are Latinos. According to John McLaurin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Human Resources, the goal is "to boost the Latino numbers in the military from roughly 10 per cent to as much as 22 per cent."

George Bush pushed forward this goal when he made an order in July 2002 allowing 31,000 'non-citizens' to join the military to apply for nationalization at the start of their active duty. He was good on his word too. The first US soldier to be killed in Iraq was Lance Cpl. Jose Gutierrez, a 28 year-old Guatemalan orphan who came to Los Angeles in the mid-1990s. He was not a US citizen before he was killed in combat on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2003, but Bush granted him status posthumously... without any benefits to be extended to his family. Though the Pentagon denies that it is the policy of the army, recruiters have been caught in high schools in Tijuana, distributing recruitment fliers to more potential post-humus US citizens.

The primary target for all army recruiters are people who don't have any options for university or a decent job besides the army. Because of this, the position of oppressed

people in the US is directly tied to the ability of the army recruitment officer. To support War Resisters means supporting poor and working young people against capitalist exploitation when they are pressed up against the wall of economic crisis and the choice between flipping burgers forever, joining a gang, or registering for the army. By fighting for the rights of non-status workers, women, all workers and poor people a strong antiwar movement has the potential to support oppressed people in the US against being sent to Iraq to kill other oppressed people, and also to support them against no-choice capitalist racism.

**War Resisters: Sand in the gears of the war-machine**

*"Obviously, the Nuremberg Tribunal was saying as a soldier you have a responsibility to not carry out illegal acts and that's the logic I use for what I've done. If I were to go to Iraq, I would be taking part in a criminal enterprise."* – Jeremy Hinzman, in an interview with Lateline

In his above statement, Jeremy Hinzman is taking a clear stand with oppressed people against imperialist war and occupation. This statement is contrary to the hundreds of hours of 'training' the army subjected him to, contrary to his job as a US soldier, and contrary to US law. For taking this stand, he will be thrown in jail in the US, and all financial support for his family has already been cut off. On the other hand, for taking this brave stand, Jeremy Hinzman, Brandon Hughey, Dave Sanders and all War Resisters must be welcomed, protected and supported by the antiwar movement and all poor, working and oppressed people in the world.

In Canada, we occupy a special position to assist War Resisters as part of the struggle to weaken US imperialism through weakening the ruling class's control over the armed forces of the US. We must demand refugee status for all war resisters in Canada and demand:

**BRING ALL TROOPS HOME NOW! Visit the War Resisters websites and sign the petitions for their refugee claims:**

www.jeremyhinzman.net,  
www.brandonhughey.org,  
www.resisters.ca



## Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Venezuela Hugo Chavez Emerges as a New Revolutionary Leader of the Third World

From page 1

In August 15th, 2004 the Chavez government in Venezuela, along with the majority of working and poor people globally, won a historical and decisive victory. This achievement was a step forward in the battle for working class democracy and self-determination against counter-revolutionary forces of the capitalist ruling class in Venezuela and their imperialist backers in Washington.

The confidence of the Venezuelan people on their leadership and social and political gains in the last six years proved itself this August when, of the 9,789,637 who poured into the polls, 59.25% reaffirmed the presidency of Chavez and delivered their "gift to Bush".

### Recent History

The history of Venezuela is shared with nations across Latin America, all of which have suffered since 1492 from the colonial operations of European "explorers" and later on from sustained interventions and attacks from their northern neighbour, and colonial settler-state, United States. Since the footsteps of the first Europeans touched Latin America, a history of foreign intervention, plundering and destruction has wreaked havoc on the region. These attacks have been met with heroic struggles against poverty, genocide, devastation, and inequality; heroic struggles for national freedom and sovereignty.

The recent history of Venezuela has been characterized largely, by further economic depression, austerity programs, IMF loans and major social and political upheaval. This was under these conditions that Hugo Chavez' Movimiento Quinta Republica (MQR) was formed, and based on the political, social and economic polarization of Venezuela MQR gained the confidence of many poor and working Venezuelans.

In 1998 Hugo Chavez Frias was elected to presidency in a landslide vote. Over the next six years, Chavez and the government of the newly named Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (BVR) made incredible steps forward in favour of oppressed people. Through land and oil industry reforms, a restructuring of the national oil company (PDVSA) and through developing widespread literacy and healthcare programs, the BVR has improved the lives of millions of Venezuelans. These gains were major blow to the economic monopoly and political domination of the capitalist class and their foreign supporters in Venezuela.

In the past six years Venezuela has become a unique example for a progressive change in Latin America. Venezuela has emerged as a leadership force for oppressed people across the continent who have fought for centuries against war, occupation, plundering, domination, suppression and exploitation. In Venezuela the upheaval, unrest and constant struggle of the impoverished majority has begun to bear fruit and has delivered an example of leadership that may prove to be the worst threat the US imperialist ruling class has had to face yet.

### Attacks By Reactionary Forces

Venezuela has not gone through this process without facing major internal



Demonstration in Venezuela celebrating the 'no' result of the referendum to recall Chavez..

opposition from the capitalist class, which formally ruled the nation. The Chavez government has faced a series of obstacles, propaganda

and attacks attempting to derail their efforts from the petroleum oligarchy, the employers federation Fedecameras, big entrepreneurs, owners of private media, bureaucrats of corrupt pro-management unions, traitorous military chiefs and reactionary opposition parties. One major very active organization of the reactionary opposition is the coalition Coordinadora Democratica (CD).

These reactionary opposition forces have objected to the government's plans to spend oil revenues on social programs, which range from subsidized food to classes on literacy and farming. They have opposed the constitution, which was ratified by a majority of Venezuelans in 1999. And ultimately, they have attempted to oust Chavez through a variety of increasingly dangerous, criminal and desperate strategies.

In April 2002, Chavez was kidnapped from the Presidential palace in a coup

d'etat led by an opposition alliance that immediately overturned recent progressive legislation and threw out the constitution. Within 48 hours mass demonstrations, along with a revolt in the rank-and-file military kicked the coup leaders out and restored the president.

After this failed attempt to overthrow Chavez, in April 2002, a bosses-imposed oil "strike" in December 2002 and January 2003 paralyzed the oil industry and damaged Venezuela's economy. The reactionary opposition also organized a contingent of over 130 Colombian military and paramilitary forces to spread violence. Throughout all of this, the counter revolutionary opposition controlled media (which is 90 % of all media) has attacked Chavez and spread lies and anti-government propaganda nationally and internationally.

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## South Korea Working People Moving into the Centre Stage of Social Struggle;

### An Interview with Two Members of Korean Student Network Against War

By Shannon Bundock

*For more than 50 years the US has had tens of thousands of troops stationed in South Korea. With these troops, the US has been able to maintain a strong dominance over the people of South Korea, using their position as a strategic foothold in South East Asia.*

*As a result of this intervention, as well as the prior decades of fighting Japanese colonization, the people of South Korea have built a long and heroic history of resistance to invasion and occupation.*

*Today, as the threat and impact of imperialist war and occupation expands globally the US forces in South Korea are facing ever-growing opposition. South Korean people are not only holding demonstrations and strikes that demand the US forces get out of South Korea, but also that imperialist forces get out of Iraq.*

*Early this September, Fire This Time sat down with Jungmi and Sangdo, both members of the Vancouver-based Korean Students Network Against War (KSNAW), in order to get some insight on the struggle of Korean working people against imperialist attacks. As well we discussed domestic attacks that are affecting working people in South Korea and how Korean*

*people living abroad can most effectively contribute to the global fight for a better world.*

**FTT:** There are some major issues affecting people in South Korea currently. First of all, there was a demonstration held by KSNAW in the spring to protest the impeachment of President Roh, who was later reinstated by South Korea's Constitutional Court. Can you explain why Roh was impeached and why people in South Korea demonstrated against this impeachment?

Korean Students Network Against War organized a Candlelight Vigil to nullify the impeachment and for democracy on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004 at the Vancouver Art Gallery. This was the first event we organized by ourselves. KSNAW recognized that what happened on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004 was an act of parliamentary coup by right-wing parties in Korea. We think this was obviously a setback for democracy in South Korea. Many Korean people think that we have accomplished democracy with lots of bloody sacrifices in protests and in struggle. That's how we have formed democracy until now. So, lots of people were outraged when right-wing parties impeached the president and they came out to demand and chant "Nullify the Impeachment!"



Police use water cannons against students demonstrating in South Korea.

In our view, we actually don't support the impeached president

because he has liberal politics,

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# Four Years After 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada Began...

## Crisis of the Israeli Occupation of Palestine: Disengaged?

By Mike Krebs

September 9th 2004

Things are not going well for Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon and his government. Since April, when he unveiled his plans for unilateral 'disengagement' from the area of Palestine known as Gaza, Sharon's strategy has been met with opposition from virtually every direction possible, whether from within his own government or the loss of moral legitimacy in the eyes of working and oppressed people all over the world.

Mainly however, the resistance of the Palestinian people to the brutal occupation of their country, which has gone on now for over four years, is creating an even deeper crisis for the Israeli ruling class as they struggle to find a way to kill this resistance. It is precisely this crisis which Sharon's 'disengagement' plan is intended to solve for Zionist Israel.

**Israeli government thrown on roller-coaster over 'Disengagement'**

'There was a clear decision by the government on disengagement.' - Ariel Sharon, interview with the Jerusalem Post,

The only thing clear about the Israeli government's decision on the 'disengagement' plan is that it has shown how divided the Israeli ruling class is on how to best continue its suppression of Palestinians. At least since May 2nd, when the 'disengagement' plan was voted down in a general referendum by Sharon's own Likud party, attempts to move forward with the 'disengagement' plan have met repeated opposition within the Likud.

Just recently the plan suffered another blow from within Sharon's party when the central committee of Likud voted against inviting the Israeli Labour Party to join the Likud's coalition government. Since the National Religious Party (NRP) quit the governing coalition earlier in the year, Sharon and those in Likud who support the 'disengagement' plan need to make a new coalition in order to have a majority push the plan through in the Israeli Knesset (parliament).

In an attempt to deal with the strong opposition to the 'disengagement' plan within the central committee, Sharon announced on September 8th that he intends



Palestinian girls waiting to get into school, 6 September 2004

## A Lover From Palestine

By Palestinian Poet Mahmoud Darwish

Your eyes  
A thorn in my heart  
Painful yet adorable  
I shield it from the wind  
And stab it deep through the night  
Through pain  
Its wound illuminates the darkness  
Transforms my present into future  
Dearer than my soul  
And I shall forget as our eyes meet  
That once we were together behind  
the gate

Your words were my song  
I tried singing  
But winter replaced the spring  
Your words, like the sparrow, flew  
away  
Like the sparrow who left our  
doors  
After you  
Our mirrors broke-sorrows  
engulfed us  
We picked the splinters of sound  
And only learned to lament the  
Fatherland

We shall plant it together  
Over the breast of a guitar  
Play it over the roofs of our  
tragedy  
To disfigured moons and rocks  
But I have forgotten  
I have forgotten your voice  
Was it my silence  
Was it my silence or  
Your departure  
That rusted my guitar?

I saw you last at the port  
A lonely traveler without luggage  
I ran to you like an orphan, a child  
Seeking answers in ancestral  
wisdom:  
How could the green orchard be  
imprisoned  
Exiled, banished to a port  
And still remain green

I entered in my diary  
I love oranges  
And hate the port  
Where I stood  
As torrents of rain poured down  
We only had the orange peels  
And behind us stretched the  
endless desert

I saw you on thorny hills  
A sheepless shepherd-chased  
I saw you on the ruins and once  
You were a green orchard  
I stood a stranger  
Knocking at your door  
The doors, the windows, the  
cemented stone  
Vibrated

I saw your face in the wells  
In the granaries-torn  
I saw you a waitress in the night  
cafes  
I saw through the tears and  
wounds  
And you are the words on my lips  
You are the fire  
And the water

I saw you at the mouth of a cave  
Hanging your orphan's rags  
I saw you in the stalls, in the  
streets  
Warming yourself by the fire  
I saw you in the lamentations of  
misery  
In blood dripping from the sun  
In the salt of the sea and the sand  
And yet  
You were as beautiful as the earth  
As children

I swear  
From my eyelashes I shall weave  
you  
A kerchief  
with words sweeter than honey  
And kisses I shall write:  
And kisses you were  
And so you will remain

I opened my doors to the night  
storm  
On a bronzy moon  
I wandered the back streets in the  
darkness  
And I have a date with words  
With the dawn of light  
You are my virgin garden as  
Faithful as the wheat  
With our songs we shall pierce the  
air  
And plant fertility in the dormant  
earth  
And you like the braided palm tree

Unbending to the storm  
Heedless of the hewer's blows  
Beyond the claw and the fangs of  
the jungle beasts

Come to me wherever you are  
Whatever you have become  
And return color to my cheeks  
And meaning to my being  
Return and take me into your eyes  
Take an olive branch  
Take a verse of my tragedy  
A toy  
Take a stone from our house  
So that our descendants  
Will remember their way home

Palestinian are your eyes  
Palestinian is your name  
Palestinian your thoughts-dreams  
Palestinian your mantilla, your  
body  
Your feet  
Palestinian the words-the silence  
Palestinian the voice  
Palestinian in life  
Palestinian in death

I carried you in my diaries  
Inspiration for the fire of my words  
The food for my thoughts  
And in your name I shout in the  
valleys:  
Invaders' horses!-I met them  
Though the times have changed  
Beware-beware hooves and stones  
I destroyed the big idols  
The thunderbolt has struck the  
flint  
I shall fill the expanses of Sham

With my songs

In your name I have shouted to the  
enemy:  
If I sleep  
Let maggots eat my flesh  
Ants cannot breed eagles  
And the snake hatches only snakes  
Long ago  
I turned away the invaders' horses  
Deep in my soul!  
I know  
I will turn them away again

to push through electoral reforms that would have Likud candidates running for the Knesset elected in primaries by the Likud membership, as opposed to the current setup where the central committee and other party organs appoint Likud candidates. Sharon hopes that this will lead to a set of Likud candidates more willing to ratify the 'disengagement' plan, based on the assumption that there is strong support among the general membership for the plan.

This latest move, rather than mark a potential change in fortunes for Sharon's plan, has only revealed the depths of the crisis within Likud for 'disengagement.' First of all, Sharon's announcement has led to a sharp increase in the level of opposition to his plans within the party's central committee. Several popular leaders of the Likud central committee have already started meeting in order to plan a strategy to block the reforms. As one Likud member of the Knesset (MK) put it, "No Likud MK would take the risk of supporting this now. It would be political suicide." Second of all, this latest plan is relying on support for 'disengagement' by the same membership that already voted the plan down!

With such a crisis within Sharon's own party, we have to ask: what government is Sharon referring to when he says that there is a 'clear decision' about disengagement? There is no clarity on this question, and if there is any decision, it is overall opposed to the plan. The crisis of division and opposition within Sharon's party, around such a crucial question for Israel as how to maintain its occupation over the Palestinian people, will likely continue at the party's next major convention on September 21st. At this convention, Sharon will again be pushing for the Likud party to form a coalition with the Labour, Shas, and United Torah Judaism parties in order to have the majority in the Knesset required to push the 'disengagement' plan through.

### Opposition to disengagement by the settler movement

The conflict within the Israeli government over the disengagement plan represents not only opposition within the Israeli ruling class over how to deal with the Palestinian resistance, but also the fact that the far-right settler movement in Israel, which opposes the 'disengagement' plan, is well-organized and in a strong position to oppose the plan.

On September 12th, tens of thousands of settlers and their supporters staged a rally in Jerusalem against the removal of Israeli settlements in Gaza. The settler rally also fueled opposition to the 'disengagement' plan within the Likud, with Binyamin Netanyahu, Sharon's major competitor in Likud, calling for a national referendum on the issue of 'disengagement' before it goes before the Knesset. This was only the latest of several rallies and actions in recent months organized by the settler movement in Israel who have strategic and tactical differences with Sharon over the disengagement plan.

### Head, chest, or foot?

This opposition from the further-to-the-right elements of Israeli society should not lead us into the false idea that Sharon and his plans are somehow more progressive or less murderous than those within Israeli society who oppose giving up even a single Israeli settlement. This is especially clear 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.

Sharon has repeatedly made it clear that the 'disengagement' plan is not intended to open up space for Palestinians, but as a way to put Israel in a better position to suppress Palestinians in the

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# The Importance of the Student Movement in South Korea

From page 7

such as the dispatching of our troops to Iraq under the US government's pressure. But we had no choice but to chant and demand "No Impeachment!" it was for democracy not for the president. So more than 70% of Korean people chose to support the impeached president against right-wing parties that ran for government.

**FTT: Since the reinstatement, President Roh has come under fire from many Koreans especially working class unions for his decision to send 3,600 troops to Iraq. How have the people of South Korea fought this and why?**

We need to begin talking about the antiwar movement in South Korea with the incident of 2 young schoolgirls who were run over and killed by a US tank in June 2002. When the armored tank hit the girls, they were walking on the pedestrian side road. But Korean news media had deliberately been reporting this accident as an insignificant minor accident because there were World Cup soccer games being held at the time.

However, when US soldiers received a non-guilty verdict for the murder of the two schoolgirls the Korean people were angry and thousands of people gathered to protest across the nation. I think, this was a unified voice against the unjustifiable acts of the US military in South Korea. This was a large and growing anti-US movement in Korea.

As the US government kept pushing the war on Iraq, this anti-US movement moved to an antiwar movement because Korean people were worried about another possible war on North Korea, as George W. Bush branded N. Korea as a member of the "axis of evil". Then on March 19<sup>th</sup> he attacked, and bombed Iraq. When the war started the US pressured the Korean government to send troops to Iraq. So Korean activists, labour unions and students started to demand "No Dispatch!" Korean people don't want our government to get involved in an unjustified, imperial and aggressive US-led war because they knew that once we got involved in the war, there would be a lot of tragic, innocent victims like the two young schoolgirls.

Since the beginning of the war in Iraq there were a couple of global days of action, which happened in Korea. This was the first time Korea responded to the requests of the global antiwar movement aside from the rallies and huge protests that were happening in South Korea.

Unfortunately, despite the strong opposition of the Korean people, the Korean government decided to send our troops to Iraq as the largest coalition partner after the UK. But when Kim Sun Il was beheaded by a militant group in Iraq, Korean people realized how catastrophic our military involvement in Iraq is. Lots of people say that we should avoid

more killings in Iraq. After Kim Sun Il's death the antiwar movement in Korea got more momentum to organize people and started to take action to stop the war and bring the troops back to Korea.

**FTT: Recently, as a result of IMF measures and growing economic crisis, joblessness and poverty are on the rise in South Korea. Many strikes in private and public sectors have taken place, most recently in August by petrochemical workers, hospital workers, bank workers and maritime workers. What are the main demands of working people to address this employment crisis? How is the government responding?**

The employment crisis is a really big problem in Korea. Many companies are hiring based on limited time contracts with employees. That means, almost all Korean people who are finding jobs are hired in non-regular jobs or temporary jobs, even though they hold a university degree.

That is the main problem of the employment crisis. So, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and affiliated labour unions first demands are "No more non-regular jobs". Also they demand shorter working hours, pay for overtime work, guaranteed holiday pay (especially for the special holiday for woman workers every month), and the abolition of the



Korean Student Network Against War organizer Sangdo.

work temporary jobs can't join the labour union. In addition, according to the labour laws the foundation of unions is legal, but most managements interrupt the creation of labour unions. Besides, the government abuses their official authority to stop strikes, so negotiations are getting harder between the unions and the management. Sometimes they arrest the executive members of unions to exercise fear and terror and to show off their power to the

**help maintain the division on the peninsula. How has this affected the people of South Korea and their ability to have an independent and sovereign country and their demand to unite North and South Korea?**

We have to look at the history of North and South Korea after the brutal 50-year Japanese colonization. This was at a time when the level of consciousness of people was at its highest. After decades of fighting against Japanese occupation, the Korean people were rapidly organizing themselves through people's committees to fight for national independence, land reform and labour rights.

Truly, people were taking control of their own country. But, despite all of these efforts and struggle, US forces intervened militarily in South Korea and joined with the local landlords and local capitalist ruling class who were pro-Japanese occupation to repress the liberation movement. The US troops were seen as a liberation force at the beginning, but eventually it became very clear that the US intention was to replace Japan's role in the country with American domination.

The US military government outlawed the people's committees, imprisoned, tortured and killed thousands of Korean patriots and directly ruled South Korea, until it finally instituted the US puppet regime of Syngman Rhee in 1948. This was first step of US colonial intervention in South Korea. Then in 1950, the Korean civil war broke out between North and South, which followed for four years. After an armistice, which was made between the US and North Korea in 1953, the US did not agree to withdraw its troops from South Korea. So, that's why the US troops have continued their presence in South Korea. According to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the US and Korea, the US military forces have 'lawful' status in South Korea, which undermines the sovereignty of South Korea. The most serious thing is that the Korean government doesn't have jurisdiction over the US soldiers

who commit crimes. Since 1945, US soldiers have committed over 100,000 crimes, but nobody has been punished.

The United States always needed a pro-American or puppet government to continue its presence in South Korea. As you know, the US engineered and backed up the military coup by General Park during 1960. They repeated this action with another military coup by General Cheon in 1979 and supported the dictatorial and corrupt regime through the 1980's. Together they suppressed the people's movement for democratization such as the May 18<sup>th</sup> Gwangju democratic uprising in 1980, which ended up in blood shed with hundreds of people killed.

However, since the two young schoolgirls were killed by the US army's tank in 2002, anti-US sentiment has grown and exploded across the nation. People have started to rethink what the relationship should be between the US and South Korea and how the US has dominated our political and economic situation. I think we should recognize the role the US plays in our independent and sovereign country and we must demand that the US troops get out of South Korea.

**FTT: Can you explain when KSNAW formed and why? How can Korean students in Canada most effectively contribute to the antiwar movement and the fight against imperialist aggression, war and occupation across the globe?**

Korean Students Network Against War was formed in November 2003 because we are against war and against the Korean government's decision to send troops to Iraq and are against getting involved in this imperial war. We just want to voice out our demands and protest against this imperial war even though we are here in Vancouver.

Since we founded KSNAW we have realized it is really hard to organize Korean students who



Korean Student Network Against War organizer Jungmi.

discrimination between regular jobs and non-regular jobs.

However, on the opposite side of the unions, the government and company managers are taking an uncompromising attitude. Actually, people who

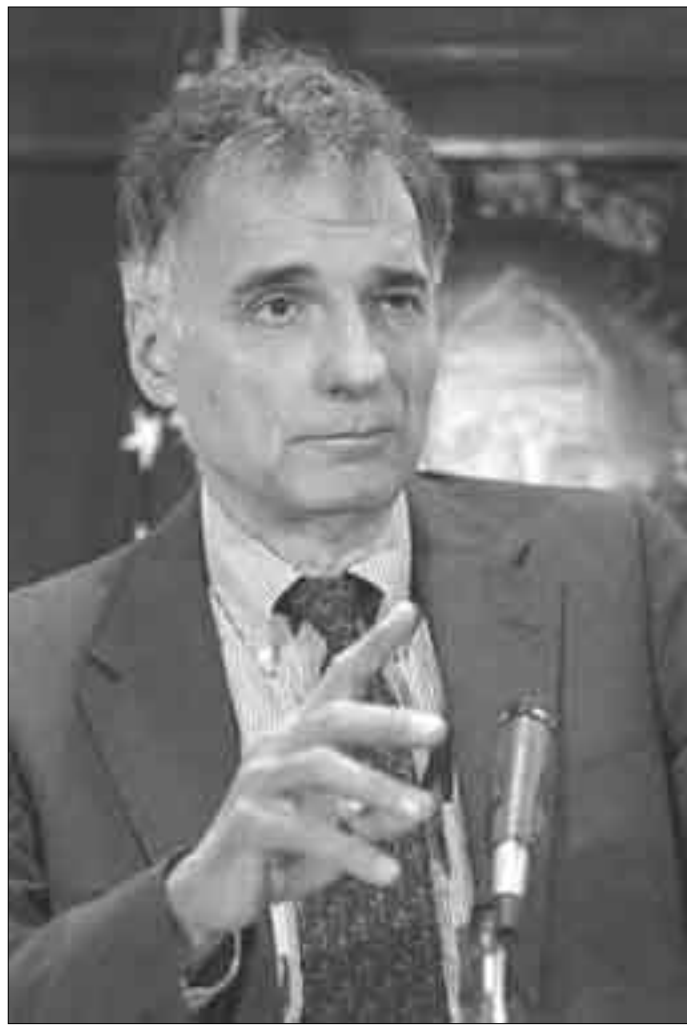
public.

**FTT: Since early 1945 there has been heavy US intervention in Korea with the US orchestration of the 1950-53 war and to this day nearly 40,000 US troops stationed in South Korea who**

# Is Nader an Alternative to Bush and Kerry?

By Andrew Malieni

*"He's an interesting politician. My sense of him is that the more dynamic the citizenry becomes, the more engaged voters become, the better a candidate he is." – Ralph Nader, talking about John Kerry after a recent meeting*



US Presidential Candidate, Ralph Nader.

Ralph Nader is sometimes put forward as an alternative to George W. Bush or John F. Kerry. Although Nader is somewhat more progressive than Bush or Kerry on certain issues like gay rights, and sometimes offers condemnations of some of the actions taken by US imperialism or corporations, overall he defends the same imperialist framework that exists to serve the interests of the US ruling class. He has stated that there is a need for a policy of "waging peace" to anticipate problems" and having a "multilateral 'peace force' ready to go," a concept very similar to Kerry's "muscular internationalism."

This means that Nader supports the use of military force to protect the needs of the US ruling class. For further evidence, it is sufficient to look at Nader's views on different occupations.

## Iraq

*"The quagmire of the Iraq war and occupation...needs to be ended expeditiously, replacing US forces with a UN peacekeeping force..." – Ralph Nader*

Ralph Nader's main criticism of the occupation of Iraq by the US is that it is harmful to the interests of the US. He warns that, "more U.S. casualties, huge financial costs, and diminished US security around and from the Islamic world." Although in reality Iraqis are in much more danger, with a recent estimate of 37,000 Iraqi civilians killed up to November 2003, in addition to tens of thousands of Iraqi military deaths and thousands more Iraqi civilians since November 2003. Nader does not speak prominently about the threat posed to Iraqis by occupation forces. It is not surprising that he calls for replacing the US occupation with an occupation by the UN: Nader suggests that

this "peacekeeping force" would be "less expensive" than the current occupation of Iraq primarily by the US.

The UN, starting in 1990, administered sanctions against Iraq at the cost of 1.5 million Iraqi lives, 500,000 of them being children under five. One UN official in charge of the sanctions, Dennis Halliday, actually resigned and said that the economic sanctions on Iraq "have created genocidal conditions." In fact, almost since the very inception of the UN, it has had a history of approving imperialist interventions and interference, one of the first major ones being the war against Korea in 1950. There is no doubt that this hypothetical "UN peacekeeping force," with or without a US presence, would serve the interests of imperialists, as before. What is really needed is the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from Iraq, but Nader, although verbally condemning the invasion itself, maintains that since Iraq has already been invaded, it is necessary that it continue to be occupied.

## Afghanistan

Nader supported the invasion of Afghanistan, although he disagreed with some of the tactics that the US/NATO used in the invasion. Nader criticized the way the invasion of Afghanistan was carried out, condemning it as illegal since the US did not go through the formality of getting authorization to go to war against Afghanistan from Congress, as the US Constitution requires. "If we're gonna do what we're gonna do, we should do it in a very constitutional way," Nader said, referring to the invasion of Afghanistan.



Nader commented in an interview that it is a "lot easier to get into Afghanistan than to get out of it." However this neglects the fact that to end the occupation troops would just need to get onto planes and fly out. This also makes it clear that he supports the continued occupation of Afghanistan in one form or another.

## Israel/Palestine

*"A conflict that is eminently resolvable with U.S. leadership is constantly postponed because of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and the cycle of violence that keeps getting more and more grievous. And if we don't break that cycle of violence, we will become continued prisoners of it, just as the Israelis and Palestinians are prisoners of the cycle of violence." – Ralph Nader*

Many commentators, like Nader, speak of a cycle of violence between Israelis and Palestinians that needs to be broken. In reality, the roots of the Israel/Palestine conflict are very much due to the actions of one side. The Zionists forcibly expelled or terrified into leaving hundreds of thousands of Palestinian-Arabs around the time of Israel's founding in 1948. They have since denied the right of these refugees and their descendents to return, invaded neighbouring countries several times and seized territory which it continues to occupy, expelled more Palestinians, imprisoned almost half of adult Palestinian males at some time or another since 1967, subjected many to torture, and killed more than 4,000 Palestinians since the start of the first Intifada in December 1987. The cause of the Israel/Palestine conflict is not a "cycle of violence," but the actions taken by Israeli Zionist state and its brutal army, which Nader does not admit.

## Nader and the Democratic Party

*"I think he's very presidential. He has a very confident demeanor. I've noticed it on TV." – Ralph Nader, about Kerry again*

Nader, supposedly an independent candidate, is pursuing a policy of trying to help John Kerry win against Bush. To this end, Nader initiated a meeting with Kerry to give advice on how to win the election. He has praised Kerry and made suggestions to him, including a suggestion for Kerry's vice presidential running mate, John Edwards. Nader's strategy is to put pressure on the Democrats to adopt a different policy closer to progressive position on certain issues, not to break with the Democratic Party.

## Nader and the extreme right

The right wing Reform Party, which in 2000 ran Patrick Buchanan as its presidential candidate, has endorsed Ralph Nader this election year, an endorsement that Nader accepted. The Reform Party has endorsed Nader to the extent that Nader is actually running as a Reform Party candidate in some US states.

Patrick Buchanan who has an extreme right wing ideology and has held a number of positions under or assisting former US presidents Nixon, Ford and Reagan, including three years as senior advisor and speechwriter to then-president Nixon during the US war against Vietnam also has endorsed Nader. Buchanan is also notorious for his support of fascism, condemning the idea that "white rule of a black majority [that is, apartheid South Africa] is inherently wrong" and opposing

the prosecution of Nazi war criminals, among other things.

This June, Buchanan interviewed Nader for "The American Conservative" magazine to discuss why Nader's "third-party presidential bid ought to appeal to conservatives disaffected with George W. Bush." Nader and Buchanan actually have similar views on a number of issues. Nader even declared that he was "against feticide," implying that he shared Buchanan's opposition to the legality of abortions. However, the key similarities have to do with international trade agreements and immigration. Both Nader and Buchanan appeal to American imperialist nationalism. Both Nader and Buchanan employ populist rhetoric in order to attract working people, but both offer nothing but Capitalist and imperialist alternative.



## Nader and immigration

*"We have to control our immigration and our borders. We have to limit the number of people who come into this country illegally and see if a Canadian type temporary permit system can work for seasonal jobs." – Ralph Nader*

In addition to this, Nader doesn't propose any major reform of the US immigration policy that literally costs lives. The US already controls its borders against "illegal" immigrants, with deadly consequences. For example, since 1985 up to the present, more than 5,000 people have died trying to get across the Mexican border into the US. Again, this is similar to Buchanan's view that the US needs to be protected "against foreign invasion [that is, immigration from the Third World]."

The ruling class doesn't allow itself to be constrained within the US borders. It is always ready to send forces to intervene in various corners of the world, whenever the people of a country try to pry off the tentacles of US imperialism or whenever intervention is needed for its interests. Although Nader has called for ending support of "dictators and oligarchs south of our borders," there is the question of what this means. In addition to support for a "peace force" always "ready to go," he supports policies that "assist" the former Soviet Union, and not unlikely other countries, in moving toward a "more open...economic system." The countries of the former Soviet Union have been moving towards a more open economic system for some time, but even the UN, which supports this policy, said in a 1999 report that the transition years have "literally been lethal for a great many people,"

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# Referendum in Venezuela a Huge Setback for Reactionary Opposition

Continued From Page 7

The most recent strategy that the opposition employed was a massive campaign for the recall referendum, which has also proven to be a failed strategy. Two attempts to collect signatures in August and September 2003 turned up invalid, suspect and fraudulent signatures. Finally, with the third attempt, a recall referendum date was set.

What was Chavez' response to this? In a

nationally televised speech on June 3rd, Chavez said he was "happy that instead of coups, the opposition is planning a democratic referendum," demonstrating that "Venezuela is a country with participatory democracy."

This was his response to the unrelenting and bitter attacks on his legitimacy, a calm confidence and unfazed conviction. This leadership, and total defiance of the former status-quo is the same sensation that was shown by Venezuelans across Venezuela when faced with the latest assault.

In response to record turn outs on the referendum day, the National Electoral Council (CNE) extended polling hours until midnight on Aug 15th. Venezuelans spent the day standing in seemingly unending line-ups with record numbers of people casting ballots.

The final showdown in this battle had begun. When the polls finally closed, and the counting finished, the CNE announced at 4:03AM on August 16th; that Chavez had won the referendum.

The opposition had two choices: to accept defeat in this battle and re-organize, or to reject rationality and deny the figures. Some opposition forces rejected reality, such as the Coordinadora Democratica (CD), which continues to allege the Chavez victory was based on election fraud, despite providing any evidence that would prove this.

The defeat and the setback faced by the opposition through the failure to win the referendum has also led to fractioning in the Coordinadora Democratica. *Alianza Bravo Pueblo* (ABP, Brave People's Alliance), *Visión Emergente* (Emerging Vision), *Fuerza Liberal* (Liberal Force), *Un Solo Pueblo* (One Single People), and various individuals all have left CD in recent weeks because of differences on whether the opposition should participate in upcoming regional elections for state governors, mayors, and city councils in

October 31, 2004. The opposition currently controls eight of the 23 state governorships and over half of the country's 335 mayors. Considering that a portion of the opposition intends to boycott these elections, it is clear that there is a total lack of confidence in their ability to maintain regional and local control as well as national leadership.

## Post Referendum

The US had to give up on the referendum because their strategy in Latin America is one

years even before Chavez, in spite of many 'extreme' measures that taken by Chavez, prefer to do business with his government. The reason is that they see Chavez government an stable government who guarantees the possibilities of investment and making very reasonable profit, while a Venezuela without Chavez would be in chaos without perceivable future, which puts everything in risk.

Recently, through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) documents have been revealed

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and --that-- "there are nearly 5.9 million 'missing men' in the Russian Federation alone and another 2.6 million in Ukraine. The total for the transition economies as a whole is nearly 9.7 million."

## Nader and capitalism

Nader has called for restoration of "the responsiveness of government to its citizenry," and suggested that in earlier years the US government was better. However, a government is always responsive to the interests of a part of that country's citizenry. In the US, as well as Canada, the government has always been responsive to the interests of one class: the capitalist class. The real task is not to "restore the responsiveness of government to its citizenry," but to make it responsive to the majority of people who are oppressed and who do not benefit from the various imperialist interventions internationally and domestically, with cuts to wages and social and other programs carried out for the benefit of the national capitalist class.

Although certain earlier presidents of the US, as Nader indicates, have agreed to make limited concessions to the working class, these are not for any principled reason, nor are the concessions themselves meant to be permanent. They are made when there is increased threat to the dominance of the ruling class, and are only maintained through struggle. Nader says there is a struggle between plutocracy and democracy [rule based on wealth vs. rule from the people], but really, there is actually a struggle between classes. The government is not neutral in this. Even when concessions are made, this still benefits the ruling class, since it makes it easier for its rule to continue.

Although Nader often denounces the behavior of corporations, he never addresses the root of these problems. He attributes them to everything but the capitalist system itself. For example, Nader laments the outsourcing of US jobs abroad. He attributes this to individual unpatriotic CEOs. Solution? Nader writes a letter to 100 top CEOs "asking that they establish an annual practice of pledging allegiance of their corporation to the flag and the Republic for which it stands." However, CEOs do not outsource jobs because they are unpatriotic. They do this because in other countries it is easier to pay lower wages and demand longer hours than it is within the US, even so the US ruling class is taking measures to minimize this gap. If these CEOs pledged allegiance to the US flag hourly, this would not change their function of increasing their profits.

What Nader really proposes is to uphold the interests of the ruling class, albeit while making certain concessions to the oppressed by providing limited universal healthcare and some other limited reforms. In effect, Nader's policies are the equivalent of someone who, needing his or her tooth extracted, wiggles it slightly daily for 30 years. What is really needed is for the oppressed class in the US and internationally to become the ruling class. Nader rejects fundamentally this idea.



Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez greeting some of his supporters in Venezuela.

of long-term and lasting establishment. They must take into account the balance of forces and the fact that they cannot afford a major crisis in Venezuela that would result in mass uprising. They took this defeat because, with desperation they face in the occupation of Iraq and from their own internal economic crisis, they can't afford another big battle. The other factor though is that a group of international corporations who have been doing business with Venezuela for

that show that United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided millions of dollars in term of funding to various organizations in Venezuela, many of which are aligned with the opposition. One of the key groups collaborating with USAID is *Súmate*, the organization that promoted the recall referendum campaign against Chávez and is now rejecting the results.

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## People of the World, People of Iraq; Resistance Swells!

From page 6

"I see no ray of light on the horizon at all. The worst case has come true." - Jeffrey Record, Professor of Strategy at the Air War College.

"I don't think you can kill the insurgency. We have a growing, maturing insurgency group. We see larger and more coordinated military attacks... The political culture is more hostile to the US presence. The longer we stay, the more they are confirmed in that view." - W. Andrew Terril, professor at the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute.

Reports by US military officials on the ground paint the same gloomy picture for US military strategy in Iraq. According to a September 15th article from the British Financial Times, US military officers expressed uncertainty over their ability to maintain security even for the 'Green Zone', the heavily fortified area of Baghdad that is the headquarters of both the US-UK occupation forces and the Iraqi 'interim government'. The article reported that "at a briefing earlier this month, a high-ranking US officer in charge of the zone's perimeter said he had insufficient soldiers to prevent intruders penetrating the compound's defenses."

This must certainly have a chilling effect on the occupation forces nestled within the Green Zone. This paints a grim picture for the occupation forces, with questionable security inside the most fortified area in Iraq. The green zone is only a few hundred meters from Sadr City, one of the many cities in Iraq to have been 'lost,' a city of over two million mostly Shi'ite muslims who are struggling against almost daily bombing

raids on their homes and neighborhoods. If the US-led occupation forces cannot contain the forces of Iraqi mass resistance within Sadr City and other 'lost cities,' they might have to contend with more than just a bomb or two launched at the Green Zone, but a mass uprising at the very site of occupation headquarters. This could be the worst 'beheading' that the US-led occupation forces would ever have to contend with in Iraq.

## End the Occupation of Iraq!

"The last shall be first and the first last." *Decolonization is the putting into practice of this sentence.* - Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

It is the continued, and increasing, resistance of the people in Iraq that has exposed every myth put forward by the US-led occupation forces. Every lie, every sham strategy has come down to nothing more than the brutal murder and suppression of Iraqis for the purposes of imperialist plundering.

The people from one of the most decimated countries in the world, facing outlandish living conditions, bombings, harassment, murder, and torture at the hands of the US-led occupation forces, are showing their ability to fight against and eventually defeat the most powerful military forces in the world. The humiliation suffered by Iraqis under occupation is turning into a resistance movement capable of humiliating the US, Britain, and the other imperialist countries with their eyes on the wealth and strategic value gained from controlling Iraq.

This resistance is also opening up the eyes of working and oppressed people around the world, who are slowly recognizing the possibility, and necessity, of taking part in

an international movement to defeat the forces of imperialist war and occupation. This movement is building as imperialist forces threaten to expand their war and destruction in the coming decades to more and more corners of the world as the global economic crisis deepens.

This awakening is significantly happening among people living within the very imperialist countries that are waging these wars and occupations of destruction. The quagmire for the US-led occupation in losing the 'hearts and minds' in Iraq is paralleled by steadily decreasing support for the war within the US, as more and more poor and working people question whether they have anything to gain in supporting 'their' government in its occupation of Iraq, or risking their life for it.

As people opposed to the continued brutality inflicted on the people of Iraq, we must build an international antiwar movement that is not only successful at bringing the troops home, but one that can bring the Iraqi spirit of resistance to the imperialist countries as well. A strong international movement against the occupation of Iraq needs to do its part to weaken the US even more. Only by continuing to demand an end to the occupations of Iraq, Palestine, and Afghanistan, and defending the self-determination of oppressed people, can we build an effective antiwar movement that will support the Iraqi people's struggle to end the crisis they are facing. We must demand an end to the occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine. We must demand all imperialist troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan, and all Canadian troops out of Afghanistan.

# 'We Have Faith in the Struggle of the Peoples and We Are Certain That We Will Accomplish a New World Order Based on the Respect for the Rights of All'

Statement By H.E. Mr. Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Cuba, At The 59<sup>th</sup> Session of The United Nations General Assembly. New York, 24 September 2004.

Mr. President:

Every year at the United Nations we go through the same ritual. We attend the general debate knowing beforehand that the clamor for justice and peace by our underdeveloped countries will be ignored once again. However, we persist. We know that we are right. We know that one day we will accomplish social justice and development. We also know that such assets will not be given away to us. We know that the peoples will have to seize them from those who deny us justice today, because they underpin their wealth and arrogance on the disdain for our grief. But it will not be always like this. We say so today with more conviction than ever before.

Having said this and knowing – as we do – that some powerful ones, just a few, present here will be chagrined, and also knowing that they are shared by many, Cuba will now tell some truths:



Mr. Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba.

forthcoming 60 years. It pales, it pants, it feigns, but it does not work.

Who handcuffed the United Nations named by President Roosevelt? President Bush.

**Second:** US troops will have to be withdrawn from Iraq.

After the life of over 1,000

In spite of the imperial monopoly over information, the peoples always get to the truth. Someday, those responsible and their accomplices will have to deal with the consequences of their actions in the face of History and their own peoples.

**Third:** For the time being, there

anachronistic privilege of the veto will remain; that the Security Council will not be democratized as it should or expanded to include Third World countries; that the General Assembly will continue to stand ignored and that at the United Nations there will be more actions driven by the interests imposed by the superpower and its allies. We, as non-aligned countries, will have to entrench ourselves in defending the United Nations Charter – because, otherwise, it will be redrafted with the deletion of every trace of principles such as the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and the non-use or the threat to use force.

**Fourth:** The powerful collude to divide us.

The over 130 underdeveloped countries must build a common front for the defense of the sacred interests of our peoples, of our right to development and peace. Let us revitalize the Non-Aligned Movement. Let us strengthen the G-77.

**Fifth:** The modest objectives of the Millennium Declaration will not be accomplished. We will reach the fifth anniversary of the Summit in a worse situation.

• We endeavored to halve by 2015 the 1.276 billion human beings in abject poverty that existed in 1990. There had to be a yearly reduction of 46 million poor people. However, excluding China, between 1990 and 2000 extreme poverty rose by 28 million people. Impoverishment does not decline, it grows.

• We wanted to halve by 2015 the 842 million starving people recorded in the world. There had to be a yearly reduction of 28 million. However, there has barely been a reduction of 2.1 million hungry people per year. At this rate, the goal would be

attained by 2215, two hundred years after what was envisaged – and only if our species survives the destruction of its environment.

• We proclaimed the aspiration to achieve universal primary education by 2015. However, more than 120 million children, 1 in every 5 in that school age, do not attend primary school. According to UNICEF, at the current rate the goal will be accomplished after 2100.

• We endeavored to reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate in children under five years of age. The reduction is symbolic: out of 86 children who died per 1,000 live births in 1998, now the figure is 82. Every year, 11 million children continue to die of diseases that can be prevented or cured, whose parents will rightfully wonder what our meetings are for.

• We said that we would pay attention to Africa's special needs. However, very little has been done. African nations do not need foreign advice or models, but financial resources and access to both markets and technologies. Assisting Africa would not be an act of charity, but an act of justice; it would be tantamount to settling the historical debt resulting from centuries of exploitation and pillage.

• We undertook to put a halt to and start reverting the AIDS pandemic by 2015. However, in 2003 it claimed nearly 3 million lives. At this rate, by 2015 some 36 million people will have died of this cause.

**Sixth:** Creditor countries and the international financial agencies will not seek a just and lasting solution to the foreign debt.

They prefer to keep us in debt; that is, vulnerable. Therefore, even though we have paid off US\$ 4.1 trillion in debt service over the last 13 years, our debt increased from US\$ 1.4 trillion to US\$ 2.6 trillion. It means that we have paid three times what we owed and now our debt is twice as much.

**Seventh:** We, as underdeveloped countries, are the ones that finance the squandering and the opulence of developed countries.

While in 2003 they gave us US\$ 68.400 billion in ODA, we delivered to them US\$ 436 billion as payment for the foreign debt. Who is helping who?

**Eighth:** The fight against terrorism can only be won through cooperation among all nations and with respect for International Law, and not through massive bombings or pre-emptive wars against "dark corners of the world."

Hypocrisy and double standards must cease. Sheltering three

*Continued on page 15*



Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, Under the Volcano Festival August 2004.

**First:** After the aggression on Iraq, there is no United Nations Organization, understood as a useful and diverse forum, based on the respect for the rights of all and also with guarantees for the small States.

It is living through the worst moment of its already

American youths was uselessly sacrificed to serve the spurious interests of a clique of cronies and buddies, and following the death of more than 12,000 Iraqis, it is clear that the only way out for the occupying power faced with a revolting people is to recognize the impossibility of subduing them and to withdraw.

will be no valid, real and useful reform to the United Nations.

It would take the superpower, which inherited the immense prerogative of governing an order conceived for a bipolar world, to relinquish its privileges. And it will not do so.

Since now, we know that the

# 'Tenemos fe en la Lucha de los Pueblos y Estamos Seguros de que Conquistaremos un Nuevo Orden Mundial Basado en el Respeto al Derecho de Todos'

INTERVENCIÓN DEL FELIPE PÉREZ ROQUE, MINISTRO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES DE LA REPÚBLICA DE CUBA, ANTE EL 59 PERÍODO ORDINARIO DE SESIONES DE LA ASAMBLEA GENERAL DE NACIONES UNIDAS. NUEVA YORK, 24 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 2004.

Señor Presidente:

Cada año cumplimos en Naciones Unidas el mismo ritual. Asistimos al debate general sabiendo de antemano que el clamor de justicia y paz de nuestros países subdesarrollados será otra vez ignorado. Sin embargo, persistimos. Sabemos que tenemos la razón. Sabemos que algún día conquistaremos la justicia social y el desarrollo. Sabemos también que no nos serán regalados. Sabemos que los pueblos tendremos que arrancarlos a los que hoy nos niegan la justicia, porque sostienen su opulencia y arrogancia en el desprecio a nuestro dolor. Pero no será así siempre. Lo decimos hoy con más convicción que nunca antes.

Dicho esto, y sabiendo —como sabemos— que incomodará a algunos poderosos —pocos— aquí presentes, y sabiendo también que son compartidas por muchos, Cuba dirá ahora algunas verdades:

**Primera:** No existe, después de la agresión a Iraq, la Organización de Naciones Unidas, entendida como foro útil y diverso, basada en el respeto a los derechos de todos y con garantías también para los Estados pequeños.

Vive el peor momento de sus ya próximos 60 años. Languidece. Jadea, aparenta, pero no funciona.

¿Quién maniató a las Naciones Unidas a las que el Presidente Roosevelt les puso nombre? El Presidente Bush.

**Segunda:** Las tropas norteamericanas tendrán que ser retiradas de Iraq.

Después que la vida de más de 1 000 jóvenes norteamericanos fuese sacrificada inútilmente para servir a los intereses espurios de una camarilla de amiguetes y socios, y tras la muerte de más de 12 mil iraquíes, está claro que la única salida para el ocupante ante un pueblo insurrecto es reconocer la imposibilidad de dominarlo y retirarse. A pesar del monopolio imperial de la información, los pueblos siempre llegan a la verdad. Algún día, los responsables y sus cómplices enfrentarán ante la Historia y sus pueblos las consecuencias de sus actos.

**Tercera:** No habrá por el momento reforma válida, real y útil de las Naciones Unidas.

Requeriría que la superpotencia, que heredó la prerrogativa inmensa de usufructuar sola



Felipe Pérez Roque, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de la República de Cuba.

un orden concebido para un mundo bipolar, renunciara a sus privilegios. Y no lo hará.

Desde ahora sabemos que el anacrónico privilegio del veto se mantendrá, que el Consejo de Seguridad no podrá ser democratizado como debiera ni ampliado con países del Tercer Mundo, que la Asamblea General continuará siendo ignorada, y que en Naciones Unidas se seguirá actuando según los intereses impuestos por la superpotencia y sus aliados. Tendremos los países No Alineados que atrincherarnos en la defensa de la Carta de Naciones Unidas, porque de lo contrario también será reescrita y borrado de ella todo vestigio de principios tales como la igualdad soberana de los Estados, la no intervención, y el no uso ni la amenaza del uso de la fuerza.

**Cuarta:** Los poderosos conspiran para dividirnos.

Los más de 130 países subdesarrollados debemos construir un frente común para la defensa de los intereses sagrados de nuestros pueblos, de nuestro derecho al desarrollo y a la paz. Revitalicemos el Movimiento de Países No Alineados. Fortalezcamos el Grupo de los 77.

**Quinta:** Los modestos objetivos de la Declaración del Milenio no serán cumplidos. Llegaremos al quinto aniversario de la Cumbre en peor situación.

- Nos propusimos disminuir a la mitad para el 2015 los 1 276 millones de seres humanos en pobreza extrema que había en el año 1990. Se requeriría reducir más de 46 millones de pobres cada año. Sin embargo, excluyendo a China, entre 1990 y el año 2000 la pobreza extrema creció en 28 millones de personas. La pobreza no disminuye, crece.

- Quisimos disminuir a la mitad para el 2015 los 842 millones de hambrientos registrados en el mundo. Se requería disminuir 28 millones por año. Sin embargo, apenas se ha estado reduciendo 2,1 millones de hambrientos por año. A este ritmo la meta se lograría en el año 2215,

doscientos años después de lo previsto y eso solo si nuestra especie sobrevive a la destrucción de su medio ambiente.

- Proclamamos la aspiración de lograr en el 2015 la enseñanza primaria universal. Sin embargo, más de 120 millones de niños, 1 de cada 5 en esa edad escolar, no van a la escuela primaria. Según UNICEF, al ritmo actual la meta se alcanzará después del año 2100.

- Nos propusimos reducir en dos terceras partes la mortalidad en menores de cinco años. La reducción es simbólica: de 86 niños que morían por 1000 nacidos vivos en 1998, ahora mueren 82. Siguen muriendo cada año 11 millones de niños por enfermedades que pueden ser prevenidas o curadas, cuyos padres se preguntarán con razón para qué sirven nuestras reuniones.

- Dijimos que prestaríamos atención a las necesidades especiales de África. Sin embargo, se ha hecho muy poco. Los pueblos africanos no necesitan ni consejos ni modelos foráneos, sino recursos financieros, y acceso a los mercados y a las tecnologías. Ayudar a África no sería un acto de caridad, sino de justicia; sería saldar la deuda histórica de siglos de explotación y saqueo.

- Nos comprometimos a detener y comenzar a revertir para el 2015 la epidemia del SIDA. Sin embargo, en el 2003 provocó casi 3 millones de muertos. A este ritmo, en el 2015 habrían muerto, sólo por esta causa, 36 millones de personas.

**Sexta:** Los países acreedores y los organismos financieros internacionales no buscarán una solución justa y duradera a la deuda externa. Nos prefieren deudores, es decir, vulnerables. Por eso, aunque hemos pagado 4,1 millones de millones de dólares por servicios de la deuda en los últimos 13 años, nuestra deuda creció de 1,4 millones de millones a 2,6 millones de millones. Es decir, hemos pagado tres veces lo que debíamos y ahora nuestra deuda es el doble.

**Séptima:** Somos los países subdesarrollados los que financiamos el derroche y la opulencia de los países desarrollados. Mientras en el 2003 ellos nos dieron como Ayuda Oficial al Desarrollo 68 400 millones de dólares, nosotros les entregamos como pago por la deuda 436 mil millones. ¿Quién ayuda a quién?

**Octava:** La lucha contra el terrorismo sólo puede ganarse mediante la cooperación entre todas las naciones y con respeto al Derecho Internacional, y no mediante bombardeos masivos ni guerras preventivas contra "oscuros rincones del mundo". La hipocresía y los dobles raseros deben cesar. Dar refugio en Estados Unidos a tres terroristas cubanos es un acto de complicidad con el terrorismo. Castigar a cinco jóvenes luchadores antiterroristas cubanos, y a sus familiares, es un crimen.

**Novena:** El desarme general y completo, incluido el desarme nuclear, es hoy imposible. Es responsabilidad de un grupo de países desarrollados que son los que más venden y compran armas. Sin embargo, debemos seguir luchando por él. Debemos exigir que los más de 900 mil millones que hoy se dedican cada año a gastos militares sean empleados en el desarrollo, y

**Décima:** Existen los recursos financieros para garantizar el desarrollo sostenible a todos los pueblos del planeta, pero falta la voluntad política de los que dominan el mundo.



Felipe Pérez Roque recibe un regalo del Papa Juan Pablo II, enero 2000.

Un impuesto para el desarrollo de apenas un 0,1 por ciento a las transacciones financieras internacionales generaría recursos por casi 400 mil millones de dólares anuales.

La condonación de la deuda externa a los países subdesarrollados les permitiría disponer para su desarrollo de no menos de 436 mil millones de dólares anuales, que hoy dedican al pago de la deuda.

Si los países desarrollados cumplieran su compromiso de dedicar el 0,7 por ciento de su Producto Nacional Bruto como ayuda oficial al desarrollo, su contribución se elevaría de los 68

400 millones actuales a 160 mil millones de dólares por año.

Finalmente, Excelencias, quiero expresar claramente la convicción profunda de Cuba de que los 6 400 millones de seres humanos que habitamos este planeta y que, según la Carta de Naciones Unidas, tenemos iguales derechos, necesitamos imperiosamente un nuevo orden, en el que el mundo no esté en vilo, como ahora, esperando el resultado de las elecciones en una nueva Roma en las que participará solo la mitad de los votantes y se gastarán aproximadamente 1 500 millones de dólares.

No hay desaliento en nuestras palabras, debo dejarlo claro. Somos optimistas, porque somos revolucionarios. Tenemos fe en la lucha de los pueblos y estamos seguros de que conquistaremos un nuevo orden mundial basado en el respeto al derecho de todos; un orden basado en la solidaridad, la justicia y la paz, hijo de lo mejor de la cultura universal y no de la mediocridad y la fuerza bruta.

De Cuba, a la que ni bloqueos, ni amenazas, ni huracanes, ni sequías, ni fuerza humana o natural pueden apartar de su rumbo, no digo nada.

El próximo 28 de octubre esta Asamblea General discutirá y votará por decimotercera vez una resolución sobre el bloqueo contra el pueblo cubano. Otra vez la moral y los principios derrotarán a la arrogancia y la fuerza.

Termino recordando las palabras que 25 años atrás pronunciara en este mismo lugar el Presidente Fidel Castro:

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

Muchas gracias.

# Imperialist Plans Fail

From page 8

West Bank and in Gaza. With the West Bank, the disengagement plan includes expansion of the largest Israeli settlements within the West Bank and finishing the construction of the brutal Apartheid Wall. This wall not only consolidates more of the West Bank into Israel 'proper,' but has also caused untold destruction for Palestinians living in the West Bank. This includes the destruction of homes and farmland, separating roughly half a million Palestinians from their farmlands, and making it almost impossible for Palestinians to travel to work in Israel. On September 9th Sharon announced that certain unfinished parts of the wall route are being redrawn to include even more Israeli settlements on what he refers to as the 'Israeli' side of the line. For Gaza, the 'disengagement' plan amounts to removing the small Israeli population and turning the whole area into a prison camp for Gaza's 1.3 million Palestinians, with Israel still controlling the borders and airspace of Gaza, and reserving the right to enter militarily 'when needed.'

For Sharon, the main strategy behind the Gaza 'pullout' is that it will be easier for Israel to escalate the slaughter of the Palestinian population in Gaza from the sky primarily through airstrikes, rather than with the regular on-the-ground Israeli forces currently in Gaza. According to an August 31st article on the *Israelinsider* daily online magazine, Sharon stated that 'shelling Palestinian targets' would be the standard means of suppressing Palestinians in Gaza when they resist the brutal conditions imposed on them by the Israeli occupation. This strategy, which



Demonstration against the Apartheid Wall in Deir Samit, Palestine, 14 September 2004.

would cause more brutal Palestinian deaths at the hands of Israel was even criticized by Israel's Attorney General, Menachem Mazuz, as amounting to a 'war crime'.

#### Israel's moral legitimacy

If implemented, the 'disengagement' plan will only feed what is one of the most serious crises that Israel is facing, which is the crisis of moral legitimacy in the eyes of working and oppressed people all over the world. In the last few months, the escalation in ruthless bloodshed and

hardship imposed on Palestinians at the hands of the Zionist occupation of Palestine has shown that Israel's existence is based primarily on its ability to brutally suppress Palestinian people and their right to end the occupation of their country.

In Gaza especially, the last few weeks have been marked by the ruthless slaughter of Palestinians at the hands of Israeli military forces. On September 9th, five Palestinians were killed in the Jabalya refugee camp after the camp was ravaged by missiles fired from Israeli helicopter gunships. On the same day, a fifteen-year

old Palestinian was killed when he was run over by an Israeli army jeep during a brief incursion into a refugee camp near Ramallah.

In addition, the routine demolition of Palestinian homes by the Israeli military continues to escalate, a tactic which to date has left over 13,000 Palestinians in Gaza homeless.

Most recently, almost half of the over 7,000 Palestinians in Israeli prisons took part in a hunger strike to protest the dehumanizing conditions they face, further exposing the complete moral bankruptcy of the Zionist state of Israel. The regular imprisonment of Palestinians is an important part of overall Israeli strategy in suppressing Palestinian resistance, but the current level of Palestinian resistance is so great that even the routine arresting and detaining has created an enormous logistical and financial problem for Israel, who cannot afford to 'jail them all.'

2500 of the Palestinian prisoners inside Israeli prisons were detained from the West Bank in the last year alone, and according to a Reuters article from September 7th, many of them are being held in 'administrative detention' without charge or trial.

The list of over 140 demands presented to the Israeli Prisons Services by the Unified Leadership of the Hunger Strike on August 11th stands as a comprehensive documentation of the inhuman conditions which Palestinians in Israeli prisons are forced to endure. They also show the extent to which the conditions in these prisons are getting worse as Israel steps up its crackdown on the Palestinian resistance.

*Continued on page 15*

## FOCCED

### Newly Released DVD and Web Site Expose War, Occupation and Hypocrisy

*By Brennan Luchsinger*

The FOCCED (Finnace Oil Chemical Credit Energy Defence) foundation is a non-profit educational society founded for one specific purpose- to try to get people involved in the political process. On September 11th 2004 the FOCCED foundation held a release part for their new documentary "FOCCED: US Foreign Policy in the Middle East". The film features a soundtrack by the Iraqi hip-hop group *Euphrates*. FTT had a chance to meet up with the director of the foundation, Hsing Lee, for this interview.

**FTT: Could you introduce yourself and give us some information about FOCCED?**

My name is Hsing Lee, I am a director of the FOCCED foundation. The FOCCED foundation was founded this September around the first or second of the month, and our purpose is to try to educate the public about what is being done in their name.

**FTT: Could you give us a quick explanation of what the new FOCCED documentary is about?**

The documentary is going to be the first in a series of documentaries. This is a broad overview look at the electoral process, comparing and contrasting the policies of the United States government in the Middle East. The reason we wanted to do this is to show the difference in treatment of Israel compared to the Arab states, because in the eyes of the Arab world this treatment is unfair, and you know the United States may have it's reasons, both economic and security reasons, for wanting to engage in a certain amount of these policies of propping up these dictatorships. But at the same time how can you say, with a straight face, that we believe in democracy while propping up a regime in Saudi Arabia, by propping up a regime in Kuwait where human beings can still own human beings as slaves? It's Hypocrisy, it's beyond hypocrisy and I think that if the American public, if the public in general were aware of just how much support the Saudi's get from companies like the Nell corporation, the Carlyle group literally companies that the Bush family owns shares in, that are propping up this dictatorship, I think that they would be horrified. That's why part of this process in this show is to explain to people, listen those planes did not just fall out of the sky on 9/11. This is something that goes back to September 11th 1922 and

the British mandate of Palestine. That is when the colonization of Palestine began by Europeans, and until we acknowledge this until we acknowledge that there are fundamental reasons for these problems, we are not going to be able to get past terrorism.

**FTT: What kind of initial response has there been to the documentary?**

We're hoping that we'll have some replay value. This is something that you will be able to listen to not just once and fire and forget, like your usual documentary, but you can leave it on as background music in an underground club. That's part of the deal, is that we want to do this for young people so that it becomes part of the culture. Let's forget the mainstream media, they're not going to help us guys, you're talking to a brick wall if you want to get yourself on the New York Times, ABC, NBC, or CBS. If you want to get your message out there, you need to use the file sharing networks before they get shutdown.

The production company that made FOCCED from day one, is called Thousand Miles Productions. The point behind that: A wise man from my people once said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Well, that single step

is downloading a copy of this show, and setting it up on a peer-to-peer service so it can be downloaded by others. Information, the truth, can be viral and that's what we need to do, is we need to make the truth into a virus.

**FTT: What's the next step for FOCCED?**

The next step is to do, hopefully, if we get some interest out there from the public and the public decides that what we are doing is worthy and decides to donate enough money for us to continue, we plan on doing one to three shows a year depending on the level of donations we receive. Virtually all the money that is sent in is going to appear on screen, because we have very low, little to no overhead we're literally working out of our own homes. We're hoping that in doing this we can create a fundamental lasting change in our society one where we can have our capitalist system, we can have our cake and eat it too, because we can have that cake without having to oppress other people or put them in a situation of abject poverty for a corporation that doesn't need another billion dollars.

For more information about FOCCED visit [www.focced.com](http://www.focced.com)

# Occupation = Resistance

From page 14

Some of these demands included:

- To allow personal contact with children as in the past
- To allow prisoners to take photos with family members and children
- To make family visits on Fridays as in the past (the day of prayer for Muslim prisoners)
- To allow prisoners representatives to make phone calls to prisoner's organizations and lawyers and to the Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners Affairs
- To end all collective punishments
- To compensate prisoners for every item that was damaged intentionally through raids on cell-blocks
- An overall medical checkup for every prisoner at least once a year
- To stop searching prisoners each time they leave for the recreation area or to prayers

This is just a small glimpse of prison life for Palestinians living inside the prisons of the so-called 'democracy' in the Middle East.

## Israel, the US, and failed imperialist plans for the Middle East

*"When it comes to the security of Israel, only we will decide on this matter, and no one else can determine the security needs for Israel, only Israel. If Israel wants to exist as an independent country, only it will determine its security needs. - Ariel Sharon, interview with the Jerusalem Post, September 9th 2004*

Israel has never existed as an 'independent' country, and so long as the Palestinian people resist its brutal occupation of their country, Israel can not exist without the financial, military, and political support of the US. This includes the \$4Billion US Israel receives every year to keep its incredibly weak economy afloat and fund its military suppression of Palestinians, not to mention the immense diplomatic shield that the US provides for Israel's murderous crimes in exchange for serving US imperialist interests in the Middle East.

In the new era of war and occupation, the fate of Zionist Israel's occupation of Palestine is now even more connected with that of US imperialist designs for the Middle East. As early as 1996, plans were drawn up by several current US government officials, including Pentagon consultant Richard Perle and State Department official David Wurmser, for a war and invasion of Iraq, which was partly intended to shift the balance of forces in the region more in favour of Israel against the Palestinian people. Part of this strategy was for Israel to hold off or sabotage any negotiations with Palestinians until the war on Iraq could be carried out.

However, based on the disaster that the US is facing with its occupation of Iraq, the outcome of this strategy has had the reverse affect for Israel. The balance of forces in the Middle East are overall shifting in favour of Palestinians as they draw strength and inspiration from their brothers and sisters resisting in Iraq. The combined struggles of Palestinians and Iraqis for self-determination is creating an almost uncontrollable crisis for both the US and Israel.

## Occupation equals resistance

All of the major crises faced by the Israeli government, whether they are political, moral, or economic, have a common root: they are driven by the continued resistance of the Palestinian people to the Zionist occupation of their country. Without being able to 'defeat' this resistance decisively, Israel will remain a deformed capitalist settler state on the brink of collapse, despite Zionist's false claims of Israel's strength.

Even top officials of Israeli security have started to raise concerns about Israel's military capability to continue its suppression of Palestinians, which at this point is its only option to sustain the occupation of Palestine, and recently the chief of staff referred to Israel's military capacity as 'a barrel without a base.'

## 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 land continues. 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 also 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 the 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!*

# 'We Are Optimistic Because We Are Revolutionaries'

From page 12

Cuban-born terrorists in the United States is an act of complicity to terrorism. Punishing five Cuban youths who were fighting terrorism, and punishing their families, is a crime.

**Ninth:** General and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, is impossible today. It is the responsibility of a group of developed countries that are the ones that most sell and buy weapons.

However, we must continue to strive for it. We must demand that the over US\$ 900 billion set aside every year for military expenditures be used on development; and

**Tenth:** The financial resources to guarantee the sustainable development for all the peoples on the planet are available, but what is lacking is the political will of those who rule the world.

A development tax of merely 0.1% on international financial transactions would generate resources amounting to almost US\$ 400 billion per annum.

The cancellation of the foreign debt incurred by underdeveloped countries would allow these to have available for their development no less than US\$ 436 billion on a yearly basis - money which is currently used to pay off the debt.

If developed countries complied with their commitment to set aside 0.7% of their Gross National Product as ODA, their contribution would increase from the current US\$ 68.400 billion to US\$ 160 billion per annum.

Finally, Excellencies, I want to clearly express Cuba's profound conviction that the 6.4 billion human beings on this planet - who have equal rights according to the United Nations Charter - urgently need a new order in which the world is not left in suspense, as is the case now, awaiting the outcome of the elections in a new Rome in which only half the voters will participate and nearly US\$ 1.5 billion will be spent.

There is no discouragement in our words, I must say so clearly. We are optimistic because we are revolutionaries. We have faith in the struggle of the peoples and we are certain that we will accomplish a new world order based on the respect for the rights of all; an order based on solidarity, justice and peace, resulting from the best of universal culture and not from mediocrity or gross force.

About Cuba, which cannot be detoured from its course by blockades, threats, hurricanes, droughts or human or natural force, I will not say anything.

Next 28 October, for the 13th time,



Palestinian girl amid the ruins of her destroyed home  
Gaza Strip, 12 September 2004.

this General Assembly will debate and vote on a resolution about the blockade imposed against the Cuban people. Once again, morality and principles will defeat arrogance and force.

I would like to conclude by recalling the words spoken right here 25 years ago by President Fidel Castro:

"The noise of weapons, of the menacing

language, of the haughtiness on the international scene must cease. Enough of the illusion that the problems of the world can be solved by nuclear weapons. Bombs may kill the hungry, the sick and the ignorant, but bombs cannot kill hunger, disease and ignorance. Nor can bombs kill the righteous rebellion of the people..."

Thank you very much.

# Workers Struggle at Home: Over 100 Members of CEP Local 1129 still on Strike After 5 Months

By Kira Koshelanyk

On April 10<sup>th</sup> of this year, 103 out of 130 workers at Burnaby's Norampac paper mill, members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworker's Union of Canada (CEP) Local 1129, walked off the job and went on strike. The failed negotiations were characterized by Norampac's agenda of cutting back on the workers rights existing within the agreement that expired in May 2003. The company wants to cut the worker's health and benefits package, remove provisions against contracting out, and pull out of the province-wide job evaluation program. Norampac's ultimatum to accept concessions on these issues was rejected by a vote of 94.5% and the CEP workers at the plant went on strike by a vote of 60%. Since then Norampac has clearly shown its approach to these workers – by refusing to negotiate by any other means than ultimatum and by bullying with force.

Norampac has not waged this attack alone, and like many other cases of dispute between workers

and bosses over the last few years, Norampac has used the BC courts and police to hit workers harder. Although 22 other pulp and paper mills in BC have already reached agreement on essentially the same framework, Norampac refuses to sit down and negotiate, despite numerous attempts by the union. Instead Norampac got a court injunction against the striking workers stating that they can block the entrance to the plant for no more than 2 minutes at a time. On June 9<sup>th</sup>, two members of local 1129 were arrested for failing to comply with the enforcement order presented by Burnaby police. The company has continued to show its arrogance by moving both finished product and raw materials to and from the mill, while the workers are forced to stand by.

The ongoing strike in Burnaby is looking more and more like the many fought in "battlefield BC" over the last few years. As the Canadian government and corporations' panic increases at the deepening economic crisis, they continue attacking



Members of CEP Local 1129 on strike.

workers in all sectors in an attempt to solve their problems. Through this vicious process we have observed the pattern of the bosses, the government and private companies alike, who are refusing to abide by fair bargaining processes and practices. Simultaneously, there

has been an almost immediate jump to tactics such as 'back to work' legislation which makes their strike illegal, arrests, court orders and injunctions against effective picket lines. The companies are determined to make the fight for workers rights a war of attrition. They are

employing methods intended to destroy the effects of the strike on their money making potential and towards demoralizing the workers through these same means. Workers across Canada are under attack in all levels of industry, from health care to production workers in private plants and factories, and any gains the government and corporations make against the workers now mean devastation for those next in line.

With regressive legislation having been introduced and still being introduced against the most marginalized and vulnerable workers, such as farm workers, youth and non-status workers, it is necessary for us to unite behind the struggle of our sisters and brothers currently under attack. By supporting union workers in their fight to strike fairly and effectively, non-union workers are improving their position. By supporting each other on concrete demands and making gains we are not only building solidarity among all workers but also making those gains for all of us by setting precedents. Workers under direct attack, workers locked out, workers on strike and those who are being bullied by their employers need our support. As we rally behind their struggle and concrete demands for: fair treatment, the right to work under safe conditions and living wages with benefits, it puts us in a better position to fight for our own rights in our jobs, unionized or non-unionized. We must fight against the erosion of all workers rights, because it constitutes an attack on all. For further information on CEP local 1129 strike please visit <http://www.cep1129.ca>.

**No more breaking unions! No more contracting out! Workers unite for fair wages and contracts!**

*We encourage everyone to join and support the pickets of the striking CEP workers!*

## Justice for Jeff Berg! A Case Against Police Brutality An Interview with Julie Berg

By Ivan Drury

In October 2000, Jeff Berg was arrested by Vancouver police constable #1593 David Bruce Thomas in an alley in a residential part of East Vancouver. In the course of the arrest, Jeff Berg was brutally assaulted by the arresting officer and died two days later from an aneurysm resulting from a blow to the side of his neck.

Sari Fujikawa witnessed the arrest and assault from her home overlooking the alley. At the Coroners inquest, she gave eyewitness testimony stating that she saw Berg standing at the back of a car with his hands on the trunk and his legs slightly apart. She testified that a police officer approached him from behind and hit him in the neck/shoulder area with his gun and then, once Berg had fallen to the ground, kicked him twice in the back of head.

"I felt sick, angry, numbed and shocked at the same time," her testimony continued, "The man had not moved toward the officer

in any threatening way. From what I could see, he was standing still, like a statue."

According to eyewitnesses, a group of officers stood around over Berg's unconscious body and did nothing to help him.

An internal investigation was performed and, despite extensive damning witness statements, no charges were laid against Cst. Bruce Thomas and no disciplinary action was taken.

Since Jeff Berg's death, his sister Julie Berg has taken up a campaign against police brutality, demanding an inquiry into his death. This campaign has won widespread attention and support from poor and working people throughout BC and all around the world. In 2003, Police Complaints Commissioner Dirk Ryneveld finally ordered a public hearing, which began in April.

Fire This Time interviewed Julie Berg less than a week before the final stretch of the public hearing was set to begin after a summer-break. We encourage all readers to support her struggle for justice

for Jeff Berg in this landmark case against the brutality of the Vancouver Police Department and the corruption of the Police Complaints process and internal investigations unit.

We join her in demanding an independent complaints process, the firing and criminal charging of Constable Bruce Thomas and an end to police brutality and harassment of all poor, working and oppressed people.

**FTT: In August, the courts ruled that your brother's death in the custody of the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) was a homicide, meaning that he died because of the actions of the police. How did the police department respond to this news?**

In my view the police response was one of damage control. They sought to lay the blame on the victim instead of the member of the force. The day following the verdict, Chief Graham came out with his statement saying that this officer should be congratulated.

Well, there's actually no winners

here, it's a tragedy all around, but what's important is that the truth did come out that it was a real homicide, and it's a real victory in that respect. It's not that he died from a pre-existing aneurysm, which is what they were trying to tell our family.

The police tried to turn this around and give the public information that was in fact not factual. They tried to portray a story that shed a positive light on a member of their police force. The greater picture here for Chief Graham is that he has full confidence in his force... well, I think the bigger question is whether the public has full confidence, and clearly they do not.

As we all know, the department has been rife with controversy over the last many years. It's true that Chief Graham did inherit these problems, but it's his duty as chief constable to not make irresponsible comments. He clearly demonstrated that he has no understanding of the justice system, he shifted all blame to the

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# Child Labour and the Six Dollar Training Wage

## Two Pillars of BC Liberal Attack on Young Workers

By Brennan Luchsinger

### The BC Liberals wage a two-pronged attack on the workers of BC

Over the past three years the BC Liberal Government has waged a new series of attacks on the rights of workers. With the introduction of the six-dollar Training wage, the Liberal government claimed they had started a new initiative to increase youth employment. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Since 2001 students and youth have lost jobs and suffered to make ends meet as wages decline and tuition has risen by as much as 150%. Alongside the introduction of the training wage, the Liberals also slashed the regulations on child labor, creating a new resource for large employers: low-wage child labor.

Along with cuts to wages, employment standards in BC have been rapidly evaporating under the heat of the Liberal agenda. The introduction of self-help kits and the removal of the Employment Standards Branch (ESB) from disputes have left workers helpless against the exploitation of their employers.

While the government has employed a two-pronged strategy of attacking young workers, and all other workers alike, employment standards have been lowered across the bar, and the interests of working people have been left off the agenda in BC. This legislating away of workers rights is a sign of the overall agenda of the BC Liberals. This agenda includes driving employment standards into the ground, and the creating greater "freedom" for employers to take advantage of, and profit from, the oppressive labour conditions that now exist in BC.

### Youth unemployment rises

"...Schools are closing, youth unemployment is up, training opportunities are disappearing, tuition fees have more than doubled and funding has been cut to every ministry affecting people under 19."  
- B.C. Federation of Labour President Jim Sinclair

Introduced in November of 2001 the six-dollar training wage was billed as an opportunity to create jobs for young, inexperienced workers. The training wage affected all workers who do not have 500 hours of employment experience prior to November 1st 2001. Since 2001 the training wage has failed to create jobs for youth. In April of 2004 the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour reported that youths lost over 4,000 jobs. The rates of youth unemployment have increased over the past three years as the training wage has created fewer jobs that pay students and youth decent wages. The unemployment rate for youths aged 15-24 has risen to 15.8 from 14.9 in April of 2003.

The training wage is used mainly in the restaurant and foodservice industry, which has forced youth into low paying jobs, with inconsistent hours. It was promised that the training wage would provide greater "freedom" and "opportunities", but the real question is who benefits from this freedom and opportunity? Inexperienced and experienced workers alike have all felt the negative impact of this legislation, while big businesses have reaped the numerous rewards of the increased "freedom" and "opportunity" for further exploitation of workers.

The benefits of the training wage have been corporate businesses that can feed off this cheap labour and constantly exploit the position of young workers. There have been many cases of workers rights abuse that have slipped through the cracks of the new lack of regulation towards employers. The six-dollar wage also serves as an attack on all working people, effectively lowering wages across the bar by creating a source of cheap labour.

While the government insists that businesses that use the training wage are being monitored for abuses, the ESB has been entirely removed from the process forcing young workers with instable positions within society, and their workplaces, to rely on self-mediation. In many incidents workers have been laid off or fired after completing their 500 hours of employment and becoming eligible for the regular minimum wage of \$8. In other

situations employers have been using the training wage inappropriately beyond the 500 hours, relying on young workers lack of knowledge of employment standards, or the ineffectiveness of self-mediation.

### The deregulation of employment standards

Passed in May of 2002 bill 48 changed

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## Exposing Police Brutality & Fighting for Justice

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victim of police brutality while turning a blind eye to the more important role of police accountability.

I believe the proper response from Chief Graham when there was a homicide verdict was that he should have showed neutrality, control and leadership by saying that he should not comment because there are still witnesses coming forward and a public hearing and potential other civil proceedings.

For him to assign premature guilt or innocence without a trial was clearly inappropriate, and tragically, with the attitude that Jamie Graham displayed on behalf of the police department, he is showing that more people will die at the hands of the VPD because there is no accountability. There will be more Jeff Bergs, more Frank Pauls, more missing women.

### FTT: How did you respond to the verdict from the courts and to Jamie Graham's comments on behalf of the VPD?

Well, I held a press conference the following day and said that my family was shocked at his callous attitude. It's the jury that is the finders of the facts, not chief Graham, not Constable Bruce Thomas. The jury found it was a homicide, so he should accept that verdict and look at their findings.

Our family was completely in shock; I couldn't accept media calls that day, I was so upset. He immediately turned it around instead of accepting that verdict and showing neutrality. Our family was completely disgusted and I was not impressed at all with his irresponsible comments.

### FTT: You were not involved in anything like this before, but since your brother's death you have invested a great amount of time in pursuing justice for him against the VPD. Obviously your brother's case is important. What does your brother's case mean now for other people who have been assaulted by the VPD and for all poor and working people in this province?

This is a case, a very extraordinary case, involving police and a civilian death. Now most people believe that there are safeguards in place, and process, and we put our trust in the process. Now, my experience has been that that process is very flawed, very biased and there is definitely a thin blue line and they actually close rank. The public is not aware of the seriousness of these flaws and errors in the VPD.



Jeff and Julie Berg at Julie's wedding party.

Prior to this I never had any problems, except for a speeding ticket or something, but never been involved in anything of this serious a nature. I only pursued it because my questions were not being answered. I am a diligent levelheaded person, and I can certainly speak my mind and ask questions, and if the questions don't make sense to me, then I pursue them further. A lot of people don't have that ability and we know that time and again, there are many cases that go unrecorded, that no one hears about.

I feel this case is very important because it brings to the forefront of the public eye what actually happens in these proceedings. If I did not bring this forward, it would be just one more unrecorded, bad in custody death. My

brother's death has brought forward the larger picture of how the VPD is rife with problems and those problems have not been dealt with, those problems have been pushed under the rug.

I know that more deaths will occur and more tragedies, not always just death but certainly abuse of power and authority. We have to keep in mind that the police work for us, they are accountable to us, to the public and the public does have a say in how that system works. I wanted to bring this forward to show that we do have a voice, that one person can make a difference. My case has clearly shown that there are serious flaws and I think it's important that the public talks

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# Resist War!

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## Skwelkwek'welt vs. Sun Peaks! The Struggle of Native People to Regain Their Stolen Land in British Columbia

By Aaron Mercredi

On August 29<sup>th</sup>, over two hundred protestors marched on Sun Peaks Ski Resort, located 30 minutes North of Kamloops, to rally against its continued expansion on to Secwepemc (commonly known as Shuswap) territory. The demonstration, which brought out indigenous people and supporters from all over the country, brought attention to and built solidarity with the struggle against the resort's relentless expansion and development on to unceded Secwepemc land.

The march stopped at various parts of the resort for speakers from different indigenous nations and solidarity groups to speak, including at the entrance to Delta Hotels, which is one of the main companies involved in the expansion of the resort. The

march ended up at a higher point on the mountain, where a new Sun Peaks village and an 18-hole golf course are in the process of being built. At this location, the Skwelkwek'welt Defenders began to build a foundation for a building that would act as their monitoring centre. In a traditional way, Secwepemc people exercised their rights to their land by felling two trees to begin the construction of a permanent structure. The structure will be used to monitor environmental damage at Skwelkwek'welt, to inform tourists and potential investors of the on-going land dispute, to assert and exercise Secwepemc rights and title to their land by occupying it, and act as a cultural centre.

### How colonial expansion in Secwepemc land started

The \$70 Million expansion of the resort that was approved by the



Rally against the continued expansion of Sun Peaks ski resort on Secwepemc territory, 29 August 2004.

government of BC in 1997 without the consultation of Secwepemc people has been increased to a \$285 Million development. This development now includes its expansion to 20,000 bed units,

and the development of Mount Morrisey which had previously been untouched. With utter disregard for Secwepemc rights and title to the land in question, this expansion would continue to destroy the natural habitat of the mountain area and continue to infringe on Secwepemc land.

Sun Peaks ski resort was originally purchased in 1992 by the Japanese holding company, Nippon Cable. Since then, the size and scope of the resort has expanded ten-fold from a capacity of 100 beds to 4000, along with other projects like the construction of an 18-hole golf course. Secwepemc people never agreed to the construction or expansion of the ski resort, and have responded by building the Skwelkwek'welt Protection Centre to occupy their own land and put an end to the illegal development. Since this began, more than 54 people have been arrested for defending the unceded territory, including youth and elders, and more than 8 Secwepemc homes and traditional sweatlodges have been destroyed by bulldozers. Despite this, Secwepemc people have continued to fight back.

The BC government has continued its colonial policy towards indigenous nations like the Secwepemc, in spite of recent precedent-setting victories for indigenous people in the Canada's own colonial courts. Despite the recognition of inherent land rights of Aboriginal people as Aboriginal title in the Delgamuukw case, and the result of the Haida case, which required provincial and private interests to have consent from and accommodate Aboriginal interests before developing on Aboriginal territories, the BC government has undermined the self-determination of Secwepemc people and ignored their legal right and title to the area currently occupied by Sun Peaks.

## We'll Just Keep Challenging It Over And Over Again Two Interviews with Skwelkwek'welt Defenders, Janice Billy and Ska7cis

By Aaron Mercredi

### Janice Billy

**FTT: Last Friday, you and other members of the Skwelkwek'welt Protection Centre were in court in Vancouver. What was the issue at stake?**

Well, we were presented with an injunction and a trespass notice. The trespass came first, then we went to court there were two things brought up: the injunction to remove us from where we are, the trespass charge and the enforcement order to remove people.

**FTT: Is it related to the protest rally that you had on August 29<sup>th</sup>?**

Well, it's not directly because it is an occupation of our lands that we actually just started the same day as the demonstration.

**FTT: What was the result of the court hearing?**

The judge granted the injunction and said that we had to leave immediately, I guess. And then she granted an enforcement order and said that we had to leave immediately, which was Friday at around 4:30pm, when the judge made the decision.

**FTT: What impact will the court's decision have on Secwepemc people?**

Well, we've refused to obey all injunctions, all



Skwelkwek'welt Defender Janice Billy (middle).

trespass notices, everything they give us. We refuse to obey it.

**FTT: Now that this injunction has been put in place, what is going to happen to this Protection Centre currently being built by**

**the Swelkwek'welt defenders?**

Well, it's still there and it will stay there as

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# Interview with Skwelkwek'welt Defender Ska7cis

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long as we keep it there. And if people are willing to be arrested, if that's what it's going to take then we'll just keep challenging it over and over again in court and by whatever other means we have. And it's not a protection centre, it's a monitoring centre. It's also a cultural learning centre because we have people there, the elders, that come up and the people there that teach our youth and even the non-Secwepemc people about our way of life, about the culture, about the environment, about our land rights, so it's also an education centre too.

**FTT: How do the Secwepemc people plan on responding to this injunction?**

Well first of all, by refusing to obey it. Refusing to accept those laws that are imposed upon us. That is the first thing- we just absolutely do not recognize them. We do not recognize the BC Land Act that the trespass notice was issued under and we do not recognize the assumed ownership of Sun Peaks resort or the government of BC. And then, also looking at all other means of challenging those court decisions imposed on us.

**FTT: Thank you, Janice.**

**Ska7cis**  
(Pronounced "Skasheesh")

**FTT: As a young Secwepemc person, why do you oppose the expansion of Sun Peaks ski resort?**

To maintain our culture, to maintain our way of life. It's just genocide. It's a third party extinguishment of aboriginal title. That's what it comes down to. We can't practice our right to occupy any land we want or cut any trees we want or hunt wherever we want. Right now there's the injunction that stops us from doing that, right, it's the beginning of extinguishing our aboriginal title and the loss of our culture. That's why I oppose it.

**FTT: What do you think the effect of not only this injunction, but also the expansion of Sun Peaks Ski Resort will have on the future of Secwepemc people, the Secwepemc youth?**

Well, we've been here for 10,000 years, the Secwepemc people, and we'll be here for 10,000 more years. And it's displacement, right? Basically that's a "No Indian" zone now. It's a "No go" zone. No Indians allowed in the base land area of Sun Peaks which is 8.74 hectares, right, so that's just about



Skwelkwek'welt Defender Ska7cis (left).

9 square kilometres of Secwepemc territory that the courts don't want us to occupy. They don't want us to be Indian in these areas.

**FTT: Why do you think it's important for indigenous as well as non-indigenous people to support this struggle against Sun Peaks?**

Well, first of all it's for the environment. It's for the water. It's for the animals. It's for the oxygen. To have clean water, everyone should have the right to clean water, because in Europe, for every glass of water you have to pay a dollar. You go to a restaurant and you pay a dollar for a glass of water and you pay for the water in your

house. I don't want it to be like that here in Secwepemc where we have to pay for our own water, and eventually it might come to that if we keep on letting developments happen like Sun Peaks, mass tourism and mass logging.

**FTT: Thank you.**



RCMP arrest Skwelkwek'welt defender Henry Sauls, 21 September 2004.

## Fighting for Sovereignty

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**The struggle continues**

On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, members of the Skwelkwek'welt Protection Centre appeared in BC Supreme Court in Vancouver after they received a trespass notice from Sun Peaks Resort. During the hearing, the judge agreed to an interlocutory injunction by Sun Peaks that ordered the defenders out of the base area occupied by the resort, which would effectively remove them from their own land. This injunction was followed up by an enforcement order that would give the RCMP the authority to arrest anyone who violates that injunction. The defenders refused to leave, and continued to 'occupy' their land despite police harassment. The monitoring centre that began to be constructed on August 29<sup>th</sup> remained next to the 16<sup>th</sup> hole of the golf course to

be used by Secwepemc people. On September 21<sup>st</sup>, the RCMP executed the court injunction and enforcement order against the defenders at the camp, arresting three Secwepemc Nationals. Henry Sauls, George Manuel Jr., and Arnie Jack have been charged with contempt of Civil Court order, and are to appear in Court in Kamloops on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

The resilience of Secwepemc people has been shown to the people of BC, Canada and the world. Since the Skwelkwek'welt defenders have taken on Sun Peaks and the BC government, they have inspired acts of solidarity by indigenous and non-indigenous activists, from Toronto to Germany, building international solidarity against the illegal occupation of their land. With the current direct struggle over Secwepemc land, the BC

government's long-standing policy towards indigenous people, a policy of theft and extinguishment, has been exposed. The convergence at Sun Peaks ski resort on August 29<sup>th</sup> represented the importance of people uniting against this policy, against Sun Peaks and the BC government who have been working together to undermine the sovereignty and borders of the Secwepemc nation, and who have relied on brute force to act it out. With the level of anger and frustration that exists over this colonial dispute, uniting Secwepemc with other nations, indigenous and non-indigenous people, and other people under attack by the same BC government, in broad mass movement could directly challenge this theft of indigenous land.

**SUN PEAKS OUT OF SKWELKWEK'WELT!**

## Why Students and Youth Must Join the Protest Movement Against War and Occupation

By Nicole Burton

*"In foreign countries the students have helped bring about revolution-it was the students who brought about the revolution in the Sudan, who swept Syngman Rhee out of office in Korea, swept Menderes out in Turkey. The students didn't think in terms of the odds against them, and they couldn't be bought out." - Malcolm X, 1965*

Today, students and youth around the world are becoming the forefront of the movement against imperialist war and occupation. Whereas in 2003, the global upsurge against the war in Iraq marked for many the beginning of their involvement in this struggle, young people across continents are becoming committed to building this movement in their campuses, cities and nations. This is the beginning of a clear-cut radicalization of youth around the world. In doing this, they are developing themselves as an advanced element in the anti-war movement, educating, organizing and mobilizing against the occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Haiti.

### History of student and youth leadership



poor and working people looking to find better jobs with a post-secondary education.

While youth and children as young as seven were organizing resistance in countries like the Congo against the Belgians, and Vietnam against the French and later the US, students within aggressor imperial nations began looking to these passionate freedom fighters of the third world as an example of leadership. Alienated by the imperialist

for refusing to be drafted into the army. Thousands more deserted their posts and left the country to avoid military service.

The war in Vietnam became a turning point for students around the world, polarizing campuses into heated discussions, crowded workshops and lecture halls, sit-ins and walkouts. In 1964, antiwar organizers, primarily based out of student groups on campuses, organized the first march against war on Washington, in a mobilization of 25,000 people - at this time, the largest antiwar demonstration in American history. These mobilizations grew year by year, as news of the war reached home and more coffins came home draped in American flags. Pro-war support from poor and working people plummeted, and students began organizing with them, forming student-worker organizations with demonstrations totaling over 1 million people.

During this time in France, college students of L'Universite Nanterre stormed their Dean's office protesting the arrests of members of a Vietnam solidarity group. The momentum generated by these and other student organizers on campus led to the 1968 Paris uprising, during which tens of thousands of students mobilized in support of a free Vietnam while extending an arm of solidarity to the working class, in an "outright rejection" of the conditions that created imperialism, and the consequential conditions created for students and workers, from overcrowded classrooms to decreasing wages, to massive unemployment and poverty.

This era of student organizing is characterized by a reassessment of alliances for youth and students in imperialist countries, who increasingly saw their leadership as that of Che Guevara over Richard Nixon, and their flag as that of the Vietnamese liberation fighters over the stars and stripes.

The student movement identified with oppressed people around the world, and worked to build a movement of international solidarity - with them, by them, for them. This led to the

development of oppressed people in North America as culturally, ethnically, and racially oppressed minorities, who began forming their own organizations: the Organization for Afro-American Unity, the Puerto Rican Young Lords, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, and the American Indian Movement.

The foundations established during this era led to further development of youth and students as a force necessary for change in society, capable of uniting across nations, cultures and religions against imperialist forces that continue to plunder the planet in an effort to save themselves from economic collapse. This has led to the current era of war and occupation that we now live in, where imperialist nations like the US, UK, Canada, France and others have become increasingly desperate to find new markets and battlegrounds for economic survival.

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School and university students protest US-led war on Iraq in Manchester, England, 20 March 2003.

The foundations of this phenomenon are grounded as much within a historical background as they are committed to the future that we as young people are building. Students and youth have led these movements since the 1950s, when resistance to colonialism across Africa, Asia and Latin America gave rise to mass movements of oppressed people who began winning their independence, and destroying the colonial empires built by the most powerful nations in the world. This came at a time when college and university campuses in North America and Europe began opening their doors to more

nature of their own countries, and frustrated by their own lack of political power, students and youth of North America and Europe began to develop politically. Ultimately many young people concluded that they had nothing in common with imperialists and colonialists, who waged war around the world while attacking workers, minorities and women at home. In the US, a high point of this awareness led to the now well-known draft resistance, when young soldiers ultimately refused to do the dirty work of their governments any longer. Between 1963 and 1973, over 9,000 young men were prosecuted

## How Students are Exploited by the Canadian Educational and Financial Institutions

From page 1

by these attacks are students, who are forced to deal with increased tuition as well as more exploitive working conditions. This is in contrast, to those who are gaining off the oppression of students, which is their employers, the BC government and their capitalist financial institutions.

### Tuition fees on the rise!

When the BC liberals came to power in 2001 they promised to "Support the 5 per cent tuition cut and tuition freeze and fully fund it in the current fiscal year to offset costs to post-secondary institutes." According to their website this promise was kept, because during the 2001/02 school year tuition was cut by 5%. However as post-secondary students across the province can attest this promise was far from kept, and was violently broken in 2002 when the BC liberals removed the provincial tuition freeze that had been in place since the 1995/96 school year. Since 2002 tuition fees around the province have been skyrocketing,

with the average student's tuition nearly doubling in the last three years. This year alone BC students are watching angrily as their fees rise by 15.6% with the average student paying \$4,735 a year to go to school.

According to an e-mail sent out by Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) "SFU Administrators have said that the reason behind the fee increase is a shortfall in government funding for our university, and is expecting that there will be another funding gap for the next school year. That means that students at SFU can look forward to yet another fee increase in 2005."

It is not only the SFSS who are predicting these increases. According to the BC government's 'Budget 2004' website 'post-secondary fees' are set to increase to provide revenue for a balanced budget. This 'post-secondary fees' revenue was measured at \$440 million in 2000/01, is estimated at \$713 million for this year (2004/2005), and is

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# Young, Working, & Poor People Must Demand Free & Accessible Education for All

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projected to be \$837 million in 2006/2007. All this means that students will be faced with an educational system that drives them into poverty and makes their living standard even lower. The obvious result of these draconian measures is that students' debt will increase even more and will force thousands of students to quit their post-secondary education. Gordon Campbell's Liberal government is creating a situation where students must either accept the heavy burden of debt and payments for years to come, or colleges and universities will become accessible only to middle class and rich students.

## Students are not alone – Everybody is under attack

These tuition fees increases must be seen in the context of the overall attacks on working, poor and marginalized people by the BC Liberals since coming to power in 2001. Whether it was the introduction of the \$6 an hour training wage in the name of reducing youth unemployment, or the fact that youth unemployment has risen since the implementation of the training wage, we can see how youth and students are facing severe economic worry and uncertainty. This is coupled with the fact that in July 2003 youth unemployment in BC was the third highest in Canada at 14.1%. Demonstrating how unemployment-wise much of Canada is in a better situation than BC.

On top of this BC's apprenticeship programs and youth summer employment training programs have been cut. Disastrous changes were also made to the Employment Standards Act, which gave more power to non-union employers by lowering the standards for hours of work, overtime, etc. The number of people employed by the government to insure that employment standards are met was also cut by one third. Which gives employers more chance to exploit workers and go unchecked.

The undermining of workers rights and long-fought for gains have impacted students and young people in a very serious way. With post-secondary prices increasing, and many students being forced to take out student loans, job stability and job standards are increasingly uncertain and deteriorating.

The BC Liberals attacks on workers and marginalized people are connected to students in many ways, but mainly because a large section of students are workers. With less standardized job training and a higher level of youth unemployment, young people are being forced into 'unskilled' labour jobs where they are easily replaceable, have little job security and suffer from an absence of labour unions to represent them. The 'unskilled worker' label also gives employers a good opportunity to legitimize paying their workers less, and giving workers little to no benefits while profiting off of their labour power.

At this point, even graduating from post-secondary provides little shelter to students whose



Students in BC protest against tuition increases 6 February 2002.

options are becoming more and more limited as many job sectors are facing wage cuts, contracting out, and less job security.

## Why these attacks are happening now? Why it isn't just the BC Liberals?

Although the Liberals have waged these cuts and attacks in BC, it is important to realize that these attacks are not isolated to the BC Liberals or to the people of British-Columbia. Across Canada

and around the world young people, students and workers are coming under attack.

In BC and Canada these attacks represent a desperate capitalist ruling class and their government who are trying to scrounge up money in the name of 'balancing the budget' or 'raising youth employment levels'. While it is clear, especially in BC that the government itself is not willing to budget with the BC Liberal

government forming the largest cabinet in BC history, costing over \$3 million dollars to taxpayers. Campbell's cabinet also gave themselves a \$150 per day pay perk under the Capital City Allowance, which basically gave ministers a pay raise of about \$11,000 a year.

Then in January 2002 the Liberal government announced a 5% salary cut for its ministers, attempting to show that they too were willing to make concessions with their wages. This measure however, was purely tokenistic and based on the way the pay cut was scaled most ministers only had 3-3.5% of their six figure wage shaved off.

If the BC government is representative of the people of BC why are young and working British Columbians being forced to pay higher tuition, suffering from wage cuts and job losses, while the government gets more ministers and larger pay checks. The answer is because the BC government and governments across Canada are not representing the interests of majority of the people in Canada.

The attacks on students and workers in BC and Canada are happening right now in the same context as the war on Iraq and the occupation of Afghanistan. Each of these attacks, wars and occupations are the imperialist ruling classes attempts to maintain and further their power and capitalist interests. Right now capitalist economies are falling into crisis around the globe. Imperialist governments are moving into third-world countries to steal resources and cheap labour, as well as attacking people in their own country by lowering

wages, destabilizing workers, increasing tuition fees, etc. These attacks must be seen as the same, as they are an over all offensive on the world's working people by the ruling classes in an attempt to stabilize their position in this time of unstable economies.

However, in case of Canada the ruling class power is currently becoming less and less stable because their ability to make Canadians feel like their government is representing their interests is slowly failing. Canadians across the country can see and feel the attacks being waged against them and the attacks being waged on their sisters and brothers abroad. They can also see the widening economic gap between themselves and those who are supposedly representing them. This is leading to major dissatisfaction and potential for all students, workers and oppressed people to come together to oppose the attacks being waged against them both at home and abroad.

## What we need to demand and what we need to fight for

As students in BC return to school this fall it is important that we recognize the attacks being waged against us, and who our co-fighters against these attacks must be. Looking at BC we must recognize the need to bring young, working and poor people together as oppressed layers of society and fight back by demanding that education be free and accessible for all people and an end to all attacks on oppressed people at home and abroad!

*Tamara Hansen is a second year student at Simon Fraser University and the Copy Editor of Fire This Time.*

# Educate, Organize, Mobilize!

From page 21

## No to War in Iraq!

The student and youth-led movement against the war in Vietnam in the 1960s and 70s had remained unchallenged historically as the largest and most powerful mass movements the world had ever seen -- until 2003. Across the world, millions mobilized months before the bombing in Iraq began, with over 40 million marching together during the global day of action on February 15th. During this time, campus groups and cross-campus networks appeared overnight, organizing and preparing for the encroaching day of US/UK invasion, or "day X". Students and youth took immediate positions of leadership in the streets, posterizing cities top to bottom and speaking on tabletops in their campuses.

As "day X" arrived on March 19th, 2003, students across North America --in high schools especially-- organized walkouts with classmates and faculty, canceling classes. Millions poured into the streets of San Francisco, New York City, London, Paris, Barcelona,

Seoul, Mexico City, and Jakarta. In Vancouver 10,000 people mobilized in less than 24 hours notice, taking the Burrard Street Bridge and marching to the Vancouver Art Gallery, refusing to leave the streets until long after official "rallies" were declared over. The leadership taken by students and youth in 1968 was based in the same foundations as student and youth leadership in March of 2003, and the movement as it continues to develop today. The axis of this foundation of student and youth leadership is the political ability we have to lead movements with vision, determination, and above all, hope.

In organizing against war and occupation, the tasks of all students and youth are those of leadership. While the US/UK occupation forces in Iraq continue to look for justifications to their plundering, our role takes place not only in the streets, but in our classrooms, campuses, lecture halls and libraries-- educating, organizing, and mobilizing against all foreign intervention in Iraq. The responsibility we now carry is to develop ourselves politically in order to build a mass movement for self-determination



Students march against US-led war on Iraq in Madrid, Spain, March 2003.

that carries oppressed people in its leadership, including youth and students, as well as women, workers, people of colour, people from the third world, immigrants and refugees. Students and youth alone have the capability to develop such a movement, unified across the world, and with

one voice demand:

EDUCATE, ORGANIZE, MOBILIZE!

END THE OCCUPATIONS!

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR IRAQ!!

# Vancouver Demands: Hands Off Iraq!

By Nicole Burton

On Saturday, August 28th, Mobilization Against War and Occupation continued their work to build a dynamic and effective antiwar movement with a demonstration in the streets, demanding "The War is Not Over -- The Occupation is Not Over!", "US/UK, HANDS OFF IRAQ!" This event marked both the continuing need to organize against occupation after the supposed "Handover" of sovereignty on June 28th, as well as addressing the immediate need

for opposition to the brutal and destructive attacks on the Holy city of Najaf by US forces.

On this day, over 150 people came out in the pouring rain to unify their voice, demanding self-determination for the people of Iraq. Despite these conditions, a diverse gathering of students, workers, women, people of colour, as well as several prominent members of the Muslim community made for a dynamic and powerful event. The program began with Vancouver City Counselor Tim Louis, a longtime activist and fighter for social justice, who opened the

day with news of the current war being waged by US occupiers on the Iraqi people and their holy sites, specifically the Imam Ali Mosque. This was followed by Dr. Muzaffar Syed, a Pakistani-Canadian Muslim community leader who echoed the demand of Iraqis and spoke against the ongoing war and occupation. This was expanded by Shiek Hasneyn, who emphasized that we win our demands by unifying. This was especially relevant on August 28th, as people across cultures, religions and communities came together -rain or shine- in solidarity with the Iraqi people.



MAWO organizer Min Kyou speaking at August 28th rally against the US-led occupation of Iraq.

## Under The Volcano, Festival of Culture and Resistance An Interview with Meegan Maultsaid

By Kira Koshelanyk

*Meegan Maultsaid has been one of the central organizers of Under the Volcano (UTV), the annual festival of culture and resistance in North Vancouver, for ten years. She is also a main organizer of Vancouver's annual Rock for Choice Music Festival and Conference. Fire This Time had the opportunity to sit down with Meegan and ask her some questions about this year's Under the Volcano festival and its future.*

**FTT:** First, I'd like to congratulate you on 15 years of Under the Volcano and having maintained this connection of resistance and culture. For 15 years, UTV has brought the culture and art of resistance to the people of the lower mainland. What is the idea behind connecting culture, art and struggle?

**Meegan:** I think the important thing about Under the Volcano is that during the year within the larger movement people kind of operate by themselves a lot. They have their network of people who are their tightest allies, and they'll do a conference and bring together some groups but maybe that doesn't appeal to or reach out to other communities.

The thing about Volcano that is so positive is that, because it's a larger environment and there's so much room for individual art, and also with editorials in the program there's always different ways for people to participate. It enables the larger activist community to come together in that space. Anyone who has any kind of analysis knows that every year there are 8 or 10 or 12 hot topics that need to be brought to the forefront and that information needs to be brought out to people outside of our own communities. We follow what goes on in activist culture and resistance culture. That's part of our day-to-day lives.

For other people, coming to Volcano provides them that opportunity so they'll read the program, they'll go like "Oh, there's a protest at Sun Peaks I didn't know that" and then they can contextualize and understand what's going on and understand why the protest at Sun Peaks is going on or what's going on within other sovereigntist struggles.

**FTT:** One of the very interesting and important political aspects of UTV this year was the organizing of many forums and workshops on different political issues. Even

more interesting were the titles and themes of the workshops, like "Women's Resistance to Illegal Occupation" "The Empire Strikes: Coups, Embargos and Imperialist Interventions." There was an obvious focus on anti-imperialist politics this year, am I right? Why?

**Meegan:** I think every year by default the workshops and the programming are anti-imperialist. In the winter the group of people gets

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Meegan Maultsaid.

Shiela Patterson of the Peace and Justice unit of the Anglican church, now well-known as a powerful speaker at many of MAWO's recent demonstrations, gave a moving speech in solidarity with all oppressed people fighting for their humanity, and condemned the leaders of powerful imperialist nations in their attempt to confuse and divide them around world. Brother Khosro, representative of the United Muslim Alliance brought the struggle for Iraqi independence into a historical context, linking it for the struggle of oppressed people in Africa organizing against colonialism. Victor Finberg of the executive of the Vancouver-Kingsway NPD spoke next, urging that opposition to war and occupation must lead to effective action in building a movement. MAWO organizer Syed Asif Ali Shah then took the stage, and with passion and determination, condemned the attacks on Iraq, linking them with imperialist attacks happening around the world - from Pakistan to Cuba. Chaudhry Sannulah, vice-president of Pakistan-Canada Association, gave a truly inspirational address to the current struggle against injustices in Iraq, and linking it to a future of peace that we all are working towards.

After several chants led by MCs Shannon Bundock and Nicole Burton, MAWO co-chair and student at Langara, Kira Koshelanyk rose to the stage. Kira led the crowd in more chanting: "US/UK OUT!!", "HANDS OFF

IRAQ!" This was then followed by an inspiring speech by Min Kyou Park, an organizer with MAWO and student from Korea. Min Kyou explained his reasons for getting involved in the antiwar movement only months before, with the deployment of South Korean soldiers to Iraq.

This was followed by Shamas Umedaly of the Muslim community, who gave an inspiring speech against US aggression in Iraq. The last of the day's speakers was Mike Krebs of the Blackfoot nation, a member of Mobilization Against War and Occupation, and the SFU First Nations Student Society. Mike made the essential link of US and Canadian aggression abroad with the 500 year struggle of Indigenous peoples of North America for the right to manage and govern themselves.

Finally, amidst cheers of support, Allison Bodine, a student organizer with MAWO and Coalition Against War on the People of Iraq (CAWOPI) at UBC, and a member of Youth-Third World Alliance, led the crowd in a resolution, condemning the continued war, occupation and devastation of US and UK forces. August 28th made turned these needs into a reality for Vancouver's antiwar movement, bringing many different people together for the goal of achieving one powerful, unified voice, that demands:

US/UK: OUT OF IRAQ! SELF-DETERMINATION FOR IRAQ NOW!

# 'The People of Iraq will be Liberated'

## Two Speeches from August 28th Rally Against War and Occupation

**Kira Koshelanyk**  
*MAWO co-chair*

Thank you Nicole, and thank you for warming everyone up because I think I might be asking you some questions, and I'm expecting you to answer. The first thing that I wanted to say is that I've noticed that people in Canada and people in Vancouver appear to be affected by rain. It seems that some times it makes them stay home.

Well I was wondering, would people in Iraq stay home because of rain? (NO!)

Would people in Iraq stay home because of heat? (NO!)

Have they stayed home at all since their country was invaded in 2003? (NO!)

Have they stayed home at all in the last three weeks when they were under siege in Najaf? (NO!)

No, they mobilized, they fought back, and they marched by the thousands to meet with their brothers and sisters in Najaf. Why is that? Because they know that the occupation is not over. It has not been over since it started, never-mind the June 30th transfer of power. It's not over because they can feel it, every second of every



MAWO co-chair Kira Koshelanyk speaking at August 28th rally against the US-led occupation of Iraq.

of third-world countries; we're going to see more attacks on the people of the world. It is our human obligation, it is our job and our responsibility, we have to organize and mobilize, and connect with people all over the world who

The United States of America and the UK invaded Iraq, and they are continually bombing the cities of Najaf, Fallujah and other cities in Iraq. Bush, before going to war told the world that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. I am asking Bush, what are you dropping on the cities of Iraq? Are you dropping fragrance of flowers? No, you are dropping weapons of mass destruction on the people of Iraq. Before going to war Bush told the world that there is a democracy in Afghanistan, and that there will be democracy in Iraq.

I am telling Bush that we have seen your democracy in Afghanistan; we have seen your democracy in Iraq. We've seen how you humiliated the people of Iraq in Abu Ghraib prison. How you deal with the people of Afghanistan, 3,000 Afghan people were held in containers and they all died of suffocation.

Mr. Bush if you are looking for weapons of mass destruction, go to Israel, Israel is in the possession of 360 nuclear weapons. Israel used the deadly chemical weapons against Arabs in 1948. Israel used these deadly chemical weapons against Palestinians in the first Intifada in 1989.

Israel is the pampered child of the United States of America and the UN is doing nothing. The UN is helping the imperial powers to establish imperialism. The UN is helping the colonial powers to make neo-colonialism in the world. It is a great injustice that an agent of the CIA, Allawi is now prime minister of Iraq; it is a great injustice that Hamid Karzai is the prime minister of Afghanistan against the wishes of the people of Afghanistan, against the wishes of the

people of Iraq.

I'm telling the people of America that the people of Iraq are not your enemies; your enemies are the capitalists and the elite class of your country. I will not applaud the next prime minister of Canada. I will not applaud the prime minister of France. I will not applaud the prime minister of Germany. If they are not in this war, it is not because they love humanity, it was not because they love peace. It was because they

were not given their share of this war.

To all imperial nations you are the essence of war. You kill the people of the third-world. You killed Pakistan, you killed Venezuela, you killed Saudi Arabia, you killed Afghanistan, and you killed Palestine. You are killing the human beings; you are working against human beings. There are no ethics, there is no morality, and there are no Geneva conventions. You are killing the human beings.

I will salute the freedom fighters of Iraq who are fighting for self-dignity and honor, and for the resources of their country. I will salute the freedom fighters of Palestine who are fighting against the imperialist power of Israel the pampered child of America. I salute Fidel Castro of Cuba, who during tough times defended the freedom of his nation and is standing against Imperialism.

We MAWO will mobilize the people of this country; we will educate the students against imperialism. With the efforts of MAWO with the circle of freedom fighters, with the efforts of these peace loving people, the people of Iraq will be liberated, the people of Palestine will be liberated, and the indigenous people of Canada will have their rights.

I have the message of MAWO the key to living is freedom, and the key to freedom is coming.

**“I'm telling the people of America that the people of Iraq are not your enemies!”**

day, with bullets and bombs and air strikes, attacks on their homes and holy places. They can feel it especially because of the 160,000 occupying troops that they see on their streets everyday.

I want to finish actually, pretty quickly and then start chanting with you, because I think that with all this rain, and all this dampness we're probably pretty cold.

I wanted just to let everyone know that we need to keep an eye on the people of Iraq. We need to watch them because we need to follow their example. We need to organize, we need to mobilize, we need to get up and we need to stay up. Because this era of war and occupation is not over, it's only just beginning. We're going to see more invasions

are under attack. We need to educate and spread the word. And most of all we need to echo the demands of the demonstrations that we saw in Iraq last week. We need to echo the demonstrations that we see in Iraq this week. And every week since the war began, and every week as this war goes on.

And those demands are US/UK Out! Hands Off Iraq! Self-determination Now!

**Syed Asif Ali Shah**  
*MAWO organizer*

Ladies and Gentlemen welcome to our rally. We are working for peace, and we are against imperialism. Our subject is humanity, and our duty is peace.



MAWO organizer Syed Asif Ali Shah speaking at August 28th rally against the US-led occupation of Iraq.



# In Solidarity with Cuba and Venezuela

## Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba Holds Successful Conference

By Kira Koshelanyk

On August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004 Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) held its first conference titled "Cuba and Venezuela in the Era of War and Occupation: Why the US is targeting Cuba and Venezuela (and what you can do about it)". The conference linked the attacks on the sovereign nations of Cuba and Venezuela with the ongoing era of imperialist war, occupation and destruction. The event also lived up to its name by including dynamic discussion on the role of oppressed people in Vancouver and Canada taking action in solidarity with the Cuban and Venezuelan people.

At the IWA hall, surrounded by VCSC's banners and slogans of "Against the new US aggression!" "End Imperialist Intervention in Latin America" "Hands Off Cuba!" and Cuban and Venezuelan flags, the conference was opened by Vancouver City Councillor, Tim Louis. Louis spoke of the referendum in Venezuela which had happened only six days earlier and how it was a major victory, not only for people in Venezuela, but for all working people around the world. He also linked the struggle in Venezuela to that of Cuba and the US' role in trying to overthrow both governments that are a symbol of progress and hope for people in Latin America.

The section on Venezuela was opened with a showing of Marta Harnecker's film "With the Poor of the Earth". The film shows the struggle of the Venezuelan people to maintain their president Hugo Chavez despite imperialist intervention and internal pressure from the reactionary oligarchy. This was followed by a presentation by Marysol Torres of the Vancouver Internationalist Bolivarian Circles on Venezuela's history of struggle against imperialist domination. She also spoke of her personal experiences as a Venezuelan-Canadian and the Venezuelan people's inspiring organization and action in defence of their rights. Torres presentation was followed by a political discussion on the US goals in supporting the reactionary opposition in Venezuela and the importance of following the Venezuelan people's example of political preparation. In 2002, when there was a US-backed coup against Chavez, the Venezuelan people were ready for action and mobilized to bring him back within 48 hours. The people of Venezuela demonstrated their strength again in the August 15<sup>th</sup> referendum and are leading with the oppressed and the poor of the world against the new era of imperialist aggression and intervention.

The second half of the program was opened with the film "Desafio" ("Challenge"). The Cuban made



FTT coordinator Shannon Bundock (l) speaking at Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba Conference with conference MC and VCSC Coordinator Tamara Hansen (r), 21 August 2004.

film shows the Cuban people's fight to improve their lives in Cuba under the oppressive US economic blockade. The film shows Cuban people explaining that the US will have no success in trying to

break Cuba's government and people because to the last breath, they are with Fidel and he is the manifestation of their will to fight for dignity and humanity. Shannon Bundock, an organizer with VCSC,

then gave the political presentation on Cuba.

In her opening Bundock explained the importance of the Cuban peoples historic struggle for dignity and independence. She also explained why the US is targeting Cuba and the role of Cuba as a leader for the people of the world against oppression, war, occupation and imperialism.

The discussion on Cuba was as lively as that on Venezuela as many expressed their different views about the era of war and occupation and its effect on Cuba. Examining Cuba's situation today in the context of the era of war and occupation is crucial in understanding its relevance and importance. The discussion also delved into why the US is so interested in Cuba and why it has insisted on attacking the island for fifty years. Even more interesting is how the Cuban people have fought back and defended themselves. This aspect of the discussion was an important natural development and it became clear that the struggle of the Cuban people was understood as our own as well.

The conference on August 21<sup>st</sup> was another important step toward building the unity of people in Vancouver with oppressed people worldwide. It is clear that VCSC's approach to organizing consistently and effectively is necessary in building a Cuban solidarity movement in Vancouver and that it is a successful method. The conference on August 21<sup>st</sup> showed that only through expanding the solidarity and sympathy of people in Vancouver toward the Cuban and Venezuelan people and all oppressed people internationally will we be able to unite and prevail over those who attack us.

United in Solidarity with Cuba!  
United We Will Win!

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## Cuba in the Era of Imperialist War and Occupation

### What We Can Learn From Revolutionary Cuba

**Presentation by Shannon Bundock at the Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) conference, "Cuba and Venezuela in the Era of War and Occupation" August 21st, 2004**

I want to thank you for coming today and I hope that my talk here today will help to explain and do justice to the topic and look at the Cuban revolution not only an accomplishment as for Cuban people, but also an accomplishment for the interest of working people and oppressed people everywhere.

#### What the enemy says about US

Before I begin, I want to share a couple things with you that I read in the National Post on July 9th. In this particular issue, there were a few articles on Cuba. The one I want to read from is titled "The revolutionary myth that won't die" and is written by Lawrence Solomon, the executive director of the right wing institute Urban Renaissance. Throughout the article Solomon attacks Cuba on a series of fronts and I hope we can keep the points he raises in mind, when we discuss the current situation of Cuba. In this article Solomon says, "... the

*Cuban embargo did hurt the Cuban economy but only marginally." He says, "Castro's economic miracle was always a hoax. His rhetoric never succeeded to either exhort or inspire Cubans to participate for the cause of socialism." He says on the blockade, "The US embargo did not eviscerate the Cuban economy, Castro's policies did." "Cubans now consume less food than before the revolution. And less food than citizens of any other Latin American country."*

*"As for the Revolution's great gains in health and literacy, those, too, are public-relations shams. Castro declared illiteracy to be eradicated in 1961, after a one-year Great Campaign that ended 'four centuries of ignorance.' Health care is good in Cuba, but only for tourists and the government elite, who want for nothing. The poor do not have access to good hospitals, or to almost any drug - unless they carry dollars."*

*"An estimated 100,000 are now imprisoned - 500,000 in all since 1959, with thousands executed, according to human rights agencies."*

And the last couple here, "In Cuba,

*a crime is whatever Castro wants it to be. He has criminalized not only the discussion of human rights but also the discussion of the economy; not only letters of complaint to the international press but letters of complaint to the Cuban government. It is a crime to visit a friend or relative in a neighboring jurisdiction without government permission." And finally he concludes with "Sadly, none of this matters to Castro's supporters. For them, no amount of suffering by the Cuban people can wipe away the romantic myth of the Cuban Revolution."*

And you read this and you think... "Well, maybe we shouldn't be biased."

#### A little bit of history

Maybe after I present, and in the context of what we heard about the Cuban revolution through [the film] Desafio, we can discuss Mr. Solomon's attacks on Cuba a little more in depth.

Right now I'm going to begin with a bit of a historical basis for the US's attack in particular on Cuba. And what is interesting here is putting this in a bit of a Canadian context

with this article running in the National Post - later we can go into that a bit further as well.

First of all, as far as the US in particular, the US really intervened heavily in the nation of Cuba in the late 1890's after a war with Spain. The US began an agenda of making Cuba a leisure spot for American tourists, using it for plundering cheap Cuban sugar and for using Cuba as a military base. In fact in 1902, the Platt Amendment, wrote into the Cuban constitution the basis for Guantanamo Bay. Article five of that [the Platt Amendment] says "To enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba, and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the Government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations, at certain specified points, to be agreed upon with the president of the United States."

So Cuba for the next 50 years after this, from 1902 to about 1952, which was when the coup d'etat in which Batista took power happened, Cuba

went through a series of US backed presidents and administrations. In this period the US controlled something like 70% of Cuba. And in these conditions Cubans became increasingly hostile to US intervention as a result of poverty, as a result of exploitation, as a result of clearly seeing the plundering and exploitation of their economy, resources and people at the hands of pleasure seekers, and at the hands of US corporations. There were strikes during this period as well and organization that was successful at kicking out a few of Batista's predecessors, a few of the reactionary leaders. In 1952 things got polarized to such a point and the conditions got so unstable in Cuba, and much of the organizing was being directly targeted against US intervention, and as a result the US called upon Batista himself to come to power and take over the nation. And in '52 that happened in a coup d'etat. The conditions that led the US to call on Batista, also led to more widespread and stronger anti-imperialist, anti-US and anti-Batista organizing. These conditions is where Fidel and other young Cubans, and people like Che Guevara - internationals, began to organize the July 26th Movement. Between their first attack on Moncada, which was only a year after Batista came to power, and the overthrow of Batista in 1959, the Cuban people had developed a revolutionary movement that directly opposed the interest of US imperialism and successfully kicked US imperialism out of Cuba.

#### US vs. Cuba

This was a serious set back for US imperialism in all of Latin America. As a well as a set back for imperialist nations generally, as it promised and delivered a program and strategy which rid the nation of foreign domination. Concretely what this meant is that US allies fled from Cuba; the Batistas, the elites and the former ruling class. As we talked about before, some of the differences between the process in Venezuela versus Cuba, is that in Cuba this was a mass-kicking-out within a very short period of time, of the opposition. Not that minor elements didn't remain of course.

What it meant too, was that major US sugar and cattle companies, which owned a lot of the land were affected by some of the very first acts after the revolution. Through Agrarian Reform and redistribution of land, which was a direct defense against the policies of these companies and their pressure trying to defeat what had been gained by the revolution. All these measures taken after the revolution, again were a direct response to attacks, for example when the US oil refineries were refusing to process Soviet oil and the US boycott of Cuban sugar, which began within a couple years of the revolution.

From the beginning, with these very first steps the objective of the US in this was to overthrow the Cuban government. They were hoping that immediately through as much pressure and attack as they could put on, that this could be successful. I'll get into how they actually went through that strategy and how this is related to what we are doing today. This was actually a very long-standing objective of US imperialism in relation to Cuba. To overthrow the Cuban government is the objective today and has been since 1959.

Politically to understand what the Cuban revolution meant for imperialism in 1959 we must put it in the international context. What can be used to explain that pretty clearly is in the 2nd declaration of Havana, which is a speech that Fidel gave

after the OAS pressured by the US, expelled Cuba from the organization and that followed the defeat of US invaders at the Bay of Pigs. After this Fidel gave a speech titled "The 2nd Declaration of Havana" where he asked and answered the question: "Why does the US fear Cuba?" Here are a couple excerpts of what he said,

*"What is it that is hidden behind the Yankees hate of the Cuban Revolution? What is it that rationally explains the conspiracy, uniting for the same aggressive purpose the most powerful and rich imperialist power in the contemporary world and the oligarchies of an entire continent, which together are supposed to represent a population of three hundred fifty million human beings, against a small country of only seven million inhabitants, economically underdeveloped, without financial or military means to threaten nor the security nor the economy of any other country?"*

*"What unites them and stirs them up is fear. Not fear of the Cuban Revolution; the fear of the Latin American revolution. Not fear of the workers, peasants, students, intellectuals and progressive layers of the middle strata which by revolutionary means have taken power in Cuba; but fear that the workers, peasants, students, intellectuals and progressive sectors of the middle strata will, by revolutionary means take power in the oppressed and hungry countries exploited by the Yankee monopolies and reactionary oligarchies of America; fear too that the plundered people of the continent will seize the arms from their oppressors and declare themselves, like Cuba, free people of America."*

This I think shows that from the beginning, from 1962 until today, Cuba understood, and the US understood that their relationship wasn't just a nation-to-nation relationship. Their relationship was within the context of Latin America, it was within the context of US interests in oppressed nations. As that interest has developed, so has that relationship and so has that objective - the serious objective of overthrowing the Cuban government.

#### US strategy

The US has attacked Cuba to meet this objective using many strategies since 1959. We've heard of these strategies many times. In the beginning with increasing hostility; the secret training of Cuban exiles in the US; hundreds and hundreds of assassination attempts on Fidel Castro. I'm sure people have read political cartoons about exploding cigars etc. But there are assassination attempts that have happened that are documented in CIA evidence. There are the economic attacks in 1960, of reducing sugar imports and in 1962 of completely boycotting Cuban sugar, which is a base of their economy. In 1962 there was the imposition of a full, what the US called "embargo", which was the still standing blockade. There was also the bombing raids in 1961, there was the use of chemical and biological weapons against people and against crops in Cuba. There was the Bay of Pigs invasion - which I am going to go into a bit more deeply. There is the US directing the Organization of American States to expel Cuba. There is the October Missile Crisis. There is the Helms-Burton Act, which is also referred to and titled "Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act" of 1996. And then there is the case of Elian Gonzales which we saw Cuban people mobilizing against in the film Desafio. The Elian Gonzales case was a huge political attack against

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# Onward to Victory! The Struggle to Advance the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela

*An excerpt from Marysol Torres's presentation at the Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) conference, "Cuba and Venezuela in the Era of War and Occupation"*

August 21st, 2004

The uprising of the Venezuelan people in 1988 took place because the people rejected the neo-Liberal agenda that was taking hold of the country. Spontaneously, without leaders, people all throughout the nation took to the streets to demonstrate against the unacceptable increase in gasoline prices, the privatization of education and other things.

What did the government do then? It used the army to massacre those who dared to disagree with such plans. Human rights groups never condemned the actions. There was the media... where was the media? Perhaps it was playing cartoons?

I was in Venezuela then. I was running away, looking for my son, I didn't know where to go. Everything was a traffic jam. There was shooting everywhere. The taxi drivers stopped and said, 'What are you doing in the middle of the street?' I said, 'I'm trying to go home.' And he said, 'OK, jump in and lay down and don't get up. If I get killed, just stay there.'

Luckily, he passed through, I just heard the shooting, and finally I was home safely and my son was there.

#### Chavez for President!

When Chavez came to power in 1998, in that election, he won by 85% of the vote. Among his highest priorities was to strengthen OPEC and raise the international prices of oil. Oil had dropped to less than \$10 a barrel. He was not as radical as he was in 2001 when he executed the land reform, reform of the laws of fishing, banks, hydrocarbon laws and others.

The neighbours of Venezuela got a high percentage of the revenues from the oil and the Venezuela government only got 16%. When the law was changed, the government started to receive 30%, so that was a big change.

President Chavez did not accept any loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) because he rejected the conditions; like reducing the budget to social programs and subsidies to agriculture or local industry. This was more radical than the government of the US could accept.

Chavez traveled around the world after approving the new constitution. The opposition never agreed to these changes. The following year President Chavez spent much time travelling to both OPEC countries and non-OPEC countries to consolidate their commitment to constrain oil production and to convince them to attend the second ever gathering of the OPEC summit, which was held in Caracas on September 27th, 2000. Chavez opened and hosted the second OPEC summit.

Some of OPEC's members, such as Mexico and Russia, were increasing production considerably, further driving down the price of oil. Chavez basically got both OPEC and non-OPEC oil producing countries to reduce production or abide by the OPEC market quota. The price rose from \$12.28 per barrel in 1998

to \$17.47 per barrel in 1999. OPEC then introduced a price of \$30.28 per barrel on that occasion.

Since Chavez has been in power, Cuba has been receiving oil. Cuba had been excluded from the group of countries covered by the San Jose agreement formed by the Caribbean countries to receive oil from Venezuela and from Mexico. Chavez also created the program called 'Oil for the People' whose objective is to trade to other countries, food or raw materials for industry. For example, for Italy there is a trading exchange for house construction. For Argentina, Venezuela is exchanging oil for agricultural products and dairy products.

The opposition also had plans. The main union federation deterred the Indigenous workers strike together with the Chamber of Commerce. The strike had been going for about a month when the coup happened. The opposition had been planning and it came to April 11th, 2002.



Marysol Torres (r) speaking at Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba Conference with conference MC and VCSC Coordinator Tamara Hansen (l), 21 August 2004.

They underestimated the power of the people. When the people started to realize what happened, they started gathering.

There was no media informing the people. There was a national and international information blackout. No information was being given to the people. A group of women gathered together and went to where the national TV station was and made the opposition who were there leave. They took over, called the national guard and called the technicians so the channel started to work.

A great soldier who met Chavez in prison at that time asked Chavez to write a letter and he went to the station, risked his life to get there, to fax the letter. So he faxed it to Cuba and to other fax numbers that Chavez had given to him. When the news came out on Venezuelan TV Channels, Venezuelans gathered in masses. They went to the hills in Caracas to stand in front of the palace and started to demand that Chavez be re-instated.

The opposition had failed; the power of the people had won again.

#### After the coup attempt... the struggle continues

Then in December of 2002, the president decided to change the directors of the oil company who were running such an important business as their own private property. Again, the main union organizations, the Chamber of Commerce and the oil companies declared an indefinite strike. The

objective was to destabilize the country by creating a civil war because people did not have food, gasoline or gas to cook.

The opposition groups took the oil refineries so that no supplies of gasoline were delivered. Farmers could not sell their produce to the market. There was no milk, no flour, and no products for people to buy at the supermarket. A lot of stores were told to remain closed because the owners of the commercial centres would not open the malls.

Oil production remained closed because the opposition leaders had control. They flew to Miami and from Miami they changed the codes of the computers in the refineries to stop production. The crude was left in containers and it was lost and also the facilities were lost.

The people started to react and they went to the refinery to control it. The opposition people who were there at that time escaped. The people started to take control but it took

almost two months for Venezuelans to get control of that because these people were threatening the truck drivers and were putting nails on the floor so that tires went flat and they couldn't travel.

Many cargoes that were sent to different countries because of the quotas were returned mid-way back to the Venezuelan ports by opposition generals. It was a nightmare. Venezuelans didn't have equipment at that time. As a result, the government started to open small markets in all the different places in Venezuela so that farmers could bring their products directly to those places. They sold it to the people at affordable prices so everyone could buy food at low prices, especially in low-income places.

Chavez told a story of a woman who he met. She had a wooden bed and the days that she didn't have gas to cook she took the pieces from her bed and burned them and cooked food.

People were desperate but they knew they had to be strong and win the battle again because it was another coup.

By the middle of last year, the Venezuelan oil sector had not only recovered, but Chavez also mentioned that in the short future it would be offering greater products, not only crude oil.

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# Students and Youth, Fight War and Occupation! Join MAWO!

By Nicole Burton

From the initial invasion and war to the transition to occupation, and then to the handover of "sovereignty," occupation forces have had no legitimacy in Iraq. Justifications for this brutality, ranging from fighting terrorism to liberating the Iraqi people, are entirely false. This is a truth seen in the homes of every Iraqi family, the facilities in every empty school, the halls of every ransacked hospital and museum.

Iraq has become one picture in the gallery of countries invaded, plundered, and destroyed by imperialism. It is the second country in 3 years to have been pre-emptively attacked in the US-led "War on Terror". And with the people of Afghanistan, as well as Haiti, Iraq must now experience its occupiers' notion of "democracy": Thousands dead, communities demolished, millions out of work and fighting the occupation of their country to defend their basic needs, and rights-- the very first thing from which they were "liberated".

In this era of war and occupation, we should not treat the US' brutal behavior as if it were an isolated incident. The bombing of civilians, the torture of Iraqis in Abu Grahیب and other prisons and the destruction of Iraq's internal structure is systematic and determined to crush resistance to imperialism around the world.

Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) is Vancouver's dynamic and most active organization building for social justice around the world. MAWO is a coalition of over 50 different



endorsing members, including student unions, student groups, labour unions, organizations of women, indigenous organizations, immigrants and refugees groups, and groups of people from the third world. We work tirelessly with communities and campuses across Vancouver to build a dynamic, strong, and effective anti-war movement, against the occupations of Afghanistan, Palestine, Haiti, and Indigenous land in Canada. As well, the most important task for us today is to connect with Iraq's anti-occupation movement, as it is one of the largest and most powerful movements in the world fighting against war and destruction.

Understanding this, it becomes our central role to build the movement, and continue to expose US strategy in Iraq as the same face in a different mask. With this we expose the complete injustice that is the entire Iraq occupation, and build

a movement that fights for jobs, health care and students' rights: a movement in solidarity with the people of Iraq, who demand self-determination. We must echo this as students and young workers here in Canada who are fighting for the same things. More than any other group in the antiwar movement, students and youth understand the importance of fighting for the right to determine their own future. This is the struggle every Iraqi is now a part of, as they continue to successfully beat back the strongest military power in the world. We must support them by developing a movement led by people here in Canada-- a movement that develops and strengthens us in our fight. United across borders, cultures, and religions, against war and occupation, we will build this movement that puts Iraq and all oppressed people of the world in a better position in the global human struggle for social justice.

people there. It's very important at Under the Volcano that young people participate not just by being there, but by helping direct how the festival evolves. Lots of the volunteers are young people and I think it can be an entry point. They come and they're like "Oh, there's bands and it's cool!" but there's a deeper meaning behind the project and that empowers them too.

Also, we know that people in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland look forward to Under the Volcano, they wait for it all year. It sort of recharges their batteries and provides people with the opportunity to network with each other and for the groups that are there, it gives people the opportunity to talk about the work that they're doing and the campaigns that they're working on. We also want to be an inspiration so younger people can start their own projects. Maybe someone will look at UTV and say "Wow, I can do that" maybe on a smaller scale, but Volcano started smaller too. So that's the challenge with younger people, to bring them into our project but hopefully to inspire them to take what they've learned through working on the festival and apply that to other events in their own community.

**FTT: I'm also curious about something. Of course, another great aspect of UTV is the music, and I have to say, it was excellent this year. I know you have a lot to do with that, how do you do it?**

**Meegan:** So much research and more and more research, goes into selecting the music. I've worked on the programming of the music since the beginning and it's been my forte. In the last few years we developed a programming committee so that we have someone for each stage; I do most of the main-stage programming. The first seed is a lot of research. Talking to a lot of artists and people we've had in the past.

For example we had these guys from L.A., they're like a Chicano Zapatista inspired hard core hip-hop group and I keep in touch with them and I might ask them if there are other groups that are in their community who might be interesting for the festival. So we use the network that we've already created and throughout the year I flag stuff I see that's interesting. I just saw a show on CBC about this woman who was in the "Little Rock 9", one of the first groups of black children to attend white schools and already I was like, "Oh I'm going to invite her to speak". So pretty much right through the year we're planning and thinking about people we see or hear about and we check out other events too. We do get some submissions, but it's rare that we book through submissions, because those who submit are more apolitical. And they just want to come because they think it might be "cool" and that's not what Volcano's about.

The programming begins in September/October and we develop the program over the winter and it is usually wrapped up by April of the following year. Those guys from Montreal, Euphrates, I'll keep in touch with them and ask them if they know people in their community who might be interesting for next year not necessarily hip hop but people in their community. It's nice to book some who are more well known, like the Gossip. They're political anyway, but they're well known and they serve a particular demographic, and it was sort of a coup to get them.

The programming is the thing I love because of doing the research and making those connections and dialogue with other political artists and finding out about what work they're doing and what they can bring to the festival. A lot of them coming into it don't know what they're getting into. "Clann Zu", the lead singer is from Ireland, and I booked their whole tour with Volcano as a part of it and they were just like blown away, they said it was the best show they'd ever played in their whole lives. For me, I think definitely "Clann Zu", Ward Churchill and Euphrates were my highlights for this year.

**FTT: Give us your overall assessment of UTV this year? And give us your perspective for the next years.**

**Meegan:** I felt like it was a very positive year and that for our anniversary it really came together and through the programming, the workshops and the info fair that we were successful in representing what we wanted to represent. I felt like it was really diverse and

## Interview with Meegan Maultsaid Continued

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together and we discuss what could be an overarching theme. We want to choose something that can be broad enough to encompass a lot of different campaigns and movements that are going on.

This year we took into account the current climate of post-9/11 and global capitalism. This has a long thread through history and we wanted to tie it in with the historical context and then bring it into the present with examples like the war on Afghanistan, or the war in Iraq, stuff that's going on in Haiti. I mean there are things that are obviously fomenting right now and I think that the anti-imperialist slant always creeps into any activist stuff that you're presenting because it's such a strong force and it's really at the root when you look at different things happening locally and globally. It's all interconnected and at the root of that is the struggle against imperialism and the struggle against global capitalism.

People's feedback about the workshops was that they were really, really strong and people were interested in the topics. I think that is because we pushed ourselves and challenged ourselves to be open to and think of groups and places that we don't normally think of. We went, like "Wow, we have a lot of solidarity with Latin American communities but we haven't had one of the Cuban groups that I can even think of", so that was really important. It was really important to talk about Haiti and the situation there as part of a larger context. There's something recent that's happening there so it's important for people to get information and analysis that is not what the mainstream media usually represents. I think that's part of why the workshops are always good but this year we worked harder to do more research, to invite more groups and communities that we haven't necessarily had in the past.

**FTT: From performers and speakers on the stages and in workshops to organizers and crew, women held important positions of leadership in the festival. Do you agree with my observation? Was it a conscious effort?**

**Meegan:** I definitely agree with the observation. Of the crew of people who worked on Under the Volcano this year there were 8 people in the core group, 3 of which were men (2 men and 1 trans) and 5 are women. I don't think it's a conscious effort. It hasn't been a conscious decision to involve more women on our part. It grows and evolves as people come and go. There's always been a strong feminist slant to the festival and that has strengthened over the years because some of the women who have come into the project are ardent feminists and of course bring that feminist analysis to all of their work.

In terms of the programming of the workshops, it is a mandate to make sure that it's balanced and to make sure that different gender roles are represented. I think that as it mirrors culture itself women are moving to the forefront of a lot of movements and the sexism that has been so rampant in the activist community is starting to shift somewhat. I mean you see it in all kinds of groups that if you went to a meeting of some particular campaign that's being worked on there'll be a lot more women. I just think that there's a lot more balance, that's what it seems to me in a way.

Within our larger movement people are starting to challenge and allow themselves to be challenged on our own inherent sexism, or homophobia, or racism, and the more we challenge ourselves and allow people to challenge us on how our movements are constructed, the more those people will be able to come into positions of power and will be able to help the rest of the movement grow and evolve. Though one thing about the core group of people is that unfortunately it is quite white

and I mean that is something that we struggle with. When you come to volcano you're like, "It's so well organized", but you don't see the craziness and it's actually this disjointed thing that just gels beautifully on the day of the festival. It is hard in some ways to bring in new people because we sort of have a model and the way we've tried to branch out more is to have certain parts of the festival done by committees or get submissions or suggestions by groups in the community.

**FTT: Every year thousands of young people attend UTV, with this exposure to social justice politics and organizing, what role does the festival play for young people in the lower mainland?**

**Meegan:** Well I agree somewhat but I think we wish that there were more young people who come. It actually started as a by youth for youth project, 15 years ago. Irwin Oostindie, who is the founder, started by doing youth shows and cultural events and productions in North Van and of course any project grows and evolves and takes on a life of its own and so forth. It has become a day that's meant to be for youth and also for immigrants and also for sovereigntists and lefties and for progressive people and for the public to come and take part in a day of resistance and culture. Even if they're people who don't necessarily frame themselves as activists. We don't want to have some sort of elitist mass. We want it to be a cultural event for all kinds of different people and anyone with any learning curve should be able to come and add their voice.

I think in terms of youth, the musical element is always what brings young people out, that's a no-brainer. When we program we bear that in mind and I book a lot of hip hop, because everyone who works on the festival loves hip-hop and secondly because it's very political by nature and it is a music that will bring young

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# Liberals Lower the Bar for Workers

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employment standards to further benefit the anti worker interests of employers. The changes created a void of worker rights and information at job place leaving workers with no way of settling workplace disputes other than self-mediation.

The Self-help kit requires workers to file a grievance with their employer who will then submit it to the ESB who will decide on the case. In many situations workers cannot settle disputes with their employers through this process without the risk of being fired, or suffering further workplace abuses. In one case a teenage girl's parents complained to the ESB after the girl had been laid off after completing her 500 hours of employment only for the ESB to rule in favor of the employer.

Along with the self-help kit, there is no longer a requirement for employers to display a poster with information about workers rights (minimum and maximum hours per day, overtime rules, scheduling requirements etc.) at workplaces. The minimum hours for work days were cut in half from four to two, making it easier for foodservices to have on-call workers for rush periods then send them home.

Workers are also subject to "agree" to a balancing agreement that entitles employers to calculate overtime over four weeks. This "agreement" is used to have workers put in overtime shifts, and then balance them out over four weeks so that employees don't receive their regular overtime pay. All these conditions have been enforced on employees with no option but to accept their employer's terms or face losing their jobs. The effects of bill 48 have removed all rights for workers and provided greater "freedom" to employers and their agenda of exploiting workers.

## Child Labour in B.C.

"These changes ensure greater fairness and eliminate redundant red tape that can affect the ability of young people to find jobs," - Minister of Skills and Development and Labour Graham Bruce

Some of the changes implemented by bill 48 include the deregulation of child labour. The Liberal agenda has created enough "freedom" for employers that they can now hire children 12 years and older with no special permission from the ESB. Previous to bill 48 employers were required to apply for a permit with the ESB for any employee under the age of 15. Now only a note is required from a parent or guardian. These changes put the oppressed layers of society under direct attack, as many low-income families have no option except having children work for six dollars an hour to support the family. As this example is frequently increasing, more and more youth are dropping out of school to take low paying jobs just to get by. How does this deregulation of labour standards protect the interest of young workers? Laws like this have been fought against all across the world in order to prevent businesses from taking advantage of children and their marginalized position in society, yet they have managed to take effect at home in B.C.

As Tuition for students has been rising over the past three years wages and employment standards have come under serious attack. These conditions have created a decline in the numbers of students involved in post secondary education, and employers are eager to take advantage of this. It's becoming more difficult for youth to get an education, and the only other option is being forced into a vulnerable position where they are easily exploited and suffer further oppression for a lack of education.

## Fight Back! Protect the Rights Of Workers

The deepening economic crisis that faces the Canadian economy is forcing the ruling class to expand their economic influence abroad as well as at home. Prime Minister Paul Martin declared that Canada is prepared to take the "world stage" as Canadian imperialism expands its military dominance over third world countries. The effects of this crisis are felt at home in Canada and this new era of war and occupation will bring attacks on workers across the world, as well

and their anti worker agenda.

The Agenda of the BC Liberal government goes against the basic interests of working people in BC. Over the past year we've witnessed the government attack workers, Healthcare, Public Education and provide greater "flexibility" to big business. As poor oppressed people that suffer the injustice of the removal of our rights, we must unite to fight back against the Liberal Government

Attacks on Youth, attacks on poor and oppressed people affect us all, lower the wages of workers across the board, and further oppress all working people in BC.

In order to win back decent living wages and dignified working conditions for everyone, we must oppose the Liberal government and their attempts to exploit youth, immigrants and refugees,

women, people of color, and all oppressed communities that are the first to be affected by these attacks. We must demand an end to the attacks on workers, and protect what few rights we as working people still have. We must fight back to ensure that employment standards are returned to the hands of workers. The first step to achieving this is that the Campbell Liberal Government must go.

## The Culture of Struggle

# Euphrates: The Sound of Iraqi Resistance in Montreal

By Ivan Drury

At the Under the Volcano festival of music and resistance on August 8<sup>th</sup> this year, a hip hop "group of displaced Iraqis" blew up the stage. The crew from Montreal called Euphrates - Narcisyst and Sandhill - introduced a re-definition of political music and cultural resistance to Vancouver that redefines more than music. The challenge that Euphrates presents to all progressive people is to never allow ourselves to grow comfortable with the limitations, restrictions or divisions that capitalism and imperialism imposes on us.

There has always been a strong political current to hip hop. Even when the lyrics are not explicitly political, the music has represented the dissatisfaction and alienation of oppressed young people within imperialist countries. Euphrates has taken this rebellion and, in the tradition of KRS-1, have focussed it into resistance to imperialism and the oppression and racist division of poor and working people in Canada. They pull this off through the bold musical blending of Middle Eastern rhythms with classic hip hop beats and with flowing poetic lyrics.

On the song "Spider Hole" off their new record, "Stereotypes Incorporated," MC Narcisyst tells the groups experience of being arrested at the US border while they were on their way to perform at an anti-discrimination concert. Characteristic of their challenging style, he does not just attack the racism at the border but explains this racism through the context of imperialist war at home and abroad under the cover of September 11<sup>th</sup>:

*"Cuffing Euphrates at the borders, that's racial profiling / Pucks to hockey, your goal is to stick us / All of a sudden you're told you're a victim / Then believe you're stepping to heaven like Led Zeppelin since September 11<sup>th</sup>"*



Within the same song, they repeat a pledge to resist this war:

*"We won't accept it, let it be known  
We suffered death and peace grown  
In action soldiers, leave no mo'  
Iraqnophobia."*

There are times in their music that Euphrates represents the voice and demands of the Iraqi resistance, with a rage against the occupation of their country expressed through sharp criticism of the era of war and occupation:

*"The states got prepared; the chain started a planned trigger to stereotype Muslims and Arabs to sand niggers, they bombed Afghanistan and raided Iraq twice  
Imperialism returns as we burn and lost life."*

And there are other times that Narcisyst speaks from the heart of a US soldier who realizes the quagmire he has been sent into by imperialism:

*"I should've stayed at home, now I'm in Basra / with British troops, everyone dying but us."*

*"soldiers caught up that's what happened at Abu Ghraib."* Euphrates is a positive and progressive example of what can be done with music as a political tool of mobilization and the expression of resistance through art and culture. They are a fierce, angry and intelligent hip hop group that remain true to the artistic expression of life and humanity throughout their consistent attacks on imperialism. They carry sharp and analytical songs without resorting to cliché or rhetoric, and throughout, their call to action for hip hoppers and all poor and working people against injustice remains clear: you can't be neutral in a struggle for humanity.

Euphrates released their first album, 'A Bend in the River' independently and have sold over a thousand copies without promotion or advertising. Their upcoming album, 'Stereotypes Incorporated', will also be released independently. Fire This Time encourages the readers of our paper to pick up their records and check them out online. You can listen to Euphrates and order their CDs on their website at: [www.euphrates.ca](http://www.euphrates.ca)



# Solidarity with the Five in the Vancouver

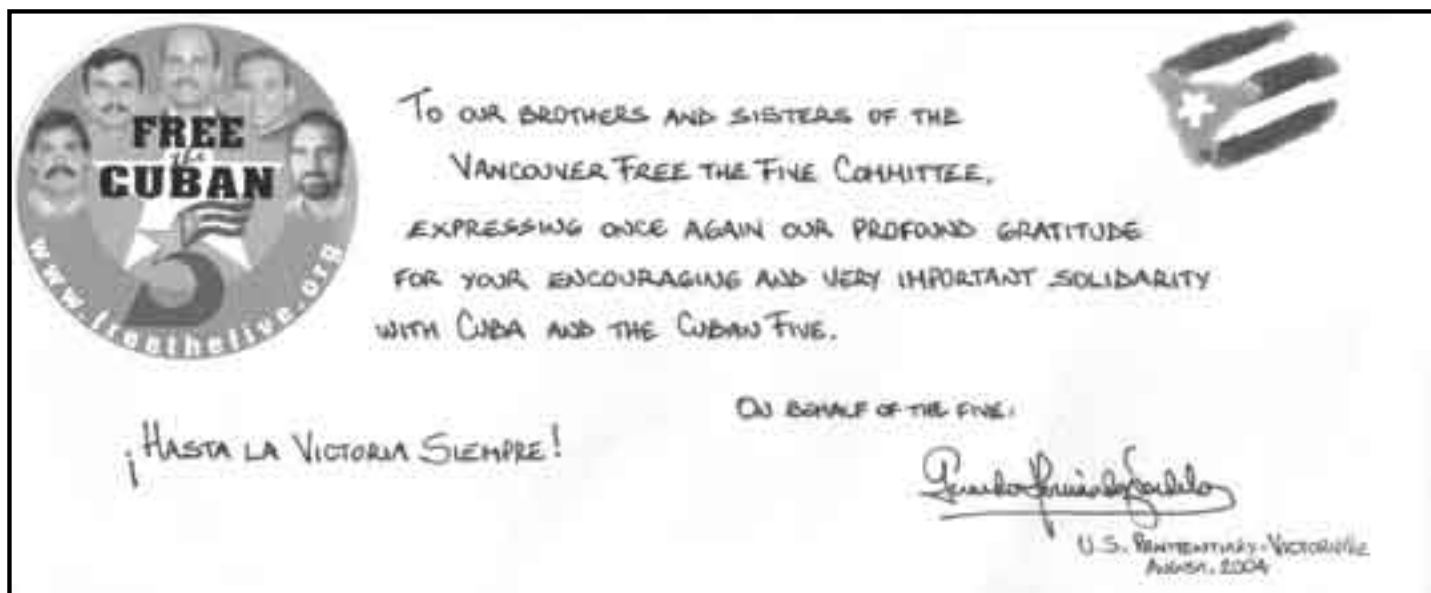
By Thomas Davies

In the midst of augmented attacks on Cuba by the United States, the Free the Cuban Five Committee - Vancouver continues to organize in defense of these five Cuban prisoners of Imperialism. The group's major campaign - a petition to demand the Cuban Five's immediate release from United States jails, now has well over 2,000 signatures. A full slate of events and materials to continue the worldwide campaign to "Free the Five!" is also well under way in Vancouver.

The group has also recently begun working with the Free the Cuban Five Committee - Courtenay, BC. The groups will undertake the petition campaign together, and we will support their upcoming forum at North Island College in Courtenay on Friday, October 22nd. As part of an international movement, this collaboration between local groups is integral to building effectively and our Committee looks forward to increased collaboration on a national and international level.

Two of the Cuban Five, Gerardo Hernandez and Fernando Gonzalez recently took the time to write individual letters to the Committee - expressing solidarity and thanks as we work together for their release, an excerpt from Gerardo's letter is below. These letters reaffirm the important and appreciated work that is being undertaken in defense of the Cuban Five in Vancouver.

As the Cuban Five continue to maintain their innocence while held in US prisons today, they are vital in a worldwide movement



to expose the brutality and hypocrisy of the United States. Among over 210 "Free the Five" organizations worldwide, we undertake our work in a constant effort to connect their struggle to Cuba's overall fight for dignity and sovereignty, and to a broad and dynamic movement for self-determination worldwide. We commit to continue organizing around the case until they are all free.

To be part of this work, please join us at our next meeting, 5:30 p.m on Monday, October 4th at 5:30pm. Contact: cuban5\_van@yahoo.com or phone (778) 889-7664.

To contact the Free the Cuban Five Committee - Courtenay, e-mail: cuban5\_courtenay@yahoo.ca or phone: (250) 339 5490.

## Onward to Victory in Venezuela!

From page 26

### Reactionary Referendum: Mobilizing the vote in defense of the Bolivarian revolution

The recall referendum is a new constitutional right that Venezuelans won thanks to the new constitution drafted by the Electoral Constituent Assembly during Hugo Chavez's first year in office and approved by popular majority.

The recall of elected officials was an idea opposed by the opposition and proposed by Chavez to the assembly. It was supported by the majority and rejected by the opposition. Now the opposition uses it to oust the president. The opposition puts all their hopes in the recall referendum to oust the charismatic leader before the end of his office term. So they exercise their right to recall.

They collected the signatures in December last year and in June 2004 the final results were given by the National Electoral Council (CNE). Chavez had to be reevaluated by the people of the nation.

There were plenty of irregularities in the collection of the signatures. When the results came out, Chavez accepted the challenge and instead of rejecting it, he started to organize the country by using a legend called 'Florentino y el Diablo' and it was like a party, everybody was playing songs and organizing in groups.

In April this year a militia group was found in a farm that belonged to a Cuban contra. They had planned to kill the president, attacking the opposition areas and blaming the government supporters. All these paramilitaries had uniforms that belonged to Venezuelan soldiers so when they attacked the opposition areas, people would not recognize them because they were wearing the Venezuelan military uniforms.

Venezuelans, every time, have demonstrated their patience, civic behavior, and determination to keep Chavez.

During the recall referendum, there were long lines to vote. The CNE had underestimated the great amount of voters that were going to show up so no new voting centres were opened to accommodate this great amount of people who were 94.49% of the eligible population. Of the almost 14 million people who were eligible voters, almost 13 million voted.

On Sunday the 15th of August at around noontime, there was a news release that authorities had found a CD containing sound recording. This recording had the same voice as CNE president. This message said that the opposition had won the referendum by more than 11million votes. The recording was supposed to be released by Sunday at 8pm. All afternoon the private channels were airing this news despite the CNE's advice to wait until the official result were given. The first plan to ruin the referendum had failed.

The election on Sunday was supposed to be finished by 6pm. The electoral council extended the hours to 8pm, provided that nobody was waiting in line, and then until midnight. At 1:45am on the 16th, there were still people lining up to vote; in spite of the

difficulties people were determined to vote. In some cases in the morning when the process started, the technicians who were supposed to be running the scanning machines [to verify identification] did not show up on time and they did not accept to start the process if the machines were not running. They didn't want to risk losing their vote the same way it had happened in the past; so they organized again, went to the Venezuelan TV stations and demanded that those machines start to work.

Today I heard in the news that the official amount given by the national electoral council of votes was 74.64%, so Chavez won by almost 75% of the vote. This is the third election that the president has won; the first was by 68%, the reelection was by 69% and this time by almost 75%.

This means that the amount of people who support the president has increased.

### The battle is won, but the war goes on

Millions of Venezuelans now have access for the first time to medical and dental care, education, literacy programs, free university, micro-credit loans and even some land that has been re-distributed in rural areas since the law of land was changed, benefiting all groups of people but especially indigenous people and women.

Venezuelans know that there is an active neo-Liberal agenda, therefore they defend their president and their democracy because they feel included in the participative democracy. President Chavez advised that the battle here remain active because the battle is not finished. These units have been formed because of the campaigns for the referendum and he advised these units to continue working together to face any difficulties that may arise and Venezuelans are always ready to come in masses to join the battlefield.

We can see by the results, the percentages since the president won the first time have continually increased and it's expected that it will rise to almost 100% when the new law of the media starts to run, soon it will be approved.

The elections for the Governors are coming on the 26th of September; most Governors are going to be changed for people who want to work for the revolution. Then probably in December there will be the election for deputies. If the media law has not been approved for then, it will for sure be approved for next year so 100% of Venezuelans will be able to listen to the truth everyday, not a bunch of lies like they have been listening to throughout this process.

Chavez says that the constitution is a project that Simon Bolivar started in the 1800's when he liberated five nations. The project stopped because Simon Bolivar was sent to Colombia when the oligarchy attacked him.

Chavez says that after the referendum, the conclusion of this process, and the consolidation of this project comes. The Venezuelan people don't want promises, they want acts, and Chavez is giving that.

ONWARD TO VICTORY!  
(Applause)



Mural for Cuban 5 in Havana.

## Letter From Fernando Gonzalez to the activists of FC5C Vancouver

August 12, 2004

Dear Friends:

Thank you so much for your message of solidarity and your kind words regarding our resistance to imperialism and injustice.

I am very glad to know that you got together to celebrate the anniversary of the attacks of the Moncada and we are very grateful for your efforts in solidarity with Cuba and our cause.

We are still awaiting a

decision on our case by the Court of Appeals in Atlanta. I am very optimistic and certain of the strength of our arguments so, I have reasons to expect important corrections of some of the injustices in the case, However, I believe that it will be solidarity that will have the last word in bringing justice.

To all our friends in Vancouver I want to express my deepest gratitude...

"Venceremos!

Fernando Gonzalez"

# Cuba's Successes Against Imperialism

From page 26

Cuba, it was used by the US as propaganda against Cuba in as many ways as possible.

## Three major attacks

There are three of these attacks which I think are particularly significant and which I want to expand upon a bit. Number one, the Bay of Pigs, which was a major set back for the US. What happened in this was that the US organized Cuban exiles to invade Cuba in 1961 and they were defeated. This was a set back for the strategy to militarily destroy the revolution and overthrow the Cuban government. The Cuban people were mobilized and only 3 years after the revolution they successfully drove out invading forces that were backed by a tremendously powerful military. What this meant is that the US and the world really realized that defeating the Cuban people and overthrowing the Cuban government wasn't going to happen with an easy strategy of a military invasion. This is when long term political and economic strategies emerged.

The economic blockade is the second attack I'm going to explain. Following the cutting and then stopping of sugar imports, the US imposed a full economic blockade on Cuba. This has been strengthened more recently. It is one of the biggest and most longstanding attacks by the US against Cuba and has caused an incredible impact on the nation. It is interesting to note as well, in the context of the fact that there is no declared war on Cuba by the US, that this is a fully illegal attack internationally. Of course we could look at the many things the US does to defend its interests that are completely illegal. The severity and consequences of this blockade have been felt very deeply throughout Cuba. Despite that it has failed to succeed in its objective of destroying the Cuban government.

Interestingly as well, in 1996, which is some time after these first two attacks, the Helms-Burton Act was passed. This, again, is referred to as the "Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act". It continued and strengthened US sanctions against Cuba. It was in response to the developments around a terrorist threat in Cuba. Two planes, which were operated by "Brothers to the Rescue", which is a terrorist organization that works out of Miami which has made different attempts to try to sabotage and drive people out of Cuba. They [Brothers to the Rescue airplanes] were shot down when flying in Cuban airspace. So the US responded to that with the Helms-Burton. This act has been condemned by various governments in the world and as well is understood by the Cuban people as another major and more recent attack which shows of the significance of Cuba to the US. These three examples of how the US is maneuvering to overthrow the Cuban government have also shown us how against such incredible odds, the Cuban people have not been defeated.

## How the Cuban leadership responded

How the Cuban people have responded historically and how they continue to respond to these attacks; whether they are the refusal to refine Soviet oil as US companies did in the beginning, or an actual military invasion, or if they are propaganda, there are reoccurring elements and strategies in how the Cuban people respond. Three of the most significant strategies are: number one - mobilization. Number two - through voluntary work, which has even been rejuvenated and has been a huge part of maintaining the revolution. And

number three - international work and internationalism.

The response of Cuba, without exception, to US attacks has been the response of masses of people in motion. From the beginning Cuba responded through mobilization, whether its calling people to defend with arms or whether its calling people to mobilize against the blockade. When they've faced economic pressure, voluntary work brigades were mobilized in order to build schools, in order to build

different than any other leadership. Different from ex-Soviet Union and of course different from Canada and the US. The result of this strategy in Cuba is based on politics that were developed very early on, this objective of the development of a new human being. All these strategies for mobilizing people and impacting people politically - expanding leadership, expanding active participation.

## Era of imperialist wars and occupations



FTT coordinator Shannon Bundock (l) speaking at Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba conference with conference MC and VCSC Coordinator Tamara Hansen (r) 21 August 2004.

hospitals, in order to strengthen the institutions needed and in order to maintain quality of life in Cuba. Cuba even responded to illiteracy through mass-mobilization. Cuba fought for Elian Gonzalez through mass-mobilization.

This mobilization has the character of Cuban people overcoming obstacles with the essential element of voluntary labour. In the face of the most dire economic conditions, at the beginning of the revolution, all the way up until the Special Period in the early 1990's, voluntary work has combated problems and developed the Cuban people as active and voluntary participants in the revolution and the development of their nation. Again, voluntary work is connected very deeply to international work. International work and internationalism is perhaps the most threatening and the most effective element of the strategy of Cuba. International work, of sending doctors, of sending teachers, sending skilled laborers, sending soldiers, to other nations to work with oppressed people. Through practicing internationalism Cuba cannot be isolated and destroyed as a lone fighter in a sea of sharks.

Cuba is strengthened politically because through this, not only does Cuba develop relationships with oppressed people's movements, what it really develops, what it most significantly develops is something that Che Guevara introduced and that is the development of a new human being. In Cuba this means that they'll defend Cuba to the end, but they will do that with an international understanding and context. In a country that is under such severe attack, being able to send doctors, completely free of charge to places like Venezuela, and all around the world is an incredible act. It is done for a very significant and important political reason.

What this means, what all of this means, is that in Cuba there is a different leadership. One that is

Today what we see is that the attacks on Cuba are happening in the context of a global economic crisis. They are happening as inflation increases, unemployment increases in imperialist and first world nations. They are happening as the situation becomes more desperate for imperialist nations and the response of the US to this, and the response of many of the competitors of the US - like France, Germany and Canada itself - has been going into third-world nations, occupying those nations, plundering those nations and attempting to get as much as they can gain through those wars and military occupations as they can in order to combat their own problems. And they must secure themselves against their competitors.

This era began with the intervention in Afghanistan, the launching pad. Then the intervention in Iraq. From this we see as well, the new policy and new attack on Latin America. The position of Cuba in Latin America is very special and important. I think that from looking at the history of Cuba we can understand and develop why this is. What the US is doing today is launching and strengthening the attacks that they have been making against Cuba for decades. Tamara [Hansen, conference MC] mentioned at the beginning of this that on May 6th, 2004 the US passed legislation strengthening the blockade, putting 59 million dollars into new attacks. We have started to see the new political attacks by the US through such things as the recent accusation that Cuba is engaged in sex tourism, which Fidel Castro responded to. I believe everyone has a copy of this response speech in the conference package, which is the Second Epistle addressed to George Bush. What this means too, with intervention in Haiti and the establishment of Haiti as a launching pad in Latin America is that the US is going to be putting more and more energy and strength behind its objective of overthrowing the Cuban government.

This needs to be understood with what has been happening since 1959. Despite the fact that the Cuban people are strengthened today because of the past 50 years that they have been fighting and developing, they are still facing and coming up to a period, and Fidel has said this repeatedly as well, where they will be tested again and again. A period where the US, in its desperation, will attack with more ferocity. Today Cuba is continuing to respond with those three significant strategic elements. Through

revolution which against all odds has meant a total eradication of illiteracy, has meant 95% access to healthcare, has meant that Cuba has gone from 1958 where 27% of children had access to schools, to today when 100% of have schools.

So the strategy of mobilizing, the strategy of voluntary work and the strategy of internationalism have created not just a series of accomplishments, it has essentially created a Cuba and a Cuban people that are leading and have become a leadership. And created that new leadership and new human being.

What the role of us is, is what I want to close with. What this means for Latin America, what this means beyond Latin America, what this means here in Canada, is something that is a really major political struggle for all oppressed people and all working people. At the beginning I said that we have to understand and talk about the Cuban revolution as an accomplishment for Cuban people, and defending it for Cuban people, but also defending it in the context of working and oppressed people everywhere.

In July 2003, Vladamir Mirabal was speaking in Vancouver and he said that effective solidarity work in Vancouver, is not sending bikes or sending computers to Cuba. He said that effective solidarity work with Cuba is that Cubans need friendship. That Cuban people need strong political solidarity. I think that that is something that we can't take lightly. We must build a solidarity movement here, we must build an education movement, an action movement that expands awareness and support of the Cuban revolution across the lower mainland, across BC, across Canada. And we must support Cuba as a unique example. An example for the world of a new society, a new way of life, an example of a new human being.

## Cuba's role

Cuba shares a common enemy with the people of Iraq. It shares a common enemy with the people of Afghanistan, with the people of Palestine, with the people of Haiti, with Indigenous Nations who are occupied here in Canada and America and with poor and working people of all nations globally. The Cuban people need for all working people of the world, and especially for people under attack in the most severe examples of imperialist assault, to rise up and throw off the occupier, the war monger, the invader.

As a leader of the Cuban revolution, Che Guevara said "There are no boundaries in this struggle to the death. 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."

And I don't think, again, that this was something said lightly. In order to effectively weaken imperialism and to effectively prevent further plundering of resources for the benefit of the global imperialist countries, we must unite and strengthen our forces as oppressed people.

Castro has called upon the people of the world to solidarise and to unify and we have to heed this call and truly realize it. People of the world must recognize that pressure and attacks on Cuba are a part of an expansion of the era of war and occupation and part of the ultimate goal of realizing the overthrow of the Cuban government. With this understanding we must mobilize in support Cuba, in defense of Cuba and against any US intervention and for, overall, for a better world.

Thank you.

# Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba - *JOIN US!*

By Tamara Hansen

On May 6<sup>th</sup> 2004, new measures were announced by George Bush which have escalated the criminal attacks by the US government against Cuba. Some of these measures include making \$59 million available over the next two years to pay for illegal actions aimed at destroying Cuba's sovereignty, including money for financing and training mercenaries working for the US in Cuba.

These attacks show the falsehood behind the US' claim that they are fighting for the freedom of the Cuban people. It also further limits Cuba's ability to survive as an independent sovereign nation.

## Cuba's response

On May 14<sup>th</sup> 2004, Fidel Castro and one million Cubans gathered in the streets of Havana to speak out against the new US aggression demanding President George W Bush re-evaluate his true position on human rights, justice and freedom. Castro also spoke out against the US' claim that the Cuban government is tyrannical saying: "You label a tyranny the economic and political system that has guided the Cuban people to higher



levels of literacy, knowledge and culture than those in the most developed countries in the world."

And indeed Cuba's revolutionary government has brought many gains for its people, including free education, free healthcare and high employment rates. Furthermore, the million people who came to the streets to support Fidel Castro and demand an end to US aggression on their country shows, that Cubans are willing to fight to

keep their revolution alive.

## Vancouver shows its solidarity with Cuba

In May 2004 Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) formed with the goal of fighting with the Cuban people against the new US attacks. On June 26<sup>th</sup> 2004, VCSC along with over 250 people gathered in the streets of Vancouver to declare their opposition to the new US attacks on Cuba.

Since then VCSC has continued to organize large events in solidarity with Cuba, including a celebration of the Cuban revolution on July 26<sup>th</sup> and an all-day conference on August 21<sup>st</sup> entitled, "Cuba and Venezuela in the era of war and occupation: Why the US is targeting Cuba and Venezuela and what you can do about it." Both events have sparked interest in Vancouver and have made VCSC organizers more dedicated to the long-term

work of organizing in support of Cuba- its government, its people, and their right to self-determination.

We agree with Fidel Castro when he said to US President George Bush, "In the world that you seek to impose on us, there is not the slightest notion of ethics, credibility, standards of justice, humanitarian feelings, nor of the elementary principles of solidarity and generosity." It is because of this that Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba is dedicated to show the people of British-Columbia that there is an alternative to the US' policies of aggression. We are currently organizing a Student Week in Solidarity with Cuba for this fall, and have just launched a petition campaign to "Lift the Blockade on Cuba". With these campaigns we aim to unite the people of Vancouver against the blockade and new US aggression and to defend Cuba and it's right to self-determination.

We encourage everyone who is interested in defending Cuba against US attacks to become involved with our organizing and contact us at: cubacommunities@yahoo.ca

*Venceremos - We will win!*

**DAY OF ACTION  
AGAINST WAR AND OCCUPATION!**

**US/UK OUT!**



**END THE OCCUPATIONS OF IRAQ,  
PALESTINE, AFGHANISTAN, HAITI, &  
INDIGENOUS NATIONS IN CANADA!**

**PROTEST RALLY AND MARCH**

**OCTOBER 23<sup>RD</sup>**

**3PM**

**Vancouver Art Gallery**

**Organized by Mobilization Against War and Occupation**  
www.mawovancouver.org | info@mawovancouver.org | (604) 322-1764

## Interview with Meegan Maultsaid

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I felt like the workshops were really strong and the programming was really strong.

As I moved through the festival that day I felt like there was a lot of strength and messages, others said this too. Again the idea of people coming and recharging their batteries I felt like it really happened and a lot of the post festival feedback was that it was a great day. It totally was a celebration that is really important too. And its not just the pedantic-ness of politics it's also about people who are political, it's about people who are political being able to come together for this day and be able to celebrate that we have this commonality and this common goal as activists from all these different little pockets.

When I cruise through the site and watch people interacting or watching artists or watching different workshops I think, "This is what it's meant to be. It's serving its purpose in the community." People really had a sense of celebration. I myself didn't particularly enjoy the day, I think everyone who works on it finds it hard to enjoy because it's stressful because we're trying to keep the momentum and deal with little fires that keep coming up, but that's not the point.

The point is that the 5000 people that were there got something out of

it. I think that there was about 5000 people which is really good for us. I think we all agree that we're kind of on a plateau now where I don't think we're going to get bigger and we're a bit too radical of a festival to get any bigger. I mean 5000 people is pretty good and it's a comfortable number, it's manageable and we broke even and we're non-profit so that's great. It's a good number of people and the only way we could get 7, 8, 9,000 people would be if we programmed outside of our parameters and booked more mainstream acts and that's not in the spirit of Volcano and we'd rather keep it as a really radical and progressive event and hope that the weather cooperates and hope that 4 or 5,000 people come.

So for next year, we have a meeting in a couple of weeks! Lots of the same people are going to work on it next year because people come and go and maybe only work on it for a year or two, which is great because they're committing a year of their life to it but I think it's exciting that there's some continuity and commitment and that's helping to streamline how we do things. I'm excited because we have a strong working group and I'm not sure yet exactly what the plan is yet but I know I'm going to be inviting Aleida Guevara, Che Guevara's daughter, to speak, that's my big thing for next year.

**Thank you Meegan.**

# OPERATION: CANADA OUT!

## MAWO Campaign for Afghanistan and Haiti

# 7000 Signatures: A Victory Against War & Occupation!

By Kira Koschelanyk

Since February 2004, over 7,000 people across the Lower Mainland have said "No" to Canadian imperialism. From Burnaby to Surrey to North Vancouver and New Westminster, poor and working people, students, youth and immigrants and refugees have joined MAWO's campaign against Canadian imperialism, "Operation: Canada Out!"

MAWO's "Operation: Canada Out!" is the first campaign of its kind in the history of Canada. The political focus and uncompromising fight against Canadian occupation, at home and abroad, is un-precedented and also vital to the expansion of the anti war movement in Canada. It is our job to take on our "local imperialist" and develop people's understanding of our own government's role in war and occupation. In the context of the new and unfolding era of war and occupation where imperialist nations have plans to invade and plunder more and more third world countries, we have to recognize Canada's increasing aggression in its

own interest on the world stage.

MAWO's method in carrying out this major campaign is very important in looking at its success. The petitions themselves, "Canada Out of Haiti!" "Canada Out of Afghanistan!" are living tools for education and mobilization. Through MAWO's strategy of "setting down and engulfing" an area during the traveling Petition Tour Stops, MAWO organizers saturate an area during the course of the day with anti imperialist politics and also the challenge of viewing Canada's reputation as a "peacekeeper" as a farce.

The challenge ahead for "Operation: Canada Out!" remains in its successful expansion across Canada and in the continued activity of the campaign to build consciousness around Canadian foreign policy. As people living in Canada, these issues are directly related to our lives and to those of the 7,000 who've already signed on. We must look at this victory to move forward and to see that the 7,000 are a representation of the anti imperialist sentiment and potential there is in our cities, suburbs and communities. Get involved in building



Mobilization Against War and Occupation CANADA OUT! petition stop in Surrey, 4 October 2004.

the movement against imperialist war and occupation at home and abroad! Join MAWO's "Operation: Canada Out!"

More Info, Join the Campaign, Sign the Petition: [www.mawovancouver.org](http://www.mawovancouver.org)  
[info@mawovancouver.org](mailto:info@mawovancouver.org)

## Korean Students Mobilize!

From page 9

come here to study English or who are living here. They have a hard time studying English because studying foreign languages is so stressful, so they don't have any time to get involved in this kind of movement and realize what is happening in Iraq. But, we are continuing to organize people and to get Korean students involved in the antiwar movement through rallies or fundraisers or film nights and forums. Actually, we want to effectively contribute to the antiwar movement in Canada as much as we can. We will just keep doing our job.

**FTT: Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

Canada has a welfare and social assistance system for people who live here, so Canada is one of the good places to live in the world. Canada is also known as a peacekeeping country. As former Prime Minister Jean Chretien declared, Canada is

an independent country, we are not going to get involved in the US-led war.

We were pleased and envious of the Canadian Liberal government's decision not to participate in the Iraq war. However, when we review the reasons behind Canada's decision they didn't support the US-led war, but they encouraged the US government to send more US soldiers to Iraq by deploying more troops to Afghanistan.

Now that we are more educated on the history of Canada and the history of indigenous people, we are more disappointed. So, I just want people who came to study English or immigrants or whatever to study more carefully about the history of Canada, which is rich and encouraging, but also sad for what has happened to indigenous people. We can't talk about Canada without mentioning the struggle of indigenous people and the role of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

**FTT: Thank you both for the interview.**

# US-UK Out of Iraq! The Intifada Lives! Defend War Resisters!

## MAWO Newsletter #6

Available at:

[www.mawovancouver.org](http://www.mawovancouver.org)

Mobilization Against War & Occupation  
604 322 1764 | [info@mawovancouver.org](mailto:info@mawovancouver.org)



# End Police Brutality! Justice for Jeff, Justice for All

From page 17

about it and realizes that they can make a difference and if we don't then we're just going to see a tragic deterioration of our policing force.

**FTT: What's happening with the case now?**

Starting September 13<sup>th</sup>, there is going to a public hearing ordered by Dirk Ryneveld, the police complaints commissioner. It's for 'use of unnecessary force causing death', not 'excessive,' but 'unnecessary' force because of civilian eyewitnesses that saw my brother basically frozen like a statue waiting to be handcuffed, spread eagle on the trunk of a car.

Now, the public hearing commences on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and it's scheduled for a three-week period. Of course all the police lawyers will be there, everyone trying to defend their side of the story. But it's up to the adjudicator to decide. It's not the jury that matters, but an adjudicator will be present and both sides will present the facts and it will be ruled whether there was unnecessary force causing death.

The heaviest penalty that can be held here against Constable Bruce Thomas is dismissal from the force. For me that's not good enough at all, but it's the only system that we have in place.

**FTT: What can people do to help win justice for Jeff Berg and all victims of police brutality?**

I am the voice of the average person, I have no special skills, other than that I am a people-person, I am an honest person, Vancouver-born-and-raised family-person and businesswoman. Perhaps I am just the first to bring forward these injustices.

I have set up a trust fund for my brother, if anyone wants to donate any money to keep me rolling, because this has cost me an extreme financial burden. The emotional toll, I don't mind, I accept that, because it is par for the course and it is part of my family's emotional closure as well. But there is a financial burden, I hate to bring it down to dollars but it's extremely true, it is costly for my lawyer to keep this case going forward. If anybody, please, if anybody can donate anything at all, \$20 helps, \$100, anything at all.

This is not to be fooled around with, this is extremely serious, it affects everybody, it's not just about Jeff. It's about every citizen here. Rich, poor, it doesn't matter where you live, we're all the same, we're all equally entitled to the same laws and the same protection by those laws.

People can also e-mail me their

stories; people have been doing so. People who have had wrong doings by the police. I go make speeches to the police board, I bring these people together and I think it's important because there's a common thread, it's not just about Jeff, it's about every person. I hope that some people will find it in their hearts to help me continue the fight.

**Thank-you very much Julie**

*To donate money to the Jeff Berg Defense Fund:*

Bank of Nova Scotia, 1004 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V6H 1E6 - Account #20370 - 33413.

All donations will be applied to legal services rendered by A. Cameron Ward & Co.

Cheque donations can be made at any Scotiabank branch and will be sent to Broadway & Oak branch.

You can also mail a cheque to "Jeff Berg Defense Fund", c/o Neto Leather, 252 East 2nd Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5T 1B7

Contact Julie Berg with stories of your experiences of police misconduct: [justiceforjeffberg@hotmail.com](mailto:justiceforjeffberg@hotmail.com)

Or see Julie Berg's Website: [www.justiceforjeff.com](http://www.justiceforjeff.com)



## Venezuela as a Positive Example for Poor and Working People

From page 11

Since the referendum, the US has maintained its critical and hostile view of Venezuela, albeit, through cautions and guarded statements. After the referendum, US Secretary of State, Colin Powell told the Associate Press:

*"We have concerns about some of the actions that President Chavez has taken over the years in pursuit of his vision of Bolivarian democracy. We want the Venezuelan people to do well. We are friends of the Venezuelan people. And now that the election, or the referendum, is over, we will just have to see how things develop."*

When it comes to taking action however, the US is not waiting to "see how things develop." In mid-September the Bush administration decided to sanction Venezuela and stop \$250million in loan requests. The justification for this was a series of false and totally unsubstantiated accusations of human trafficking, reminiscent of recent political slander used against Cuba. Not only was this a justification for economic attacks, it also functions as a political attack, attempting to vilify and discredit the Venezuelan government. This is really ironic that While Venezuela is a signatory to the United Nations Convention Against Organized Crime and Protocol to Prevent and Penalize Human Trafficking, US is yet to sign these important documents.

The latest economic and political attacks on Venezuela are further indication that the US is keeping a close radar on Venezuela and intervening in any way it possibly can. It is also becoming clear that the strategy of direct attacks from Washington may increase. With the fracturing, weakening and failures of the opposition, the US cannot rely solely on funneling funds to Sumate or the Coordinadora Democratica.

**Canadian Government on Chavez, A Negative Model**

*"This referendum is an important milestone in Venezuelan democracy, and It offers the*



'We Are an Overflow River', says a banner at a pro-Chavez rally outside of the presidential palace in Caracas, Venezuela.

*opportunity to decide the future direction of the country and to end months of political polarization and instability. I wish to emphasize the importance of a violence-free vote, with results that are accepted by all sides."* – Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Pettigrew on August 13

Despite the apparent importance of the August 15th referendum from the point of view of minister Pettigrew, he said nothing about the success of referendum and victory of 'democracy' or even simple official recognition of the result of very democratic referendum that he wished to be processed in Venezuela. Just after OAS observers official statement Canadian government urged all sides in Venezuela accept the result. In fact Canadian government has never been friendly to or truly respected Chavez government and never directly criticised criminal and undemocratic

activities of the reactionary right wing opposition in Venezuela. Bill Graham then and Pierre Pettigrew now, both while giving lip service to the Chavez government since 1998, in fact none of them ever showed any genuine interest in progress made by working and poor people of Venezuela. Back to coup in December 2002, no official statement issued against the undemocratic and illegal coup against elected president Chavez.

**Cuban Government on Chavez, A Positive Model**

"Our cooperation with Venezuela is inspired in ideals much more transcendental than trade exchanges between the two countries. We share a mutual awareness of the need to unite the Latin American and Caribbean nations and to struggle for a world economic order that brings more justice to all peoples. This is no written

Pact, but rather a community of objectives expressed in our common actions..." – Fidel Castro in Venezuela, February 27, 2002

Cuba's most revolutionary practice since 1959 revolution has been the commitment to revolutionary internationalism. From decisive military defeat of South African army in Angola to the humanitarian help and assistance to the more than 50 third- world countries Cuban government has practiced consistently the revolutionary internationalism in action. This remarkable achievement has done by a country that itself is considered a third-world country. No wonder since 1998 Cuba has been the most important supporter and assistant to Chavez Government and his progressive policies. Diplomatic relations and friendship with revolutionary Cuba has brought many gains for Venezuela. Some 16,000 volunteers including doctors, nurses, teachers, technician are helping Venezuelan people in their Bolivarian revolution for a better and dignified life. Two countries have increased their trade ties from \$550 million in 1998 to almost 1 billion in 2004 and still increasing. Through mutual interest Venezuela has become Cuba's biggest trading partner. Cuban has helped to build 3000 new schools and helped to educate more than 2 million new children that have been added to the educational system.

The revolutionary cooperation between these two countries is a conscious decision by their respective leadership based of the understanding of importance of role these countries are playing in the whole Latin America for a future that no imperialism or Yankee dominance is in picture.

**The Question of Questions: The Question of Leadership**

Now, what has the Chavez government done in the last six years to get all this attention from Washington? What actions could have resulted in statements such as:

*"U.S.-Venezuelan relations have suffered*

*Continued on page 34*

# Stand in Solidarity with Venezuela!

From page 33

in recent years. Chávez is mostly to blame, given his administration's abuse of democratic institutions and its embrace of rogue groups abhorred by Washington and the international community, such as Cuba, Iraq and Colombia's guerrilla armies." – Miguel Diaz director of right wing think-tank the Center for Strategic and International Studies

"Today, 22 of 23 Latin American countries are considered to be democratic. (Cuba is the exception.) But some states, especially those with leftist-leaning leaders and economic problems (such as Ecuador and Argentina), might follow Venezuela's path. This would be a significant setback for the hemisphere and its people." – Peter Brookes, senior fellow, with right wing thin tank Heritage Foundation

The fact is that Chavez has been a threat to US imperialist interests in Venezuela in both the short and long-term sense. The anti-imperialist impact of the Bolivarian Republic will increase as Venezuela develops its leadership in Latin America and gains more sympathy and support from popular movements and oppressed people in the region. In the immediate and concrete sense, the Chavez government has undermined and eroded the hegemony that US economic interests have established in the nation. In that sense Chavez has consolidated one of two most central tasks of any social movement or revolution in Venezuela or for that matter any colonial or semicolonial countries: Struggle against imperialism with the achievement of truly national independence in the course of widening and deepening bourgeois democracy with the goal of facilitating mass mobilization and building further mass democratic institutions. To achieve this his government refused to accept the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) and instead Venezuela developed the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) as a counterweight to the argument that the only path towards regional integration is economic subservience to the imperialists in the north. In addition, the Chavez government has rejected International Monetary Fund involvement in the country. In April 2004 Finance Minister Tobias Nobrega said "Venezuela is overcoming its financial difficulties independently of the IMF and it is doing this by applying the opposite of what is recommended by the well-known but limited IMF recipes."

Anti-imperialist stands of Chavez also has been consistent with its domestic and international policies. He was the first head of state to visit Iraq in defiance of ban travelling by United States. He offered ousted president Aristide of Haiti asylum and military assistance. He has condemned war in Afghanistan and Iraq and his government supported the Palestinian struggle for self determination. And above all has developed a closed revolutionary tide with Cuba. The domestic balance sheet of Chavez is even more amazing with his Bolivarian Revolution, which in essence is nothing but a declaration of war on neoliberalism. To name a few of these gains: universal health care, dropping infant mortality by 25% in four years, founding special pharmacies who sell drugs to poor 30 to 50 percent cheaper than market, creating hundreds of local clinics in the poor and working class areas, 3000 new school with two million more children added to the educational system, free food in school, creating more than 500,000 jobs, building more than 200,000 new units of social and public housing,

a massive literacy campaign that reduced the illiteracy substantially and still is going on, forming and creating new mass organizations including unions like a new National Union of Workers (UNT), set up more than 130,000 grassroots-community groups called Bolivarian Circles to educate and politicise poor with the goal of raising the level of consciousness of poor, farm and working people. More importantly Chavez has turned Venezuela a country of despotic dictators and coup planner to a country of masses in motion through education, organization and mobilization. Chavez successfully and skillfully has used the mass mobilization as a tool for social and political advancement, not by decree from above by an elite 'progressive' government but with the deep social change from the below. This is a perfect classical social change with people in motion growing and developing their social thinking stage by stage and subsequently acting politically in a concrete demand and struggle to achieve.

"The recall referendum was not just a referendum on Hugo Chavez, it was a referendum of the revolutionary process, and a majority of Venezuelans articulated their support. It is time to deepen the revolution." – President Chavez on August 16 Just after victory of referendum

"...To build the new economy, transforming the capitalist economic model into a social, humanist and equality economy... The time has come to accelerate the transformation." – President Chavez calling on private business to join the Bolivarian Revolution

Since winning the Presidential recall referendum, Chavez has increased pressure on the capitalist class by appealing to the most unconsolidated elements of the opposition. Rather than mechanically attacking the base of Coordinadora Democrática, he has added pressure to the fracturing of the coalition by appealing for dialogue and pushing to recruit some of the unstable elements. This strategy is part of the further polarization of the

reached by Barrio Adentro.

As well, a national literacy program, Mission Ribas has spread across the country. The goal of the campaign is to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to more than 1.5 million people who are illiterate, about 12 percent of adults in this country of 24 million people. On top of this a second stage has been developed through Mission Sucre, which offers free adult education courses to people seeking to improve their skills.

Next to these programs is the grassroots political organization of Venezuelans through the Bolivarian Circles, which have tackled regional and local social problems. The Venezuelan government has economically and politically supported the extensive social and political activism organized by the Bolivarian Circles, as well as their work and efforts to feed the hungry, providing after school care for poor children, securing resources for small businesses, etc. Empowering the oppressed majority through

contradictions and subsequently deepening class conflict and class polarization in rural areas. Through this important process and struggle most oppressed layers of urban and rural areas will get closer to each other and will solidify the foundation of worker and peasant unity. Struggle for this unity could finally establish a worker and peasant government in Venezuela.

After 1998 election, just after Chavez became elected president of Venezuela, he started advancing the revolutionary process right away. The first agrarian reform law, which was protecting small fishermen from giant capitalist fish industries was the first step to tackling the important task of agrarian revolution. Since 1998 Venezuelan parliament has ratified numerous laws in favour of rural workers and peasants including in 2001 that Chavez signed 49 economic and land reforms for more equal distribution of wealth in Venezuela. Just after the August 15th the victorious referendum Chavez tackled the question of unused land of big land owners for the purpose of making them useful for agricultural production and taking a step forward to reduce the dependency on food and agricultural import. This measure will undoubtedly advance the distribution of land among hundreds of thousands of landless and poor peasants.

## Solidarity With Venezuela

"There are no boundaries in this struggle to the death. 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." – Che Guevara

This international spirit is one that all people of the world must respond to. As Venezuela delivers blow after blow to US and imperialist interests, the question of internationalism and international solidarity become more and more important.

The role of progressive people all over the world, people who fight for social justice and a better world, must be to build solidarity with the fight against imperialism and reactionaries in Venezuela. We must understand that the revolutionary process in Venezuela has a long-term strategy. With each battle won by the Chavez government the position of oppressed people is improved against the counter-revolutionary forces of the capitalist ruling class and their imperialist backers.

Chavez came to power and the Bolivarian revolution began against the capitalist class remaining in Venezuela. This meant that the Chavez government had to develop a specific strategy for improving the position of oppressed people, while dealing with the pressure of the counter-revolutionary opposition. This opposition has employed constant criminal strategies to maintain the status-quo of an irrational, alienating, dehumanized and brutal system of operation and exploitation. Despite all of this, they are weakened, they are desperate and they are failing against the people of Venezuela. The people of the world have a decisive role to play in this fight. We can fight in solidarity with the people of Venezuela and add our tremendous weight to the fight for sovereignty, dignity and ultimately, for a victory for oppressed people, in which the honor of humanity prevails. "You have shown today that you are truly victor ... [The referendum is] a victory for the people of Latin America and the Caribbean who are struggling for their freedom." – Chavez August 16th post-referendum speech.



Chavez supporters in Venezuela.

The threat of Chavez is in the force of Venezuela's leadership in Latin America. The unity and confidence Venezuela has generated among poor and working people in Latin America has inspired and strengthened the fight against foreign interference and imperialist interests. Chavez has shown an alternative that is systematically sharpening the class contradictions into class struggle and therefore polarizing the oppressed majority against imperialism. "Chavez is constantly underestimated by people who do not understand his patient, methodical approach to recruiting and strategy. Chavez never provokes the U.S. or other nations, but instead works obliquely to erode the position of his enemies." said a retired U.S. Army officer who worked in Venezuela

## Where Chavez and Venezuela are Going

"The doors of Miraflores [the Presidential Palace] are open. I call on the leaders of the democratic opposition, the media, and the business organizations that have made me their adversary and who oppose me, the officials of the Catholic Church, and the young leaders of some movements that are leaving the Coordinadora Democrática, to come and dialogue." – President Chavez after the referendum on his weekly television program, "Aló Presidente."

country and building progressive and revolutionary leadership forces in the nation.

In addition, national programs to promote the interest of poor and working Venezuelans are increasing. Recently, the Chavez government dedicated more than \$500 million for a revolutionary mission to deal with the housing crisis in Venezuela. There is a deficit of almost 1 million 800 thousand houses in the country according to the Ministry of Infrastructure (MINFRA) and the ministry in charge of housing has set a goal to build 130,000 houses before the end of the year.

There is also a national health care program underway, based in primarily poor areas, called "Barrio Adentro" providing free primary medical care. When the program faced a lack of doctors, the Venezuelan government brought in voluntary Cuban doctors who live on allowances provided by the Cuban government. That was more than a year ago. Today there are over 10,000 Cuban doctors practicing in the poorest Venezuelan neighbourhoods and a training program has been developed to increase participation of Venezuelan doctors in the program. According to government statistics, in this past year in the country more than 18 million people have been treated and more than 6,000 lives have been saved. This means that approximately 70 per cent of the population has been

improvements in education, housing, health and literacy, has meant that the people of Venezuela have become stronger in their political capacity to lead the country in favor of oppressed people.

The character and strength of the Bolivarian project in Venezuela is in the mass participation of poor and working people. The people of Venezuela are consistently mobilized to defend their rights and make advances in their standards of living. The support of voluntary Cuban doctors and teachers has also impacted Venezuela and demonstrated a great example of internationalism. Chavez has not allowed Venezuela to be isolated, and instead, has united the fate of his nation with the fate of all oppressed people in Latin America and beyond.

President Hugo Chavez has also started to consolidate the second central task of any social movement or revolution in Venezuela or any colonial or semi-colonial countries: Agrarian revolution. This means struggle against the feudal remnant food and agricultural product industry including, big landlords and landholders, and big multinational farms. The most important aspect of the agrarian revolution is nationalization and the distribution of land. Most beneficiary layers of these measures are landless and poor peasants and farm workers. This is advancing the process of deepening

**MAWO Vancouver in Action**

**October 23rd**  
**US / UK Out!**  
 End the Occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Haiti, and Indigenous Nations in Canada!  
*March and Rally*  
**3PM**  
 Vancouver Art Gallery



**November 20th**  
**Iraq, Quagmire for US/ UK**  
*Is There an Alternative to Imperialist War & Occupation?*  
**All Day Antiwar Conference**

**November 27th**  
**Bring the Troops Home Now!**  
 Self-Determination for Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Haiti, and Indigenous Nations in Canada!  
**March and Rally 3PM**  
 Vancouver Art Gallery



**December 18th**  
*Second Annual*  
**Antiwar Film Festival**

**January 20th**  
*International Day of Action*  
 On the day of the inauguration of the new US president, demand  
**End the Occupation of Iraq! Bring the Troops Home Now!**  
**March and Rally**  
**3PM Vancouver Art Gallery**

**Mobilization Against War and Occupation**  
[www.mawovancouver.org](http://www.mawovancouver.org) / [info@mawovancouver.org](mailto:info@mawovancouver.org) / 604-322-1764  
**GET INVOLVED WITH MAWO!**  
 Meetings Every Wednesday 6:30pm  
 Britannia Community Centre (Commercial Dr. at Napier St.)

**Examining Christian Zionism- Theology, Politics, and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

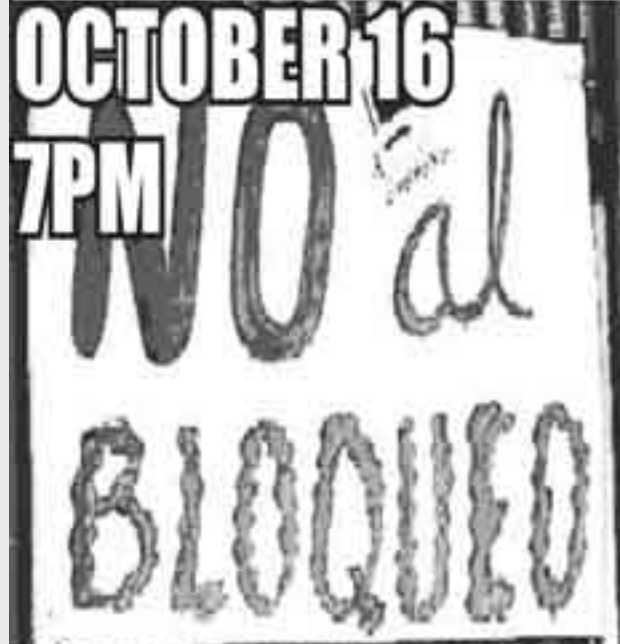
Lecture by Rev. Naim Ateek PhD., Director of the Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center- SABEEL in Jerusalem  
 Tuesday, Oct 12<sup>th</sup> at 8 pm  
 SFU Harbour Centre, Fletcher Challenge Rm.  
*Admission by donation. For more information contact: [info@palsolidaritygrp.org](mailto:info@palsolidaritygrp.org)*

**Spartacus Books Fundraiser**

Friday October 15th at 7:30 PM  
 WISE HALL 1882 Adanac (Just off Commercial)  
 Cost: Sliding scale \$8-\$13 (Includes lots of free gifts)  
*Presented by Work Less Party.*

**CUBA UNDER THE U.S. BLOCKADE FOR 43 YEARS: WHAT'S NEXT?**

A free forum and discussion on the U.S. brutal blockade on Cuba, how the Cuban people have worked to overcome it and what is its future.



@ COLLINGWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE  
 (1 BLOCK SOUTH OF JOYCE SKYTRAIN STATION)  
 Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba  
[CUBACOMMUNITIES@YAHOO.CA](mailto:CUBACOMMUNITIES@YAHOO.CA) | 778 882 5223  
This event is not organized by Collingwood Neighbourhood House.

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For distribution of *Fire This Time* in your area; across BC, Canada and Internationally please contact:

**Brennan Luchsinger**  
 Publicity and Distribution Coordinator  
 Phone: (604) 338-9006  
 Email: [distro@fire-this-time.org](mailto:distro@fire-this-time.org)

**Action in Toronto**

**Mining in the Developing World: The Dirty Role of Canadian Corporations**

Wednesday October 6th at 7 PM  
 St. Vladimir Institute.  
 620 Spadina Avenue (Between Bloor and College)  
 Organized by: The Philippine Solidarity Group of Toronto and Asian Solidarity Network-Toronto  
 For more information, contact [psgto@hotmail.com](mailto:psgto@hotmail.com) or [asians4solidarity@yahoo.ca](mailto:asians4solidarity@yahoo.ca)

**6th Annual Left Words Festival of Books and Ideas**

Sunday November 7th - 11am to 5pm  
 The Tranzac Club  
 292 Brunswick Avenue  
 For more information, contact [www.leftwords.org](http://www.leftwords.org) or 416 516 9546

*Building an Independent Anti-Imperialist Movement:*

*Lessons from the Past, Visions for the Future*



**7 PM**  
**Thursday, October 7th**  
**University of Toronto**  
 Sidney Smith Building Room 2127

**Ivan Drury**, Mobilization Against War and Occupation & Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice - Vancouver BC  
**Ahmad Shokr**, Arab Students Collective - University of Toronto  
**Christina Hernandez**, Coalition Against War and Racism

*As well, featuring speakers from:*  
 Toronto June 30th Organizing Committee  
 Grassroots Anti-Imperialist Network (GRAIN - York Univ.)

Endorsed by: June 30th Organizing Committee, GRAIN (Grassroots Anti-Imperialist Network), Coalition Against War and Racism, New Socialist Group, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO - Vancouver), Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice (Vancouver), Youth Third World Alliance (Vancouver)