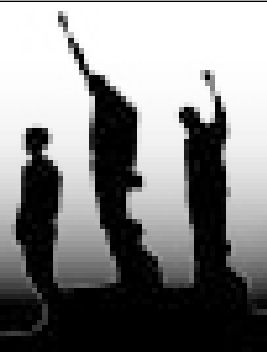


FIRE THIS TIME



The Newspaper of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice

Issue 20/21 - December 2004 / January 2005 Double Issue

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FREE

What Solution for the 'Crisis' in Iraq? US-UK Out Now!



Iraqi children giving the thumbs down to US tanks in Baghdad, January 2005.

By Mike Krebs

'It will be a lasting model of how not to do things, and its imperial image has left a legacy that the US must distance itself from as soon as possible.' – Anthony Cordesman, of the Washington-based think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies, discussing the US strategy of 'nation-building' in

Iraq

For the US government, which seeks to use Iraq as a critical entry point for pursuing its economic, strategic, and political goals throughout the Middle East in the coming decades, the fact that Iraq presents a deep crisis is clear. The question that this problem poses for the US ruling class is how to

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Workers Struggles

Justice for Emily Tang!

By Nasim Sedaghat

When Anita Bautista, a Metropolitan Hotel worker in Toronto learned that she had tragically contracted cancer she was summoned to the management office. She was presented with a document terminating her fourteen years' employment in return for fourteen weeks severance pay. She was offered no chance to seek legal advice and she was even denied the opportunity to consult with fellow employees. Under this extreme duress, she reluctantly signed the document.

Shahid Mahmood is another



worker driven out of his job at the Toronto Metropolitan Hotel. He is a devout Muslim whose religious devotions were found "troubling" by

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International Struggles

Keeping Afghanistan Divided: 'Elections', 'Democracy' and 'Freedom' US Style

By Shannon Bundock

On December 9th, Hamid Karzai was inaugurated as the 'elected' president of Afghanistan. Inside the Kabul ceremony, Karzai was celebrated by his closest partners. Supportive gazes were laid upon him by US Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who were in attendance. Outside the ceremony, Afghan cities and

countrysides were less peaceful, as Karzai was "approved" and "supported" with the brute force of 26,000 armed soldiers from Canada, the US, France and other nations involved in the occupation. Beyond Afghanistan, half-way across the world, Canadian Foreign minister Pierre Pettigrew joined in the rounds of applause, "On behalf of all Canadians, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to President Karzai, the Afghanistan

Transitional Authority and all of the Afghan people on the result of this historic vote."

This election took place after 3 years of war and occupation and after Hamid Karzai had already been in power in the country since December 22nd 2001, initially as Chairman of the Transitional Administration, and then as President of the Afghan Transitional Authority.

This election, far from bringing legitimacy to the occupation, actually opened a wound and exposed what this period in Afghanistan is all about. On every concrete level in Afghanistan the 'election' of Karzai will change nothing in the nation, other than generating more resentment and frustration over the false picture of a "liberated" Afghanistan that Karzai has created. Karzai's Afghanistan stands in stark contrast to the brutal reality of US and NATO arrests, torturing, killings, bombings and raids that assault the people of Afghanistan every day.

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Yes to War Resisters! No to Safe Streets Act! No to Apartheid Wall in Palestine!

**Vancouver & District
Labour Council
Responds to Capitalist-
Imperialist Offensive**

By Ivan Drury

On November 16th the Vancouver and District Labour Council (VDLC) passed three resolutions that put oppressed people in Canada and everywhere in a better

position against imperialism and the forces of capitalist neo-liberalism. Individually or taken together, these resolutions are important precedents for the labour movement in Canada. They are an example of what the position of unions must be in the midst of reactionary attacks on working, poor and oppressed people at home and abroad.

The VDLC represents 120

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Why the 'Crisis' in Iraq is getting worse for the US and UK

From page 1

solve it in a way that is in favour of imperialist countries, that puts them in a better position to find solutions for the global economic crisis they face. This translates into how to best continue to suppress, and find new ways to suppress, people in Iraq, people within imperialist countries, and people all over the world.

So far, the numerous methods tried by the US-led occupation forces not only to dig themselves out of this crisis but also to find alternatives to this crisis have failed, and are continuing to fail. The most recent strategy pursued in Fallujah was not only a failure in and of itself, but has served to deepen the numerous crises facing the US-led occupation.

in the eyes of the vast majority of people in Iraq, and the majority of people throughout the world. The US also hopes that the elections will divide Iraqis between those who participate in them and those who do not. This is hoped to promote internal conflict among the Iraqi people and also help set up an 'elected' government that is willing and able to participate in the suppression of the Iraqi resistance, the massacre of Iraqi people, and lay the groundwork for a sustained occupation in Iraq.

Aside from leveling this much destruction on the people of Fallujah, for the US-led occupation forces, virtually nothing was accomplished with this assault. Outside of Fallujah, resistance to the US-led occupation has

in Iraq (FWCUI), which is not recognized. In November of 2004, a governor of the 'interim' government in Baghdad issued an order threatening to arrest any labour activist who joins the FWCUI.

With the failure of 'reconstruction,' the US will only be faced with more and more resistance by working and unemployed Iraqis as they are pushed to take action against the brutal conditions they are forced to endure under the occupation. Only \$1.7 Billion of the \$18.4 billion that the US allocated for 'reconstruction' has even been spent. This has mostly gone into 'security' costs, meaning that instead of facing the 'carrot' of reconstruction and the 'stick' of brute military repression, Iraqis face two sticks, regardless of which department of the US ruling class is paying for it.

Elections? Why Bother?

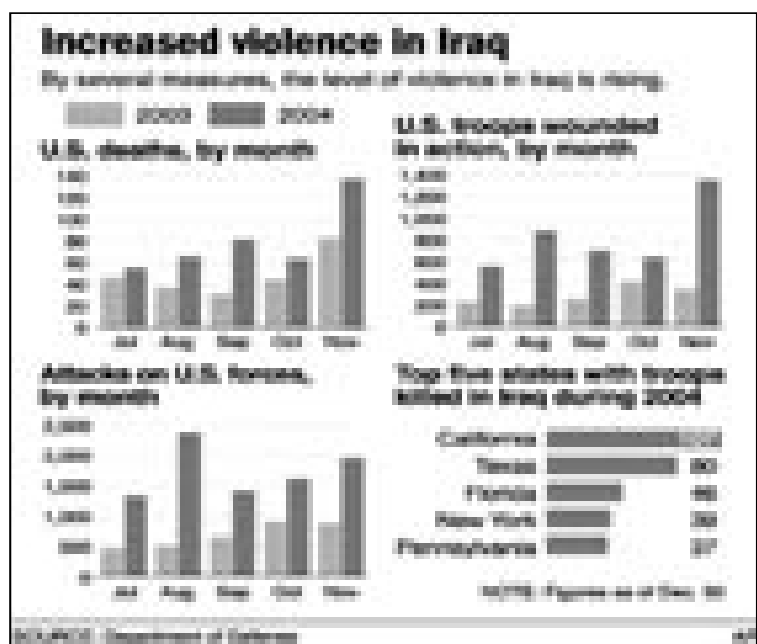
"How can we have a free election under martial law? Instead of a ceasefire, they attack Fallujah. Are they sure that the aftermath will not be bloodier than Fallujah? The martial law is one of the nails in the coffin of this regime. The last pretext for democracy here is now buried. Their declaration of martial law is a declaration of moral bankruptcy." – Dr. Wamidh Omar Nadhi, spokesman for the Iraqi National Foundation Congress

Very few people in Iraq actually believe that these elections are somehow a step towards a legitimate government handed to them by the US-led occupation forces. Should anyone be surprised by this? After destroying all previously existing political and civil institutions in Iraq during the invasion of Iraq, what legitimacy does the US have to then replant a colonial government on the charred ground that it left behind? What legitimacy does the US, or any imperialist power, have to administer 'democratic' elections in a country that is occupied with over 160,000 troops?

What legitimacy do these elections have, where several of the major parties contesting the elections were set up, trained and funded by US ruling-class institutions like the International Republican Institute and the Democratic Institute for International Affairs? How appealing is it for Iraqis to participate in building a 'democracy' where the main presidential candidate, Allawi, was formerly on the CIA payroll? These elections are the ultimate imperialist hypocrisy. It is with the same deceitful voice that the US military now speaks of 'reconstructing' Fallujah after turning it into a virtual ghost town.

The Failure to Create an Iraqi-administered Occupation

The November assault on Fallujah also deepened the problem that the US has had with setting up Iraqi police and military forces. Though the US government to some extent intended that these forces would either be non-



existent or ineffective because it gives the US an alibi for sustaining its massive military presence in Iraq ('somebody has to police the country'), at the same time the US needs at least moderately functioning Iraqi forces for political and military reasons.

US ruling class think-tanks and their intellectuals have been pushing this 'Iraqification' of the occupation for several months as a way to combat the crisis of legitimacy the US faces in the eyes of Iraqis and people around the world, as well as a way to ease the burden of financial and

human costs to the US military. Coupled with the inability to build a government that is seen as legitimate by Iraqis, the US-led occupation forces have also been unable to build any Iraqi police and military forces effective at pacifying the Iraqi resistance.

On December 8th, the police station in Samarra was overrun by Iraqis, who stormed the station, seized its weapons, and blew up the building. After this, as well as having his home fired on by rocket-propelled grenades, the police chief of Samarra resigned.

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US soldiers detaining Iraqi man in Fallujah, November 12th 2004.

Fallujah

The main imperialist objectives with the Fallujah offensive in November 2004 were to at least temporarily decrease the momentum of the Iraqi resistance by destroying one of the strongest forces of resistance, while intimidating the rest of the Iraqi people with the example of destruction displayed in Fallujah. This would buy time for the US to then be able to implement the 'elections' in January with a slightly greater degree of legitimacy. This is not because the US really cares about the election process, and it cares even less about whether or not they are truly 'democratic' or 'representative'. The goal with these elections is to combat the crisis in legitimacy that the US-led occupation faces

not diminished as a result of the Fallujah assault. Throughout the first half of December the US faced an average 150 attacks per day, including attacks on soldiers and military targets, but also on oil pipelines and the police stations of Allawi's puppet government. In Mosul alone, there were five attempts in November and December by resistance fighters to seize the main police station, each time involving hundreds of armed Iraqis.

Iraqi Workers Organize Against Occupation

A significant example of how this resistance is developing is the recent action taken by employees of the National Iraqi Railway Company. On November 9th, as the US was in its initial stages of destroying Fallujah, the Iraqi railway workers announced that they would boycott supplies to US troops or forces belonging to the US-appointed Allawi government, and threatened a national strike if forced to do otherwise.

Predictably, the response of the US-led occupation forces and their 'interim' government to such calls has been increased suppression of the dynamic labour organizing that has taken place in Iraq since the occupation began. This includes continued harassment and arrests of union organizers involved with both of the major labour federations in Iraq: the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), which is 'recognized' by Allawi's unrecognized government, and the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions

Correction

The last issue of Fire This Time, the 18/19 Double Issue, contained the wrong version of the article 'Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Venezuela.' This version was a draft still being edited, and as a result contained many typos and edit marks [such as bracketed text]. The Fire This Time Editorial Board would like to apologize to our readers for this mistake, and invite you to read the final version of this article, which is available online at www.fire-this-time.org.

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US Troop Morale is Shrinking in Iraq:

“Our Best Prepared, Best Educated Troops Refuse To Fight...”

By Brennan Luchsinger

“There’s nothing good that can come of it. We win, we lose. We lose, we lose.” - Anonymous Army operations officer, on the possible outcomes of the battle for the Imam Ali shrine in Najaf, Iraq

After 22 months of war and occupation in Iraq, the US army has come to face a deepening crisis. They are sinking into a quagmire that constantly threatens their position within Iraq, the Middle East, and throughout the world. During the Vietnam era, the US faced a similar problem. The US frantically tried to rebuild its forces in Vietnam but over and over again came up with one major block: you can’t fight a war without an army.

Right now the US is facing this same crisis in Iraq. While the war and occupation rages on, nothing has improved for the Iraqi people. Nothing has been rebuilt and the conditions facing Iraq have created a strong resistance to occupation. When the occupation began in 2003 the US military saw up to 20 attacks a day by the resistance. Now in 2004 the US faces up to 100 attacks a day. Within Iraq and around the world, people are calling for an end to the occupation. In the midst of this pressure troop morale is constantly diminishing. Many soldiers feel that their mission in Iraq is unclear, and that they are involved in an immoral military occupation.

One of the major questions in Iraq is stability. As the occupation continues, stability is being destroyed, not only for Iraqi people, but also for the US military machine. The toll on the US forces in Iraq has been consistently on the rise since the occupation began; currently over 1,300 US soldiers have died in Iraq. While the statistics for American casualties in Iraq are often in the media, the numbers of wounded soldiers are often overlooked, however over 16,000 troops have been wounded in Iraq. The majority of the wounded are unable to return to combat because they are suffering from severe injuries, such as missing limbs, paralysis, crippling psychological disorders, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

I want to go home!

“I’m tired of every time we go out the gate, someone tries to kill me.” - Staff Sgt. Sheldon Rivers, Ramadi, Iraq

For troops who are confronted with resistance daily, being told to “go home”, and feeling the

pressure of being involved in an occupation that is largely not supported by the American public, the willingness to fight is rapidly disappearing. Troops are deserting the army, applying for Conscientious Objector (CO) status, and refusing to be called back to duty. The actions of these soldiers have created a new form of resistance within the ranks of the US military.

“More and more Iraqi people want us to go home. Believe me, we want to go home.” - Army Private 1st Class Rachel Bosveld

As this new situation develops, more and more War Resisters are emerging. Soldiers like Jeremy Hinzman, Brandon Hughey, and David Saunders, have all fled from the US army to Canada and are filing for refugee status. For many other soldiers this is an initial step, a test that will provide an example for others who will soon refuse to serve the US in Iraq.

At the same time that this is happening, others within the US are refusing to return to combat. According to the pentagon over 5,500 soldiers have deserted the army since the war began. In an attempt to fill the gaps within the ranks of the army, the US has called up 2,288 Individual Ready Reserve soldiers, over one-third of which did not show up to report for duty. During Vietnam the US also failed to rebuild their forces as 1/3 of all troops called on failed to report for duty.

Major battles in Iraq like those in Fallujah, and Najaf are having a demoralizing effect on US troops. Much like the massacre that took place in Mai Lai during Vietnam where an entire village was sentenced to death, US troops are now confronted with the reality of their orders when they are sent on missions with the command “search and destroy”. The US is losing these battles because they cannot crush the Iraqis’ resistance to the occupation of their country, but they can succeed in demoralizing their own soldiers.

Why we should welcome war resisters to Canada

As we see the development of a War Resisters movement grow, we will see many more former soldiers cross the border into Canada. As poor, working and oppressed people, we need to see the importance of these people and their resistance. In the very simplest form, we should support them because they are opposed to imperialist war and occupation. But they are important for many other reasons. During the Vietnam War, draft dodgers were a crucial part of the antiwar movement.

Currently US government claim that War Resisters are not legitimate because they are not fleeing a draft, and soldier signed a contract to be in the army. Change to: Of course, the question is not whether these soldiers were drafted or have joined US army by contract but instead the heart of matter is that whether these soldiers were drafted or contracted, they are refusing to fight and kill Iraqi people because they are opposed to an unjustified, illegal and criminal war on people of Iraq.

Currently Jeremy Hinzman is awaiting the results of a Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board hearing. Brian Goodman, the officer in charge of his case has taken the argument that the illegality of the war on Iraq is “irrelevant”, a decision that exposes the Canadian Government and its reactionary policy. While they may claim that legality is “irrelevant” it means nothing to Hinzman’s case. Like the draft dodgers of the Vietnam era, War Resisters must be granted refugee status based on their political and moral opposition to war and occupation.

Dissident soldiers within the US army will closely follow this first case, and the results could create the conditions for many more War Resisters to join Hinzman in Canada.

A Victory in Iraq is Victory for All!

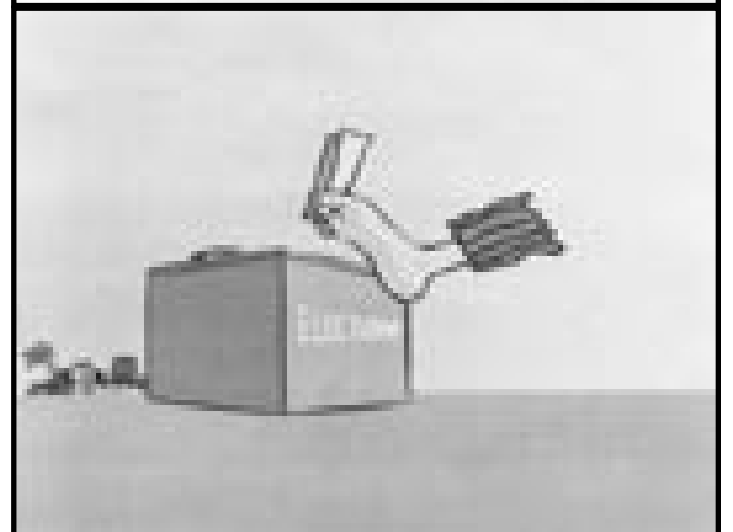
The progression of a War Resisters movement will be decisive in determining the course of the occupation of Iraq. If the US military cannot maintain its own troop levels then it will not be able to maintain its position in Iraq, and will eventually be driven out by the resistance. War resisters play an important role in determining who has the power in Iraq. The rights of soldiers to refuse service must be defended in this context. They are changing the balance of forces in Iraq in favour of Iraqis. As the resistance in Iraq becomes more powerful, imperialism is weakened, and the oppressed nations of the world are in a better position to fight against imperialism and oppression.

War Resisters represent the interests of the poor and oppressed people of the world, and we in Canada must widely support their struggle to resist war and occupation in order to defeat imperialism in Iraq.

DEFEND WAR RESISTERS!

US/UK OUT OF IRAQ!

BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!



When a Soldier Becomes a Hero for Humanity

An Interview with War Resister Brandon Hughey

By Alison Bodine

Every soldier who refuses to fight in Iraq weakens the occupation in favor of the Iraqi people. As American War Resisters in Canada, Brandon Hughey and other War Resisters are an integral part of the antiwar movement. Brandon enlisted in the Army in the summer of 2002 as a way to pay for a college education. He was in basic training as attacks on Iraq were taking place. Brandon then fled to Canada, refusing to fight in an illegal and unjust war, and now lives in Ontario. He is now waiting for his day in court with the immigration and refugee judges who will decide his future status in Canada. Brandon recently traveled to Vancouver as part of a cross Canada tour, giving talks against the occupation of Iraq and explaining his reasons for coming to Canada. We sat down with Brandon to ask him some questions regarding his experiences, views on the war on Iraq and his advice for the antiwar movement in Canada.

"As time wore on, no weapons of mass destruction could be found, nor could any connection to terrorism. I was never informed of any route I could take to leave the military, such as applying for conscientious objector status. I had promised myself that under no circumstances would I allow myself to become complicit in the illegal occupation of Iraq. No contract or enlistment oath can be used as an excuse to participate in acts of aggression or crimes against

humanity." — Brandon Hughey, www.brandonhughey.org.

FTT: Why did you ask for a discharge in 2003 and what was the response that you were given?

Brandon: I asked in for a discharge because I disagreed with the war on Iraq. Basically the answer I was given was, "No, you are going to do what we tell you whether you agree with it or not," that was it.

FTT: And the war started while you were in training?

Brandon: It started a couple of months before I went to training, so by the time I graduated it had been going on for quite some time.

FTT: You were just out of high school right?

Brandon: I graduated high school in May of 2003 and left for training in July 2003.

FTT: So they gave you no response when you first refused to go and fight in Iraq, they were just like, "This is how it is, you registered?"

Brandon: Yeah, they were unwilling to cooperate with me. They actually didn't tell me that there was a clause where I could apply for Conscientious Objector (C.O.) status.

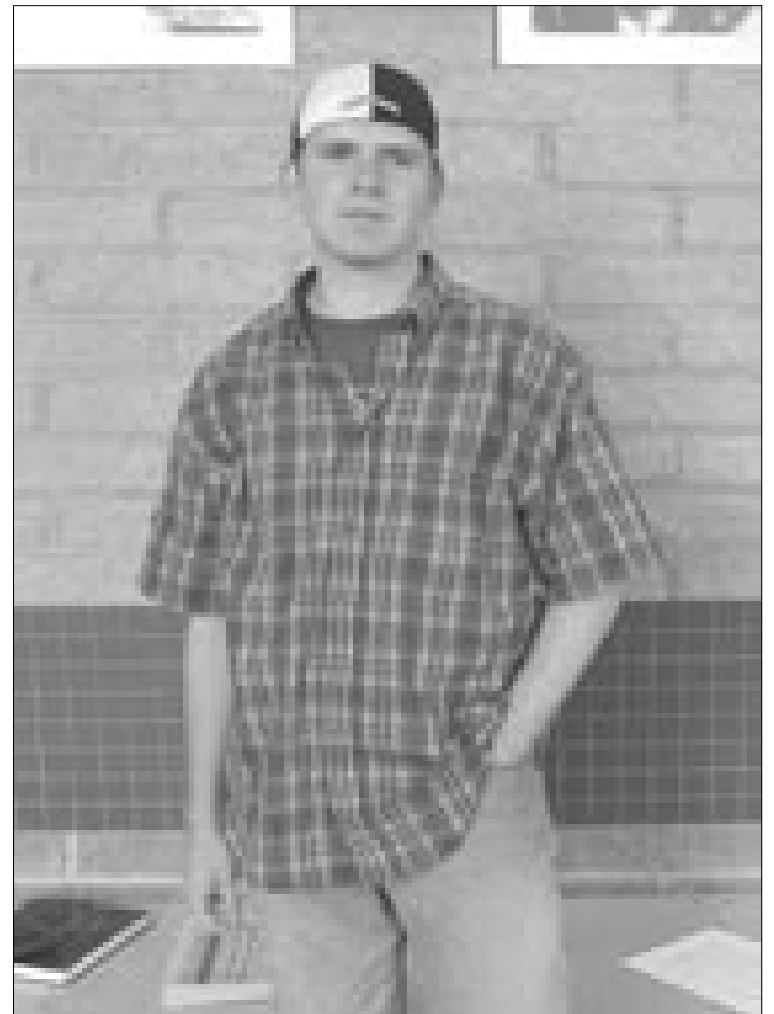
FTT: Now that the deaths of soldiers in Iraq had passed 1000, do you think that there is a growing antiwar sentiment in America?

Brandon: I do, because if you

look at the support right before the war was launched, it was almost unanimous as far as the American people go. If you look at it now, the country is pretty much split, so it is growing, and opposition is growing to the war in Iraq. As more Americans continue to die, I think that just as with Vietnam, Americans see the violence in Iraq isn't ending and there is no end in sight. I think that with that, opposition is going to grow. Two of the big groups that formed around opposition to the occupation of Iraq are: Military Families Speak Out (www.mfso.org) and Iraq Veterans Against War (www.ivaw.net)— a group of people who have actually been to Iraq, saw the truth behind it, came back and now they are opposed to it.

FTT: What do you see as the role of yourself, Jeremy Hinzman [another War Resister] and all other American War Resisters in the antiwar movement?

Brandon: As far as our role in the antiwar movement is concerned I believe that it is just letting people know that there is resistance growing within the US military. It may not be as wide spread as it was in Vietnam, but there is some resistance growing in the US military. I think that it is important that people in the antiwar movement to know that. I believe we sometimes get stereotyped in the antiwar movement as killers and murderers but we are basically just people who signed up to better our lives financially. We had no other way to do so and through that



Brandon Hughey.

process of serving in the military we saw the light. You could say we saw through all of the lies that we were told.

FTT: Where is your case at right

now?

Brandon: Right now it is kind of in limbo. I am an official refugee claimant and I am waiting for my hearing which is scheduled for Nov 19th that is the day I will go in front of the immigration and refugee board and make a case for refugee status. (Since this interview Brandon's court date had been pushed back until the results from the first trial, Jeremy Hinzman's, are known.)

FTT: You applied for a work permit, correct?

Brandon: Yeah, I sent that in at the beginning of August and we are still waiting for a response from the Canadian Government on that, but as soon as that comes in I will hopefully be able to find a job and be able to support myself.

FTT: Do you have any advice or suggestions for people in Canada and the antiwar movement here?

Brandon: As far as advice or suggestions go, the best way to help us out is to bring awareness about this issue to elected representatives in government, such as MP's, I believe that is what they are called up here. There is also a petition on-line at www.resisters.ca, you can sign the on-line petition and there are also samples of letters you can print out and send to your MP. We believe that the only way we are going to be able to stay here is with enough public support behind our cause, so public opinion is the key in this case.

For more information on Brandon, go to www.brandonhughey.org. Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) has recently launched a petition campaign demanding that the government of Canada grant refugee status to American War Resisters in Canada. The petition is available at www.mawovanoucer.org.

MAWO Launches a Petition Campaign in Defense of American War Resisters in Canada

By Alison Bodine

"The government is less welcoming. Despite Canada's opposition to the Iraq war, the government also is opposing the deserters' refugee applications, saying the soldiers are not persecuted. It is resisting the argument that the Iraq war is illegal." — Doug Struck, Washington Post, referring to the difference in opinion between the Canadian Government and the people of Canada regarding American War Resisters in Canada.

Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) launched a petition on October 18th demanding that the government of Canada grant refugee status to American soldiers in Canada. The petition calls on the government of Canada to honour, not only the tradition it established during the Vietnam War era allowing War Resisters the sanctuary they demanded, but also international law and the basic right of a soldier to refuse to participate in an illegal and unjust war. During the Nuremberg Trials following WWII it was established that not only does a soldier have the right, but he or she also has the

responsibility as a decent human being to refuse orders that they feel to be wrong and criminal. The government of Canada must be pressured into allowing War Resisters refugee status in Canada.

Overwhelming support for the petition and its demands shows that people in Canada support War Resisters and their basic democratic and human right to refuse to fight. The petition is addressed to those in the government of Canada who will decide the fate of Jeremy Hinzman, Brandon Hughey, David Sanders, and any other War Resisting soldiers who choose to come to Canada. The petition is an effective way to show the government of Canada how people in Canada feel about the decision being made in their name.

Petitioning is also an important tool to educate and mobilize people on the issue of war and War Resisters. It is also based on communication with people therefore it helps them understand the growing amount of discontent within the US military forces about the US political and military quagmire in Iraq. Mobilization Against War and Occupation has taken on heavy

petitioning as well as issuing a call for Unions, Students' Unions and any other antiwar or supporting groups or institutions to pass resolutions supporting American War Resisters in Canada. MAWO demands that the government make provisions for War Resisters to have sanctuary in Canada. It is imperative that the campaign is as intensive and wide-spread as possible, as Jeremy Hinzman's hearing began December 6th.

The campaign has already received support from the Teachers Support Staff Union (TSSU) at SFU and the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS), both of which have passed resolutions demanding that the government of Canada grant refugee status to American War Resisters. The Capilano Student Union (CSU) has also taken on their own campaign supporting the demands of refuge for War Resisters in Canada. Mobilization Against War and Occupation's petition, after less than 7 weeks, has already received over 1,300 signatures. There have been successful petition drives at both the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. This

certainly proves to the government that students in Canada demand that their peers be given refuge.

More and more soldiers are refusing to fight in Iraq. As more and more look to Canada as a place where they can come and receive sanctuary from the US Government. It is extremely important that Canada grants them refugee status. First, in defense of their democratic and human right not to fight, second in recognition that any soldier who refuses to fight in Iraq is an important part of the antiwar movement. Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) will continue its campaign to pressure the Government of Canada into allowing War Resisters refugee status.

The petition is available on-line at www.mawovanoucer.org. For more information on American War Resisters in Canada visit: www.brandonhughey.org, www.jeremyhinzman.net, www.resisters.ca.

END THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ RIGHT NOW! BRING ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!



This is What Disengagement Looks Like: Israel's Slaughter of Palestinians Continues

By Mike Krebs

"The occupation does not content itself with depriving us of the primary conditions of freedom, but goes on to deprive us of the bare essentials of a dignified human life, by declaring constant war on our bodies, and our dreams, on the people and the homes and the trees, and by committing crimes of war. It does not promise us anything more than the apartheid system, and the capacity of the sword to defeat the soul." – Mahmoud Darwish, Palestinian Poet

Ariel Sharon's plan for 'disengagement' is a hoax. Since the Israeli Prime Minister announced the plan last March, what most Palestinians feared about 'disengagement' has been proven true: 'Disengagement' is only the newest stage of Zionist Israel's decades long war, occupation and colonization of Palestine. Each step involves killing, injuring, and displacing more and more Palestinians and moving towards the possibility of a complete displacement.

As we reported in previous issues of Fire This Time, Ariel Sharon's 'disengagement' plan for Gaza calls for removing all Israeli settlements in Gaza. This involves moving 7,500 settlers, in order to focus on defending and expanding its more valuable settlements in the

West Bank, where there are almost 400,000 settlers. This plan is also intended to strengthen Israel's stranglehold on Palestinians living within Gaza. As Israel plans to retain military control over the area's borders and space, as well as maintaining the ability of Israeli occupation forces to re-enter the area 'when needed.'

Right now, the Israeli government is dealing with a very shaky relationship of forces between itself and the Palestinian people whose land it occupies. In addition, it is still suffering from the conflicts and crises within Israel itself; which includes the rickety coalition government that must carry out the 'disengagement' plan amongst widespread Israeli opposition. Finally, Israel must assert its position within an increasingly unstable balance of forces in the Middle East.

With its current attacks on the Palestinian people, the Sharon government intends to buy more time to wait out the storm. However, it is clear that the Israeli government is deluding itself with visions of calmer waters that are not yet on the horizon, and probably won't be there for some time.

Disengagement in Gaza: More Palestinians Killed and Displaced

Through November and December,



Palestinian children stare at an Israeli Defense Force Soldier.

the first two months of what many voices in the Israeli ruling class have called a 'new era for peace' following the death of Yasser Arafat, Israeli occupation forces

have been making pieces out of Palestinians in Gaza. This small strip of land, home to 1.3 million Palestinians, has been facing daily and nightly assaults by the

Israeli army. This has resulted in 3 to 10 Palestinians being killed every 24 hours, according to Palestinian medical sources.

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One Year After Imperialist Military Intervention: Who is Ruling Haiti?

By Shannon Bundock

In February 2004, the President of Haiti, Jean Bertrand Aristide, was removed from office and forced out of Haiti in an organized coup by former death squad leaders. According to *Black Commentator* (a news source based in Jenkintown PA) Colin Powell contacted Ron Dellums, a former US Congressman and lobbyist for the Aristide government, on the morning before the coup was to take place. Powell warned Dellums, "in no uncertain terms gunmen were coming to kill Aristide on Sunday morning. The U.S., said Powell, would not lift a finger to stop them. When the Americans come to call, Aristide must leave with them."

Today, Aristide is not residing in Haiti anymore and Haiti is under a UN-run occupation, established in June 2004 and virtually unparalleled in its brutality. The



Paul Martin meets with Gerard Latortue, November 14th 2004.

main players in the occupation, the nations that swooped down on Haiti immediately after the removal of the President, are

Canada, the US and France. The stated objectives of the United

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Hands Off Sudan! US Ruling Class Seeking Excuses to Intervene in East Africa

By Andrew Malieni

"The Government of Sudan has not complied with UN Security Council resolutions, and has not respected the cease-fire which it signed. The rebels are also guilty of cease-fire violations and failing to carry out past commitments. It is clear that only outside action can stop the killing. My government is seeking a new Security Council Resolution to authorize an expanded African Union security force to prevent further bloodshed." – US President George W. Bush

"We are very much committed to strengthening the African Union's operations in Sudan." – Canadian Foreign Minister Pierre Pettigrew

The US and other imperialist countries are calling for intervention in Sudan, under "humanitarian" pretexts. The US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, has referred to the violent situation in the Darfur region of

Sudan as "genocide." The reason for this is to legitimize any form of intervention taken in Sudan.

Largely, the calls for intervention are based on calling for African Union forces to act as a proxy. At the present time, it is difficult for the major imperialist countries to directly send their own troops because of the very large number of troops already being used against the massive and growing resistance in Iraq, Afghanistan and Haiti. Former Democratic Presidential candidate John Kerry, for example, said that in order to send US forces to Sudan, the US would first "have to be in a position in Iraq and Afghanistan" to do so. African Union forces are seen as a viable alternative in the meantime. The African Union forces can be considered reliable proxies because they are sent by countries in neocolonial relationships with the imperialist countries. Additionally, the

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Eyewitness to Occupation, Eyewitness to Resistance

Interview with an Organizer from the International Solidarity Movement

By Mike Krebs

The Zionist occupation of Palestine, which has now gone on for over fifty years, has been marked by one of the most important struggles in the world for self-determination and justice by the Palestinian people. This struggle has not only exposed the strategies used against oppressed people for the purpose of pursuing imperialist interests; it has also inspired and educated poor, working, and oppressed people all over the world about the importance of solidarity with oppressed people and actively resisting imperialist attacks.

Kole is one of these people. He is a Toronto-based anti-imperialist activist who recently returned from Palestine, after spending almost a year there on a trip through the International Solidarity Movement (ISM).

In November of 2004, Fire This Time interviewed Kole about his experience in Palestine, and why supporting the Palestinian struggle for self-determination is important for poor, working, and oppressed people, in Canada and throughout the world.

FTT: What were your reasons for going to Palestine?

Kole: I became active with antiwar stuff during the first Gulf War, when in elementary school. I had a friend from Lebanon, so I was kind of familiar with the politics. Since then I've been working with a lot of Palestine solidarity groups, and other groups opposing imperial policies.

My family is from Yugoslavia, so I also saw the effects of great power interventions in third-world countries.

Since university I've been involved actively in the Arab Student Collective and other Palestine solidarity groups as a natural extension of this kind of activism. I was really attracted to the work of the ISM as kind of a direct action approach, which kind of reminded me of the work that OCAP (Ontario Coalition Against Poverty) does in Toronto, who I've also done work with. I wanted to see what that was like, and also learn more about Palestine from a first-hand perspective.

FTT: What did you see as far as the daily conditions the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation?

Kole: Well, the daily conditions vary from place to place. Every Palestinian city is faced with a kind of unique situation. I was in Nablus for most of the time, and Nablus is the only city that is still under full military closure in the West Bank. So in terms of military pressure, intensity, military operation, and daily human rights abuses it is more similar to Gaza than it is to other cities in the West Bank.

There were very difficult conditions for the people there. People are very traumatized, not only by the stuff that's going on now, but also by the impact of the 2002 invasions, which were particularly brutal. Nablus lost more people during the Israeli military 'Operation Defensive



Kole in front of a banner made by Palestinian children.

Shield' than were lost in Jenin. The Israeli military has tried to prevent internationals from coming in. In fact, you can't cross the checkpoints to get into Nablus, you have to go through the mountains, and it's the only city where you have to do that in the West Bank.

FTT: In your experience, what did you see as far as the attitudes of people within Nablus and other areas, generally, towards the occupation of their land, and how are people organizing against the occupation?

Kole: Most people will tell you that the situation is difficult, it's one of the most common refrains you hear. And the situation includes the occupation, but it also includes the disconnect that most people feel between what they want as a political settlement and what the elites within the Palestinian Authority and Al Fatah are offering as a political settlement.

What really came forward to me was actually the class dynamics that exist in Palestine. Because often it's presented as a national conflict, but what you really have is the Palestinian people who are 80% unemployed, massively impoverished, and so on, against the small Palestinian elite that is willing to cooperate with the United States and the Zionists project for Palestine. When you just walk through the refugee camps and the old city of Nablus, if you're in areas where there are poor people, you'll see a lot of martyr posters on the walls, and you'll see a lot of posters of resistance fighters, because that's where the resistance comes from.

What was impressive, in terms of organizing at a grassroots level, was that the internal factional differences don't seem to matter. It was just popular outpourings of support for martyrs against occupation. Fighting units are usually mixed between factions, it's mostly friends, it's mostly people from the same neighborhoods that are fighting together.

So the differences on the ground don't make a difference, but at the political level, there's all this infighting. But on the ground level, what was inspiring was to see the unity among the people, and that one-direction demand to end to the occupation, and for a meaningful form of self-determination, and also the right of return.

FTT: What did you see within resistance and organizations, as far as the composition of the people involved with them?

Kole: There are different types of resistance activities, so there's armed struggle, which is one form, which is mainly dominated by young males. Then there's medical relief teams, for instance, who work on providing medical relief in emergencies, but also take a more holistic approach to health and stuff, including things like an analysis of class and imperialism and colonialism, and how that impacts on the health of native populations. And they're very active in terms of disobeying curfews and bringing food to people under closure, to people who are holed up in their homes and things like that.

There's also resistance activity like agricultural relief committees, which support an independent, autonomous Palestinian agricultural sector. The Israelis have done a lot to flood the Palestinian market with cheap commercial goods, cheap foodstuffs, and really undermine the basis for agricultural production and reproduction of basic nutrition and everything.

All these kinds of efforts tend towards some type of resistance, be it violent or non-violent, and it depends who and what sectors of the population are mobilized. Sometimes women aren't mobilized at all, sometimes they are. In Nablus they had a prisoner's families committee which is very effective and very active. You have these types of resistance activities that aren't talked about in the press, but they're constant. Also, there's the example of Budrus, near the wall, which has managed to mobilize its entire population to effectively resist, and at the forefront of that were Palestinian women, especially young women, little girls even, who came out full of energy and were totally standing in front of bulldozers, blocking them, inhaling tons of teargas, and keeping going. And that is a situation that has been going on for months, the wall continues, but they've put an example of some kind of alternative.

This is why I think solidarity is really important. We need to step up our efforts in solidarity, because the plan that's being proposed now is worse than Oslo. It's worse than the road map. I'm afraid that the Palestinians will be forced into

signing something that will pretty much legitimate the continued Israeli expansion and dispossession of Palestinian lands.

FTT: The occupation of Palestine has been going on for well over 50 years, but now we're in a new situation with the moves of the US and other imperialist countries into Afghanistan, and more recently into Iraq. We have a new era of war and occupation, and an attempt by these imperialist countries to change the balance of forces in their favour against people all across the region. What sort of impact do you think this has on the occupation of Palestine and the resistance against it?

Kole: On Palestine, I think the balance of forces have not been in favour of self-determination struggle for maybe 20-30 years now, since the early 80s, with the onslaught of Reagan and Thatcher, and the onset of neo-liberalism. There is the erosion of national sovereignty, which is actually one of the gains of self-determination struggles in the third world, with the ability to kick out foreign oppressors and imperialists, and to manage their own affairs.

If you look at any human rights instrument in international law, especially the convention on civil and political rights, the universal declaration of human rights, and the convention on economic, social, and cultural rights, the first clause in all of them is the right to self-determination. That clause is reproduced verbatim, and self-determination means not only the

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'Disengagement' in the West Bank: More Palestinians Killed, Displaced

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These attacks and raids have been happening all over Gaza, with the Khan Yunus refugee camp, located in southern Gaza, being especially hard-hit in the last two months. Apparently as 'retaliation' for mortar attacks launched from Khan Yunus on nearby Israeli settlements, the Israeli military has repeatedly assaulted the camp both before and after the attacks on the settlements. On December 18th, Israeli forces invaded Khan Yunus, killing 11 Palestinians, injuring 40 others, and bulldozing at least 40 homes. Four days later, the Israeli occupation forces returned with over 50 armoured vehicles, including bulldozers and helicopter gunships, and proceeded to flatten a medical clinic, raid the local school, and inflict another 9 casualties. The Khan Yunus camp was then hit less than a week later by tank shells fired into the camp by Israeli tanks, which injured another 13 Palestinians, including



Israeli occupation soldiers threaten an unarmed Palestinian demonstrator near the Aida refugee camp during a peaceful protest, August 3rd 2004.

a 13-year-old boy and a girl who is around the age of 10. This is the same camp where Israeli soldiers admittedly killed a 13-year-old boy 'for fun' last March by shooting him in the head 7 times while he was working with his father on their farm.

Disengagement in the West

Bank: More Palestinians Killed and Displaced

While the Israeli government is carrying out these repeated assaults on Palestinians in Gaza, it is continuing the expansion of the Apartheid Wall through

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Afghan Life Under Occupation

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Elections: Legitimate Democracy?

The instability in Afghanistan and lack of 'progress' has not gone unnoticed by the international community or by poor and working people the world over. The occupation forces have no plans for exiting Afghanistan any time soon, but they do feel pressure to legitimately remain in Afghanistan for years to come, and thusly began planning the Afghan federal election.

After initially failing to register enough voters; after postponing the elections twice; and after worldwide calls for an end to the occupation *before* any election was carried out, the Afghan elections were held on October 9th 2004.

The elections were rife with scandal and criticism, from election fraud, to faulty procedures and candidate boycotts. Candidates that opposed the occupation were barred from running in the elections. Because of the lack of security, under 400

election observers participated in the elections, making any reporting sparse and ineffective. The biggest scandal of all however, was not over indelible ink or ballot rigging. The biggest scandal stared the world in the face, and it was 26,000 troops strong. The foreign militaries that lined the streets across the country were a guarantee that no "free" and "democratic" election had the possibility of taking place, especially when those forces were campaigning for one specific candidate. And, "surprise!" their favorite won.

Afghan Life Under Occupation

"Today, three years after the Taliban were ousted, armed groups controlled by warlords use violence and create fear against much of the Afghan population. In previous administrations some warlords even assumed positions at highest levels of your government." – Brad Adams Executive Director, Asia Division of Human Rights Watch, in a letter to Hamid Karzai on December 3rd

Ten days after Adams wrote



A US Soldier searches Afghan women, December 2004.

to Hamid Karzai protesting the conditions in Afghanistan, Human Rights Watch, an international non-governmental organization (NGO) based out of New York City, wrote a letter

to US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld regarding US-administered detention facilities in Afghanistan. In this letter, Human Rights Watch stated, "The detention system in Afghanistan

continues to operate outside the rule of law. The United States continues to hold Afghan detainees in legal limbo and in many cases incommunicado, in violation of U.S. obligations under the laws of armed conflict and applicable Afghan law." They went on to cite numerous cases of Afghan people murdered while in custody of the US forces.

Beyond the abuse and murder highlighted by Human Rights Watch are the daily poverty, homelessness, displacement, joblessness and desperation faced by Afghan people under occupation. Women, in particular, have been served the biggest injustice of all. Operation Enduring Freedom was partially built on the justification of liberating women from inequality and gender-based persecution. After the occupation began, Afghanistan enacted a new Constitution in January 2004.

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Who's Ruling Haiti?

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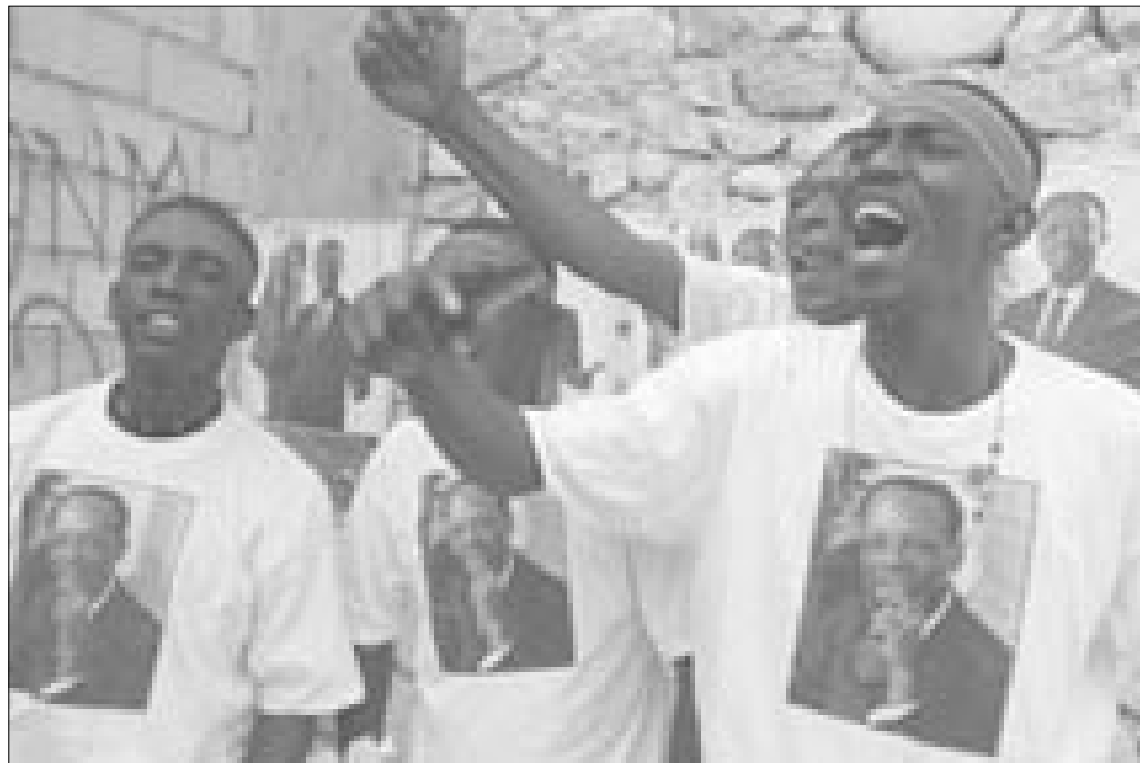
Nations "Stabilization Mission in Haiti" (MINUSTAH), are to "bring stability to the region", having determined that Haiti "continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security."

Clearly, this "threat to international peace and security", is in no way about peace and security for Haitian people. Since the MINUSTAH mission began, UN soldiers have been complicit in the mass killing of thousands of Haitians. Canadian troops, in particular, have been training the Haitian police forces that are carrying out some of the most violent acts.

Despite having a force of over 6,000 troops, the UN has been quite unable to secure and stabilize Haiti, which is essential for imperialist nations to secure and protect their position within the Caribbean and Latin America. With the quagmire in Iraq, the deteriorating conditions in Haiti prior to the coup were leading to pre-revolutionary developments, which were too much for the US and its imperialist partners to handle. Removing Aristide and imposing a discreet occupation force was their best option for killing the uprising of poor and working Haitians. The formula did not come out as planned however, and like Iraq itself, a combination of powerful anti-occupation resistance and increasing crisis and chaos has made Haiti a much more difficult mission than it was projected to be.

UN: One More Nation in A Deplorable History of Occupation

This UN intervention in Haiti



Aristide supporters rally in Port-Au-Prince, December 19th 2004.

was preceded by decades of foreign intervention and interference in the country. A US imposed aid embargo in 2001, froze humanitarian projects undermining basic humanitarian services in Haiti related to water, housing and medical care. The embargo, along with incredible, unrelieved national debt, has been a major obstacle for bringing the country out of the ominous poverty that cripples it.

Through the aforementioned MINUSTAH mission, the UN, along with Canada, France and the US are politically, economically and militarily controlling the nation. Currently, discussions are underway to set up a long-term force and designate Haiti as a UN "protectorate". This would help to legitimize an occupation

for decades to come. The UN makes claims that it is in Haiti to protect democracy and security for Haitian civilians. The reality is that the UN is working directly to protect the "Transitional Government" and its president, Gerard Latortue, who was never mandated by the Haitian people, has been protested constantly by tens of thousands of Haitians and has been responsible for attacks on the Haitian people for the past nine months.

Following the ousting of President Aristide and the rapid establishment of the occupation, the next move was to install a "transitional" (read: "puppet") government. Latortue was living in the US when he was selected to become the new President of Haiti, and sworn in on March 12th

2004. Since coming to power, Latortue has repealed the recent increase in minimum wage and abolished the Ministry of Literacy. Additionally, Latortue is in the process of reestablishing relations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), including recent talks to secure a major loan to chain Haiti into a long-term relationship with the IMF.

Gaining a clear understanding of what Latortue means for Haiti is not difficult. Beyond the sordid details of implementing neo-liberal measures and running a bloodthirsty police force, lies one particular fact that makes Latortue a completely illegitimate official. That is, he is steadfastly supporting and directly collaborating with the occupation forces and is thusly obstructing

the only path to freedom and dignity for Haiti, which is the path of self-determination.

On November 29th 2004, the UN voted to extend the Haiti mission until June 1st 2005, "with the intention to renew for further periods." This decision further undermines and delays the primary demands of the Haitian people for self-determination and only promises more resistance and crisis, as Haitian people fight for their rightful sovereignty.

Life in Haiti Under Occupation

"The situation in Haiti is dire but not yet at the level of concern as in Afghanistan, Iraq or Somalia, though Haiti clearly is heading in that direction." – From April 2004 FOCAL (Canadian Foundation for the Americas) Report

As for the UN goal to "protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence", the UN has failed miserably at this, with violence only escalating and much of that violence being carried out by their partners and themselves.

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Life in Haiti Under Occupation

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Since the September 30th 2004 anti-occupation demonstration at which UN troops fired on unarmed protesters, the crisis in Haiti has escalated. Canadian trained Haitian police killed dozens of prisoners December 9th, carting the bodies out of the prison in wheelbarrows. According to a Reuters article on December 9th ("*Rights groups say Haiti prison riot a massacre*") eyewitness reports cite that over 60 prisoners were slaughtered.

Arrests, detentions and imprisonments have skyrocketed, targeting many members of Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas Party. On October 2nd, the Oregon-based Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti reported, "*On Saturday October 02, 2004, Haitian police forcibly entered Haiti's Radio Caraibe and arrested three former parliamentarians from the Fanmi Lavalas party who had criticized the Interim Government during a radio program.*" The article goes on to list the murders of sixteen Lavalas members by Haitian police between September 30th and October 1st 2004.

In addition to the violence impacting Haiti, Haitian people face an economic crisis. Over 80% face unemployment, and extremely limited access to basic food staples. The price of rice has doubled since the beginning of 2004, with 80% of it coming from the US, since the Haitian rice market was flooded and destroyed. As well, Haitian people are still facing the devastating impact of the August tropical storm, which resulted in over 3,000 deaths and extensive destruction of infrastructure.

Imperialist Canada Exposed

In April 2004, the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) prepared a report for the House of Commons Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. In the report they clearly stated the role that Canada should take in the occupation of Haiti. "*The US will be the main donor, but with other more pressing responsibilities and a troubled history in Haiti, it appears to be actively seeking another nation to assume leadership on Haiti. Canada is a natural candidate. Brazil already has committed troops to the planned long-term UN peacekeeping force. But, it is unlikely that Brazil would be able to offer the political leadership to guide UN intervention. Again, Canada has the credentials.*"

Even if one does not agree that Canada should take the "leadership" in this occupation, it is hard to dispute FOCAL's argument. Canada *does* have the credentials. Canada's credentials for leading the occupation include half a century of colonial war and occupation on Indigenous territory in Canada, as well as the present establishment and commitment of Canada to the occupation of Afghanistan. Taking the lead in the occupation of Haiti is a huge opportunity for Canada to further build its position on "the world stage" and prove that it is indeed



UN soldiers guarding gas station, December 2004.

worthy of competing with France, Germany and especially, with the US and UK.

Early in December, Paul Martin hosted a visit to Ottawa by Latortue. Inside the meeting they discussed the role of Canada in developing the Haitian court system. Canada has already supplied 100 RCMP officers to train Haitian police. This new discussion on the judicial process will only cement the plans to remain in Haiti for a long period of time. As Fire This Time quoted in July 2004, Paul Martin has already declared and defined his commitment to the Haiti project, "*What you've got to do is get a political agreement between the parties that will allow us to not just send troops to maintain peace, but to establish a good justice system, to set up a good police force, and I have said that Canada will be very much there when that happens.*"

Resistance, Sovereignty and Global Solidarity

After defeating the colonial French forces, Haiti made the incredible accomplishment of establishing the world's first black republic in 1804. However, since then, Haiti has become the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, has been plagued by political violence and has suffered a history that is peppered with foreign intervention and interference. This history, however, has consistently been met with resolve of the Haitian people, who have stood up, time and again to fight for their liberation.

In recent months the people of Haiti have escalated their battle for freedom and dignity. With the September 30th demonstrations, which drew tens of thousands of protesters to Cap Haitien and Port-Au-Prince, recent months have brought increased resistance in the streets and renewed calls for an end to the occupation. Following the September 30th demonstrations was a strike that paralyzed Port-Au-Prince for nearly two weeks.

The people of Haiti who are participating in the resistance, like the people of all oppressed nations that are resisting occupation, have been characterized as 'rebels' and 'thugs' by imperialist media. As well, they have been pigeonholed as only "Aristide supporters" in an attempt to limit and discredit the resistance. However, it is obvious as cities are listed off as "flashpoints of resistance", that the opposition to occupation is a

broad and popular opposition. The fight for sovereignty is not

a new fight, or one isolated to this single Caribbean nation. Today the people of Iraq, the people of Palestine, the people of Afghanistan and Indigenous nations in Canada all carry this demand against imperialist occupation forces. For imperialist nations, Haiti is an opening in the Caribbean and into Latin America for the expansion of the era of war and occupation that is already raging in the Middle East. In response to this expansion, we must expand the antiwar movement and join in solidarity with the calls for self-determination in Haiti.

The occupation of Haiti is particularly important for people in Canada to protest.

The government of Canada is deeply establishing its imperialist leadership role in this occupation. As the government of Canada extends its imperialist ventures, people living in Canada must be in the forefront of the opposition exposing the government of Canada and the bankruptcy of their "peacekeeping" image.

People who believe in the right of oppressed nations to sovereignty and the right of oppressed people to freedom and dignity, must support the people of Haiti in action, and in the streets. We must increase awareness about their struggle and we must join the demands: UN out of Haiti! US out of Haiti! France out of Haiti! CANADA OUT OF HAITI!

Imperialists Hands Off Africa!

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majority of their funding comes from the US and European Union. By January or February 2005, there are supposed to be 3,320 African Union armed forces in Sudan. The Sudanese government initially allowed some African Union forces in for "monitoring," but is opposed to the expansion.

The ongoing slaughter of unknown tens of thousands of Iraqi, Afghan, and Haitian people testifies against any humanitarian concerns on the part of the ruling classes in imperialist countries. There is also the case of the 1998 US

and subsequently led to the ethnic cleansing of Serbian and Roma people in Kosovo. In effect, there is as much reason to believe that an invasion of Sudan would help or is intended to help the Sudanese people as there is to believe that a hungry wolf would keep a chicken safe.

The official calls for aid workers in Sudan have purposes unrelated to genuine aid. There is experience from elsewhere that verifies this. For example, in Yugoslavia in 1999, three "humanitarian" aid workers from an international aid organization were found to be collecting and compiling information to assist NATO's war against and

atrocities. It is important to note, however, that it was first Britain, the colonial ruler of Sudan from 1896 to 1956 that imposed a division on Sudan, based on the classic "divide and conquer" principle: again, it is easier to rule a divided Sudan. Similar reasoning has been implied to Iraq, with attempts by the occupying forces to create divisions between Shiite and Sunni Muslims. In each case the divisions are artificial. The interests of poor and working people in Iraq, Sudan, and Canada with whatever ethnic and religious divisions that exist amongst them are the same. And for sure the common interests of these oppressed people are very different from the interests of the capitalist ruling classes of the US, Canada and Europe.

There are two major reasons for the interest of the US and other imperialist countries in Sudan. Sudan has significant oil resources, which are largely being controlled by rival countries, particularly China. Sudan can also offer another base to aid in the expansion of imperialist war and occupation into resource-rich Africa. With the internal political situation in Sudan imperialists, especially the US ruling class, sees invasion as an opportunity to extend its military intervention from the Middle East to East Africa. While France is trying to expand its presence from the Ivory Coast to other African nations, the US occupation of Liberia in August 2003 and now with the military intervention in Sudan, US attempting to put itself in a better position against France and other imperialists for plundering Africa.

It is vitally important to build the movement in solidarity with the demands of the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, Palestine, and Indigenous Nations in Canada for self-determination, and to oppose the expansion of imperialist war and occupation to other countries, including Sudan. Imperialists Hands Off Africa! US Hands Off Sudan!



Sudanese refugee camp in Chad.

bombing of a major medicine factory in Sudan, which the US falsely accused of producing chemical weapons. The UN Security Council's threat of sanctions against Sudan, the effects of which were seen in Iraq with the deaths of an estimated 1.5 million Iraqis is further evidence.

The effects of so-called "humanitarian interventions," or more correctly, imperialist invasions, have in the past been seen elsewhere as well. The "humanitarian" invasion of Somalia by UN forces in 1993 killed 7,000-10,000 Somalis. The NATO "humanitarian" bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 killed about 2,000 Serbs

bombing of Yugoslavia. There is a very convenient opportunity to use aid workers, who have a unique position that enables them to see and evaluate various areas of a country, to pass on information and assessments to help in forming plans for military invasion. Additionally, some different aid agencies have called on the international community to "take action" in Sudan, and can also have the role of legitimizing anything that imperialists do to Sudan.

The Sudanese government has itself tried to further divisions among Arab and African Sudanese, and Christian and Muslim Sudanese and is responsible for various

Canadian Imperialism: 'Committed to staying the course with Afghanistan'

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Article 22 guarantees men and women equal rights and duties before the law. Article 44 provides that the state must promote education for women. Despite the legislative lip-service, for women Afghanistan in 2004 is no different from Afghanistan in 2000.

According to a broadcast by the Boston based radio show "On Point" aired in April 2004, reporter Amy Goodman said, "But now, two and a half years later, Afghan women still suffer many of the same human rights abuses, and suicide rates among Afghan women appear to be on the rise." The suicides that Goodman is referring to are often horrific self-immolations, one of which took place when on October 9th, 2004 (the day of the Presidential election in Afghanistan). Muska, a female election worker, who suffered an attempted rape while returning home from work, went into her kitchen, covered herself in gasoline and then lit her body on fire.

Life for women in Afghanistan, like life for the majority of Afghan people, has no chance of improving as long as their primary abusers are in control of every political, economic and social aspect of the nation.

Moves and Motives of the Occupiers: Divisions and Openings

With the internal battles raging between various political factions in Afghanistan, the country remains deeply divided. This division may be a potential opening for the occupation forces to maintain control of the nation. Initially one may think "No, Afghanistan will be harder to control with each regional commander creating stalls and obstacles for the occupation forces". However, it is possible to look at this situation in a different light.

A divided Afghanistan is effectively a weak Afghanistan. Hamid Karzai, and any other leader in his position for that matter, has no choice but to give all his loyalty to the occupation forces in order to simply stay alive. Karzai is protected by 200 US bodyguards and it costs Washington \$1.6 billion US monthly to keep Karzai in power. In addition to the deal with Karzai, the intervening forces are free to negotiate with other equally weak regional commanders for economic benefits, political control and the cementing of a long-term military occupation.

Operation Lightning Freedom, the next major offensive being launched against the Afghan people, will involve up to 18,000 troops. According to Washington it will "eliminate insurgents who could threaten parliamentary elections slated for the spring." The effect of Operation Lightning Freedom, beyond defending the elections, is sending a strong and clear message to their opponents; "If you disagree with us, we can negotiate, but if you fight against us, we will crush you."



George W Bush and Hamid Karzai, December 2004.

Canada's Bloody Hands

"Canada is committed to staying the course with Afghanistan." – Allan Rock, Canada's Permanent Ambassador to the UN, Dec 8 2004.

For many people, the occupation of Afghanistan opens up questions on the role of Canada. Canada is one of the main occupation forces in Afghanistan under NATO's International Security and Assistance Force

(ISAF) and has been in a position of leadership throughout its mandate. So what is Canada doing in Afghanistan? As people living in Canada face the same economic crises as those in the US; unemployment, inflation and

growing poverty; why has \$430 million been spent on Canadian troops in Afghanistan this fiscal year alone?

As the US, Canada, and other leading nations, face an impasse for solving their domestic problems internally, they have no choice but to extend themselves beyond their borders and begin securing and feeding off of the resources, people and clout that can be gained through direct military occupation of oppressed nations. As each imperialist nation raises the stakes, Canada must respond by tossing in its respective bets, one upping the others, staying in the game, and hopefully walking away with some loot in its purse.

Canada began its 2nd mission with ISAF last August, sending more soldiers to Afghanistan than any other region around the world. There are nearly 1,000 troops involved in this second rotation of Operation Athena that began on August 9th 2004. In addition to the armored reconnaissance squadron, Canada also sent a training cadre to help train the Afghan National Army.

From January 2004 until August 2004, Canadian Lieutenant-General Rick Hiller commanded

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Stop the Killing of Palestinians!

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the West Bank. This expansion is displacing more Palestinians, confiscating more Palestinian land and farms, and redrawing a new armistice line that consolidates even more Palestinian land into Israel 'proper.'

The Palestinian town of Jayyous is one of many towns getting strangled by the building of the Apartheid Wall. 75-85 % of its agricultural land has been separated from the town by the Apartheid Wall to make room for expanding the Israeli settlement of Zufim. Though officially the Israeli government 'allows' the residents of Jayyous access to their farmland through a single gate in the wall, there are ridiculous restrictions that make access to this land virtually impossible. These restrictions include: that Palestinians need work permits to pass, that the gate is only open for an hour twice a day, and that men between the ages of 15 and 50 have been told by Israeli forces that it will be almost impossible for them to attain permits.

While the Palestinian farmers of Jayyous are being denied access to their farmlands, the Israeli government is destroying these farmlands in order to pave the way for new and expanded settlements in the West Bank. On December 10th, 650 olive trees were uprooted from Jayyous farms and shipped to Israeli farms. An Israeli development company currently plans to build an Israeli housing settlement right in front of the gate, showing the clear intention

of Israel to permanently confiscate this land from the Palestinians of Jayyous.

Other Palestinian towns and cities in the West Bank are also being strangled by the construction of the Apartheid Wall. So far, the Israeli government intends to put the residents of these towns in a situation where they have two 'options': either give up their homes and leave, or work under horrible conditions in one of the nearby Israeli industrial parks that are being constructed as part of the West Bank settlements.

With both of these two 'options', it is clear that Sharon's disengagement plan isn't intended to offer Palestinians anything other than hardship or death.

Israel, the US, and the Quagmire in Iraq

To deal with the constant crisis Israel faces as an economically weak settler state, Israel must put itself in a better position against Palestinians to ensure the continued theft and consolidation of Palestinian lands, resources, and labour power by ravaging every last piece of Palestinian livelihood like a vulture. At the same time, it must also be conscious of the balance of forces within the entire Middle East that are increasingly unstable. With the growing resistance movement in Iraq Israel must be mindful of the slow shift against imperialism that is developing.

With the quagmire that the US government faces with the continued resistance of the Iraqi people to the occupation of their

country. Imperialist interests in the Middle East cannot afford any provocations of the Palestinian people that might lead to either increased resistance in Palestine or any outpouring of their anti-imperialist sentiment into other countries in the region. The Israeli government, which relies on over \$4 billion dollars every year from the US to sustain its weak economy, must provide some stability in Palestine until a time where the US and UK are able to find a solution to the quagmire in Iraq.

For the people of Palestine, this means the 'stability' of constant war and daily violent assaults at the hands of Israeli forces. If Israel is able to buy time until conditions in the Middle East are slightly better for imperialist plundering, Palestinians can expect even more killing, more displacement, and eventually the mass expulsion of the majority of Palestinians from their country.

Why People all over the World must Oppose this Killings

For over fifty years, the occupation of Palestine has been one of the keys of imperialist strategy for controlling the Middle East for the purposes of imperialist plundering. As a result of this strategy to keep Palestinians and other Arab people in a state of perpetual war, the Palestinians have been forced to the front lines of the struggle against imperialism, in the Middle East and worldwide.

With the US-led occupation of Iraq, the Palestinians are now

standing on this field alongside their brothers and sisters in Iraq, and both people are mounting strong resistance to the unbearable conditions of imperialist occupation.

Continued global economic crisis forces the US, Israel, and other imperialist countries to deepen their attacks on the people of Palestine. With this the importance of the Palestinian struggle grows for poor, working, and oppressed people all over the world. The current developments in Palestine and the Middle East make this a crucial time to build a strong movement in solidarity with the people in Palestine struggling against the brutal occupation of their country. This means taking advantage of an additional pressure that the Israeli government must deal with, and that is the increasing disgust around the world amongst poor, working, and oppressed people to Israel's constant attacks on Palestinians.

We must demand an end to the killing of Palestinians and demand an end to the occupation of their land. This is not only necessary for the survival of the Palestinian people, but is an essential component of building a movement for the survival of all people currently under attack by the same handful of imperialist countries. We must demand:

*Stop the Killing of Palestinians!
Dismantle the Apartheid wall!
No 'Disengagement' under Occupation!
End the Zionist Occupation of Palestine!*

Resistance from Iraq to Palestine

From page 6

ability to govern themselves, but also to govern and determine how the resources of that country will be used, how the soils will be used, how the airspace will be used. It means a comprehensive definition of self-determination that includes both the people and the use of the land.

What we have in Palestine is an attempt to give some very nominal and limited form of self-determination to the people, but to deny them the right to actually have a say in how their land is used, which is an absurdity.

In terms of the current balance of forces, I think we're having a leveling out of the playing field in terms of really making it clear where the lines are being drawn. And those are between the imperialist powers and local elites that enjoy very little popular support, and the broad masses of people in the Arab world and third world countries that are struggling against the neo-liberal agenda, remilitarization, and neo-imperialist policies pursued by the US and its allies.

The challenges are really big, as we see from the experience of Haiti, the experience currently in the Ivory Coast, in Colombia, in the Philippines, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where three million people have died. And nobody's done anything, or they've done everything to perpetuate that genocide. It really shows the nature of the challenge, but it also shows that there is a way forward.

FTT: The really significant part of what you previously referred to as the 'second superpower' is the resistance that has been waged in



Iraq, and you were in Palestine during the development of this, a real deep crisis for the US and the other countries that went in. As a result of this huge resistance, did you notice anything as far as an impact of the Iraqi resistance on the second intifada in Palestine?

Kole: It had a huge impact. I would say that there was a huge confluence of events in April 2004 with Fallujah, Najaf, and Sadr City, and with the assassinations in late March of (Hamas spiritual leader) Ahmed Yassin. Basically what was happening in April while the offensives were going on in Fallujah, Najaf and Sadr City, and the resistance was succeeding,

you saw a huge explosion of popular demonstrations in support of this resistance in Palestine. I remember many nights in Balaka people marching in the streets, and chanting in favour of the resistance against US imperialists. I remember the prevalence of Iraqi flags at demonstrations, and a real sense among the people that the struggles were the same, it wasn't just that they were alike, but they were the same struggle. At the Friday sermons, we lived near the mosque in Balaka, and you could always hear the words 'Iraq' and 'resistance' and words like that thrown in as they talked about the situation in Palestine. I remember sitting with people

and them comparing the names of places in Palestine and Iraq that are the same. And you know how bad the situation is in Iraq if the Palestinians want to help out. Really it showed me that the cause of Arab unity, that anti-imperialist, pan-Arab perspective is still very present. It was something that gave strength to the people in Palestine, and it was something that should really be a source of inspiration for people fighting imperialism here in North America.

FTT: Why do you think it's important for people in Canada to show strong support and solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-

determination?

Kole: Ultimately, the way things are run right now, most working and poor people in Canada aren't being represented by the elites in power right now. And the elites that are in power right now are the same ones that are pushing for the Zionist and imperialist agenda in the Middle East. It's really hard to see, with the cutbacks to social programs and pumping more money into the military, how this war on terror, or war against the axis of evil, is helping ordinary people.

I got back and found out that the Liberal government here in Ontario had taken a bunch of things off of our Ontario health insurance plan, including optometrists, chiropractors, things like that. A lot of people with disabilities, a lot of people with problems with eyesight, they are now having greater difficulties, especially poor people. This is just a continuation of the policies we had in Ontario under Harris, the previous premier.

But also we have those struggles here in Canada for self-determination, because Canada is also a settler colonial state, like Israel, and its legitimacy to its territory needs to be challenged. People in North America need to reconceptualize the way they view Canada and the US. We should be asking 'where is our interest served in supporting the Palestinians,' we should be asking 'what is the right thing to do?'

If we want to avoid living in a world like the one that we're increasingly going towards, which is one of unparalleled violence, continuous war, and insecurity for everyone, we need to step out of the framework we're currently working within and start reconceptualizing a different kind of world. I think the history of Palestine, and drawing from that experience, the mechanisms at work there, is a step in the right direction. So the sense that there is a broader community of solidarity to plug into is really important to maintain. Any work that we can do to support those forces resisting in Palestine is crucial. There's a lot of pressure being pushed – through the media, through propaganda, through psychological operations, through military pressures, arrests, persecutions – a range of instruments that the Israelis and Americans have at their disposal to disturb the resistance.

So anything we can do to help is really crucial because we need to provide assistance as much as possible to those forces still resisting. Ultimately, if the cause of Palestinian self-determination is denied, it won't just be a loss for Palestinians, it will be a loss for all third world peoples, for all people still fighting for their self-determination.

For me, looking at it not as a Canadian, but as a person from the Balkans, where our lands are divided, where our peoples are occupied, where our governments don't reflect our own will, I would see it as a big loss. Right now I think a lot of people in that region are drawing inspiration from the resistance in Iraq, from the resistance in Palestine, and if that resistance continues and if it achieves success that is visible, then people in other places in the world will also hopefully step up their resistance and that's the only way that we'll be able to defeat this global enemy.

Self-Determination for Afghanistan!

From page 9

the entire ISAF forces. Canada has also made it very clear that Afghanistan is one of their major and long-term interventions. Afghanistan is Canada's single largest recipient of bilateral aid, and the government of Canada has pledged \$250 million to be disbursed in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2009, for a total of \$616 million Canadian dollars since 2001.

"Canada is working with other countries, the UN, NATO and various international organizations to provide the security and stability necessary for the implementation of multilateral and bilateral development programs in Afghanistan to pursue systematic reconstruction of the country and to rebuild its economic, political and judicial institutions." – Government of Canada Website, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

What "systematic reconstruction" means to Canada is a long-term relationship and the establishment of Canada's role in the future of Afghanistan. Through involving itself deeply in "reconstruction"



A US soldier detains Afghan civilians, December 2004.

and "development programs", Canada is able to cement its position in the Middle East and stake out its territory against other imperialist opponents.

Sovereignty is the Only Solution

Afghanistan is a nation that has endured decades of occupation. It is a nation that has a seven thousand year history of civilization, progress and technological development. Foreign intervention has had a drastic impact of on the ability for Afghan people to move forward and begin a process of rebuilding, in all areas of their political, economic and cultural

lives.

In order to move towards a future with dignity and the potential for positive change, the Afghan people need full control over their country. After decades of intervention and occupation, the Afghan people have been robbed of their right to naturally develop their society and nation.

For people everywhere, who oppose war and occupation, it is essential that we take up the calls for self-determination for Afghanistan. Not only because Afghanistan is illegally occupied, but also because Afghanistan is a symbol of the fate of oppressed nations

all across the world that face invasion, war and occupation. Sovereignty for Afghanistan will deal a heavy blow to the entire imperialist system and will have an impact in favor of oppressed nations everywhere.

As well, sovereignty for Afghanistan is particularly important for people in Canada to support. The government of Canada is testing itself in Afghanistan and developing its future of increased foreign intervention, war and occupation. People living in Canada must be on the forefront, in solidarity with Afghan people in opposing and fighting against the inhuman and illegal acts of the government of Canada. As well, through the occupation of Afghanistan, we can expose the blood-soaked history of the Canadian-state and their 500-year old occupation of Indigenous territory in Canada.

Together with the Afghan people, with occupied people of Haiti, Iraq, Palestine and Indigenous nations in Canada, we can unite against a common enemy and for a common goal: End destruction, killing and torture in Afghanistan! Canada/US/NATO troops out now! Self-Determination for Afghanistan!

'Ideas are the Most Important Weapon in Humanity's Fight for its own Salvation' - Fidel Castro

Speech given by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, at the closing session of the Young Communists League 8th Congress, held in the Havana Convention Center, 5 December 2004.

Dear delegates, guests and attendees to the Young Communists League 8th Congress:

Communists:

Some of the concepts I will touch upon today have already been discussed and published; some have been developed in the heat of the struggle; others refer to goals we have attained; others are just reflections.

Today, when you have invited me to address you, I shall try to explain how and why this day is very special for all of us.

Unfortunately, the responsibility I have shouldered throughout this intense and difficult revolutionary process and, in particular, my relation with the Battle of Ideas, oblige me to make reference to my own speeches, ideas and concepts, something which in no way pleases me, so I beg your indulgence in advance.

I have never believed that ideas orbit around public figures; rather, it is the latter that ought to orbit around ideas.

The fact that I dared to make so many predictions that, today, people are recognizing as irrefutable truths stems exclusively from the experience I have accumulated. I could have died young, as did many other Cuban revolutionaries throughout our history. Yesterday's and today's enemies did everything humanly possible to achieve this aim, but I had the privilege of having struggled for many years, since early 1953, when we had the idea of seizing the Santiago de Cuba Regiment's weapons to initiate the struggle. The credit for this privilege is not mine; the true credit belongs to those who stood by their beliefs and were willing to sacrifice even their lives for the aims we espoused.

Only three days ago, when some congratulated me, reminding me of the 48th anniversary of the Granma landing, my first reaction was one of surprise. How much time has gone by and how much has occurred!

Engrossed in our present duties, some of us who took part in that action have hardly a second to look back on the beginning of that long march on which we were embarking in the days of Moncada and Granma. I would describe it all as a long learning process; it is amazing how ignorant we were when we set out on that unknown road.

Allow me to give you a concise summary, often using quotes, of the essentials of what I expressed on three different occasions prior to the Battle of Ideas, whose spirit today reigns over the 8th Congress of our prestigious Young Communists League.

On October 8, 1997, in the Central Report to the Party's 5th Congress, I said:

"It is obvious that we need to work more closely and intensely with our youth organizations, as these times and this Party need a continuous influx of young cadres and members.

"Now more than ever, more than at



Fidel Castro.

any other juncture --this being the most difficult, the toughest of times-- I believe we must devote special efforts to our young people and their education, because those who come after this generation must be better.

"We want them to be fully conscious of their role, of what they can do for their country, of what they can do for the Revolution, of what they can do for their future".

On October 10, 1997, in my remarks about youths in the closing session of the Party's 5th Congress, I pointed out:

"We have the Party, we have our wonderful young people --yes, that's what I said, wonderful young people-- whom we will of course ask to do more and more political work, political work which is not the same as parroting a slogan. For a long

“We cannot overlook the risk of a military invasion. Today, the real battle is the battle of ideas.”

time, the Party was also, at times, simplistic and dogmatic, working with slogans instead of arguments.

"We must work directly with the people, on a one by one basis; this means more than the work done through the press and television, through conferences or political meetings. The work of convincing and persuading human beings, one by one, is historic. Religions were created this way and have lasted thousands of years.

"We revolutionaries must do the same. Our cadres and young people

must work like this and never consider anyone a lost cause.

"Based on the profoundest conviction that we are right and that we are defending what is fairest, most beautiful, most human, we must discuss things for as long as we need to, explain things as many times as necessary, we must teach and educate. Political work cannot be done in the abstract. We must delve more deeply into knowledge, into ideas, into what happens here and in the world. We must be frank, courageous, and truthful.

"There are 780, 000 Party members, and then there are all of the revolutionaries who are not Party members. It is everyone's job to make what is in many cases an exception the rule and our best experiences the norm. How could we not achieve this? What are we? What is our worth, if we cannot achieve it? Given everything we know today, and all of the possibilities open to us, we must do it. That would be the true victory of ideas".

On December 10, 1998, at the YCL's 7th Congress, I said:

"We must meet, in the heat of battle, with the leading cadres to discuss, analyze, expand on and draft plans and strategies, to take up issues and elaborate ideas, as when an army's general staff meets.

"We must use solid arguments to talk to members and non-members, to speak to those who may be confused or even to discuss and debate with those holding positions contrary to those of the Revolution or who are influenced by imperialist ideology in this great battle of ideas we have been waging for years now, precisely in order to carry out the heroic deed of resisting against the most politically, militarily, economically, technologically and culturally powerful empire that has ever existed. Young cadres must be well prepared for this task.

"In this ideological struggle, ideas are our fundamental weapons; our most important ammunition are also ideas. We have to arm our cadres with ideas so that they, in turn, can pass these on to the young and to all of the people.

"This army knows the plan and the strategy; let the enemy learn what these are as it goes along. I am again comparing this struggle to a great battle waged by a vanguard army, an elite troop of the Revolution. I put the Revolution and the Party first; they are, after all, one and the same thing.

"In a short meeting with the new National Committee, I was able to talk to you more freely as fewer comrades were present, and we could speak even more freely and take up more discussion and opinions at a meeting with the National Bureau.

"This 7th Congress", I said then, "has been an excellent congress, one where discussions covered the broadest range of topics, where nothing led us to shy away from any issue; on the contrary, we were constantly urged to take up all of the issues, no matter how thorny or complex, in order to make the most of this meeting, and I feel we have accomplished this.

"This has been possible, we must say this categorically, thanks to the extraordinary work that has been done over the course of a year, under the leadership of the YCL's National Bureau. In fact at this point, where thanks are usually given, we should sincerely and wholeheartedly acknowledge the comrades in the Bureau and the numerous cadres who, under Otto's leadership, have been working from the time the congress was called up to this very minute.

"All of us have learned something; not only you, we have learned too.

"The Congress," I added, "shows that the YCL has become increasingly strong and that it is better organized, has more experience, greater prestige and influence than ever in key, truly strategic sectors of today's society and --even more so-- in tomorrow's society, tomorrow's Cuba. It is organized in the way these times, this historic moment, require!

"One of the extraordinary things about our Revolution is that, ever since it came into being --and it could be said that our Revolution's ideas were begotten on that university hill-- the Revolution and our young people have been as closely bound as identical, one could even say Siamese, twins. I invite you to try and find in any other country in the world a bond as strong as it has existed, exists and shall always exist in this profoundly revolutionary process. Our Revolution is reborn each day, because the ideas we stand for, the justice that we defend, the cause we fight for, is today the cause, and there can be no cause other than that of the billions of people who live on this planet.

"I say ideas because the struggle we are speaking about will not, in essence, be a war, but rather a battle of ideas. The world's problems shall not be solved through the use of nuclear weapons --this is impossible-- nor through wars. What's more, they shall not be solved through isolated revolutions that, within the order installed by neo-liberal globalization, can be crushed within a matter of days, weeks at the most.

"We cannot, however, neglect defense for even a minute, because given the unavoidable crises, a change of government, a fascist-like or far-right party in power is all it will take to

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41st anniversary of the Cuban Woman's Federation (FMC), 2001.

'Las Ideas son el Arma Esencial en la Lucha de la Humanidad por su Propia Salvación' - Fidel Castro

Discurso pronunciado por Fidel Castro Ruz, Presidente de la República de Cuba, en la clausura del VIII Congreso de la Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas, Palacio de las Convenciones, Ciudad de La Habana, 5 de diciembre de 2004.

Queridos delegados, invitados y participantes en el VIII Congreso de la Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas:

Una parte de los conceptos que voy a expresar hoy han sido dichos y publicados; algunos se han desarrollado más en medio de la lucha; otros se refieren a las metas alcanzadas; otros son reflexiones.

Un día como hoy, en que ustedes me invitan a dirigirles la palabra, trataré de explicarles cómo y por qué es un día muy especial para todos nosotros.

Lamentablemente la responsabilidad que cayó sobre mí a lo largo de este intenso y difícil proceso revolucionario, y de modo particular mi relación con la Batalla de Ideas, me obligan a referirme a discursos, reflexiones y conceptos propios, lo cual no me agrada, y pido por ello de antemano excusas. Siempre he pensado que las ideas no giran en torno a los hombres públicos, son estos quienes deben girar en torno a las ideas.

El grado en que me atreví a pronosticar acontecimientos que hoy comienzan a confirmarse como irrefutables verdades, está asociado únicamente a la experiencia acumulada. Pude morir tempranamente, como otros muchos revolucionarios cubanos a lo largo de nuestra historia. Los adversarios de ayer y de hoy hicieron lo posible y lo imposible por lograrlo, pero tuve el privilegio de haber luchado durante muchos años, desde que en los primeros meses de 1953 concebimos la idea de ocupar las armas del Regimiento de Santiago de Cuba para iniciar la lucha, y el privilegio no constituye un mérito; el mérito verdadero está en aquellos que creyeron y estuvieron dispuestos a sacrificar hasta la vida por los objetivos que proclamábamos.

Cuando hace apenas tres días algunos me felicitaban, recordándome que se cumplía el 48 Aniversario del desembarco del Granma, mi primera reacción fue de sorpresa. ¡Cuánto tiempo transcurrido y cuántos hechos acontecidos! Absorbidos por los actuales deberes, algunos de nosotros que participamos en aquella acción apenas disponemos de un segundo para recordar los inicios de la larga marcha que estábamos emprendiendo en los días del Moncada y del Granma. Yo lo definiría todo como un largo aprendizaje en el que la propia ignorancia con que iniciamos aquel inédito camino nos asombra.

Acudo al recurso de recordar, en apretadísima síntesis, utilizando muchas veces frases textuales, lo esencial que expresé en tres momentos que precedieron la Batalla de Ideas que hoy preside el espíritu del VIII Congreso de nuestra prestigiosa Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas.

El 8 de octubre de 1997, en el Informe Central al V Congreso del Partido, expresé:

«Es evidente la necesidad de un trabajo más fuerte, un trabajo más intenso en nuestras filas juveniles, puesto que estos tiempos y este Partido exigen seguir nutriéndose de cuadros y de militantes procedentes

de la juventud.

«Creo que más que nunca, más que en ninguna otra época, por ser esta la más difícil, la más dura, se requiere de un trabajo especial con la juventud y en la formación de nuestros jóvenes, porque no puede ser que los que vengan después de esta generación dejen de ser mejores.»

«**No son las armas; son las ideas las que van a decidir esta lucha universal. Y no son las ideas por sus valores intrínsecos, sino por lo que tan estrechamente se ajustan a las realidades objetivas del mundo de hoy.**»

«Queremos que tengan el máximo de conciencia de su papel, de lo que pueden hacer por su país, de lo que pueden hacer por la Revolución, de lo que pueden hacer por su futuro.»

En mis palabras sobre la juventud



Estudiantes Cubanos protestan frente a la Oficina de Intereses de Estados Unidos en la Habana, Cuba; el 20 de Diciembre del 2004.

en la clausura del V Congreso del Partido, el 10 de octubre de 1997, señalé:

«Tenemos el Partido, tenemos nuestra magnífica juventud —sí, así con esas palabras, ¡magnífica juventud!—, a la cual, desde luego, le pedimos y siempre le pediremos más, y le pediremos más trabajo político; trabajo político que no es lo mismo que usar una consigna. El Partido también, durante mucho tiempo, a veces fue esquemático, dogmático, trabajó con consignas, no siempre con argumentos.»

«Hay que trabajar con los ciudadanos en concreto, uno a uno; no es solo el trabajo a través de la prensa y de la televisión, o de las conferencias, o de los mítines políticos. El trabajo de convencer y persuadir a los seres

humanos uno por uno es histórico. Las religiones se crearon de esa forma y han durado miles de años.»

«Nosotros los revolucionarios tenemos que hacer lo mismo. Nuestros cuadros y los de la juventud tienen que trabajar así, y nunca dar a nadie por perdido.

«A partir de la más profunda convicción de que tenemos la razón y defendemos lo más justo, lo más hermoso, lo más humano, discutir todo el tiempo que haya que discutir, explicar todas las veces que haya que explicar, enseñar, educar. No se puede hacer trabajo político en abstracto. Profundizar en los conocimientos, en las ideas, en lo que pasa aquí y en lo que pasa en el mundo. Ser francos, ser valientes, ser veraces.»

«En el Partido hay 780 mil ciudadanos, y luego están todos los demás revolucionarios que no son miembros del Partido. Es tarea de todos la de convertir en regla lo que en muchos casos es excepción y la de generalizar nuestras mejores experiencias. ¿Cómo sería posible que no lo lográramos? ¿Qué somos? ¿Qué valemos si no podemos? Con todo lo que conocemos hoy día, con todas las posibilidades que tenemos, hay que hacerlo. Esa sería la verdadera victoria de las ideas.»

El 10 de diciembre de 1998, en el VII Congreso de la UJC, afirmé:

«Hay que reunirse, en medio de la batalla, con la tropa élite para debatir, analizar, profundizar, trazar planes, estrategias, abordar temas y elaborar ideas, como cuando se reúne el estado mayor de un ejército.»

«Utilizar sólidos argumentos para hablar con los militantes y con los que no son militantes;



Luisa Campos, Directora del Museo Nacional de Alfabetización en Cuba, habla acerca de la primera campaña de Alfabetización el cual movilizo a más de 10,000 estudiantes para erradicar el analfabetismo en Cuba.

vez, las vayan transmitiendo a toda la juventud y a todo el pueblo.»

«Este ejército conoce su plan, conoce su estrategia, y los enemigos que se vayan enterando sobre la marcha. Vuelvo a asociar la idea de esta lucha a una gran batalla que libra un ejército de vanguardia, una tropa élite de la Revolución. Ubico en primer lugar la Revolución y el Partido, que son al fin y al cabo la misma cosa.

«En la breve reunión con el nuevo Comité Nacional pude hablarles con un poco más de libertad, por ser un número más reducido de compañeros, y en una reunión con el Buró Nacional podríamos hablar con mayor libertad todavía, más argumentos y elementos de juicio.»

«Este VII congreso —dije entonces— ha sido un excelente congreso, uno de los congresos en que se ha discutido con más amplitud, en que bajo ningún concepto se trató de rehuir uno solo de los temas; al contrario, hubo una exhortación constante a que se abordaran todos los temas por espinosos que fuesen, por complejos que fuesen, precisamente para obtener de esta reunión todo el provecho posible, y me parece que lo hemos logrado.»

«Ha sido posible, es necesario expresarlo categóricamente, gracias a un trabajo extraordinario que se ha realizado a lo largo de un año, bajo la dirección del Buró Nacional de la UJC. Realmente aquí donde se han hecho reconocimientos, hay que hacerles un reconocimiento muy sincero, muy sentido a los compañeros del Buró y a los numerosos cuadros que, bajo la dirección de Otto, trabajaron desde la convocatoria hasta este mismo minuto.»

«Hemos aprendido todos, no solo ustedes sino también nosotros.»

«El congreso —les añadí— refleja un creciente fortalecimiento de la UJC para llegar a disponer de experiencia y organización superiores a las que haya tenido nunca, también de un prestigio y una influencia superiores a los que haya tenido nunca, y en sectores claves, verdaderamente estratégicos de la sociedad de hoy y, aun mayor, de la sociedad futura, del país futuro; de una organización como la que se requiere en estos tiempos,

¡en estos tiempos históricos!»

«Una de las cosas extraordinarias de nuestra Revolución es que desde que vino al mundo —y pudiera decirse que las ideas de nuestra Revolución se engendraron en aquella colina universitaria— hubo estrecha vinculación de hermanos gemelos, y casi casi podría decirse de hermanos siameses, entre Revolución y juventud. Vayan a buscarla en algún otro país del mundo en un grado tan alto como el que existió, existe y existirá siempre en este profundo proceso revolucionario. Nuestra Revolución cada día renace, porque las ideas que representamos, la justicia que defendemos, la causa por la que luchamos, es hoy la causa, y no puede haber otra causa que la causa de miles de millones de personas en este planeta.»

«Y digo ideas porque esta lucha de la que estamos hablando va a ser fundamentalmente una lucha de ideas; no serán guerras. Los problemas del mundo no se resolverán con armas nucleares, es imposible, ni se resolverán mediante guerras; e incluso digo más, no se resolverán mediante revoluciones aisladas que, en el orden implantado con la globalización neoliberal, pueden ser aplastadas sencillamente en cuestión de días o cuando más de semanas.»

«No por ello, sin embargo, podemos descuidar la defensa ni un minuto, porque con las crisis inevitables, un cambio de administración, un grupo fascistoide o una extrema derecha en el poder, es suficiente para que el imperio vuelva a sus viejas andanzas. Los peligros de agresiones militares no pueden descartarse. Hoy la batalla real es batalla de ideas.

«La Revolución pudo resistir porque sembró ideas.»

«Aceleradamente se globaliza el mundo, aceleradamente se establece un orden económico mundial insostenible e insoportable. Las ideas son la materia prima con la que se forman conciencias, son la materia prima por excelencia de la ideología. Prefiero llamarlas materia prima de la conciencia para expresar que no se trata de ideología estricta y rígida,

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Fidel Castro December 5th Speech Continued



Cuban student addressing July 26th Celebration in Havana Cuba, 2003.

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return the empire to its adventurist ways of old. We cannot overlook the risk of a military invasion. Today, the real battle is the battle of ideas.

"The Revolution was able to hold out because it sowed ideas.

"The world is rapidly being globalized; an unsustainable and intolerable world economic order is rapidly being established. Ideas are the raw material from which consciousness is forged; they are the raw material of ideology par excellence. I prefer to call them the raw material of consciousness to emphasize that it is not a question of strict and rigid ideology, but rather of an advanced consciousness, that is to say, a conviction that hundreds of millions and billions of people on this planet will inevitably arrive at, and that it will constitute, without a doubt, the best instrument to secure the victory of those ideas throughout the world.

"Not weapons but ideas will decide this universal battle, and not because of some intrinsic value, but because of how closely they relate to the objective reality of today's world. These ideas stem from the conviction that, mathematically speaking, the world has no other way out that imperialism is unsustainable, that the system that has been imposed on the world leads to disaster, to an insurmountable crisis, and, I dare say, sooner rather than later.

"It is based on these premises and these convictions that I evaluate what we have analyzed and what we are doing these days. It is not the only way of doing it, far from it, but it is valuable because it is essential.

"This battle you are waging cannot be lost. Without the tasks you must complete, without the work you will carry out --and you will be totally successful, I have no doubt of that-- we could not even speak of our dreams, not only dreams for our compatriots, but also for all of the people in this world.

"Never before, or anywhere else, has a people done what the people of Cuba are doing today. And what it is doing today with ideas, sowing ideas, cultivating and developing ideas;

this cannot lead to anything but the victory of ideas, to the firm belief that this Revolution shall not disappear nor crumble, because it is firmly planted in deeply rooted and ideas that are constantly evolving.

"Just ideas are invincible. Of them, Martí said: 'Trenches made of ideas are stronger than those made of stones' and 'a just cause --even one buried in the depths of a cave-- is mightier than an army'.

"Ideas are not simply an instrument to build consciousness and lead people to fight. Today, they have become the main weapon in the struggle, not a source of inspiration, not a guide, not a directive, but the main weapon of the struggle.

"We are not dogmatic nor can we be dogmatic, we are to avoid any sort of dogmas, as we believe in truly dialectical and flexible minds, which does not mean to admit even the slightest opportunism or pragmatism.

"We are flexible and dialectical because of our most rigid adherence to the principles and objectives of our revolutionary process and the new goals which we didn't ask anybody for, which we didn't hope or plan for, but which life and the history of these past decades have imposed on our country and our revolutionaries. And, this being the case, we have no other option but to fight with all our strength, thinking not only of ourselves but also of the well-being that the fruits of our struggle might bear for so many people around the world".

As fate would have it, the colossal Battle of Ideas that our people has been waging for exactly five years today began just one year after those words were spoken.

On July 5, 2000, on bestowing the "Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Order" on Miguel González, I looked back on how I had met him a year before, on December 2 to be precise, and how the battle for Elián's return had begun. That day, I said:

"I asked him a number of questions and, although he was obviously hurting and sad, he answered them with persuasive arguments and irrefutable proof of his affectionate, faultless and steadfast relationship

with his son.

"At every moment, I could see in his face the features of a noble, sincere and serious man.

"I told him that I was convinced that the boy would never be returned through legal procedures. This was a case in which the U.S. courts had absolutely no jurisdiction, and it was the duty of the U.S. immigration authorities to proceed with the immediate repatriation of his son. But, I was well aware of the arrogant, arbitrary, biased and conspiratorial behavior of the U.S. authorities with regard to any misdeeds and crimes committed against our people. The return of this boy could only be accomplished through an intense national and international political battle of public opinion".

The following day --as I said at that ceremony-- I spoke with other Party leaders and, without wasting a minute, I got in touch with leaders of the Young Communists League and the University Student Federation. Young people and students would be in the vanguard of this struggle, with the full support of all revolutionary forces.

Forty-eight hours later, on a Sunday evening like today exactly five years ago, one thousand young people from the Youth Technical Brigades who were just concluding a national conference took part in the first protest march held outside the US Interests Section.

Thus began the epic struggle for Elián's freedom. The battle for a child quickly became a battle for justice and the happiness of all our children and all of our people.

Guided by the profoundest conviction, already expressed in my closing remarks to the 7th Youth Congress I mentioned above, that ideas are the most important weapon in humanity's fight for its own salvation, the battle we began was not only one of thoughts, discussion, arguments and counter-arguments, but also of concrete facts and actions as well.

As part of the Battle of Ideas' work group, the Young Communists League has coordinated and spurred on nearly 200 revolutionary programs that have been created as a result of this struggle.

We have worked all this time to develop a critical rather than self-indulgent vision of our undertaking and our historical objectives. We have put into practice revolutionary concepts, which sweep away

“Not weapons but ideas will decide this universal battle, and not because of some intrinsic value, but because of how closely they relate to the objective reality of today's world”

formalism and conformism and accelerate the transformation processes needed for our country's future.

Some have been taken from the very notes taken by YCL cadres and by others who participate in our meetings. They include:

- No youth should be abandoned and no person should be left alone to face his fate. The YCL must work with every youth. Behind every category and every percentage is a man, a woman, a child or senior citizen.
- There is a solution to every problem; it is a question of finding alternatives.
- Any coordination work must be based on continuous analysis and up-to-date information so that decisions take precise account of the details; every action must be thought through, one must act quickly and never lose a minute.
- New coordination methods and mechanisms must

involvement and commitment from those cadres and workers who participate in each and every one of the programs.

- To exercise criticism and reflection wherever needed.
- Every idea always leads to a new idea and this new idea leads to more and more ideas. A new idea, no matter how good it seems, must be previously tested and undergo thorough experiments under real conditions.
- Discretion and compartmentalization are basic principles in program coordination and orientation. Programs shall be made public only after they have become realities; this way, we shall avoid promises that cannot be kept or that are kept and then ignored, forgotten or cast aside.
- Participating companies should neither make profits nor bear losses. Works must be executed quickly, within the budget, with quality and an optimal use of resources.
- Maintenance for equipment and facilities made available to these programs shall be provided. Everything must always be as good as new.

To this small sample of what remained in the cadres' minds, we could add hundreds of examples of what the cadres came up with when faced with the need to act swiftly and guarantee success. We had to make up for all the time lost in routine, simplistic thinking and other habits that hinder progress and frustrate the objectives that only a truly socialist system can achieve.

One day, literally said:

"Notwithstanding the rights and guarantees offered to all citizens of any race and background, the Revolution has not been as successful in its struggle to eradicate differences in the social and economic status of Cuba's black population, even though this sector plays an important role in many highly significant areas, including education and health".

These were the very words I said with no hesitation whatsoever, on February 7 last year, at the closing



Billboard in Cuba commemorating July 26th, the date of the 1953 attacks on the Moncada garrison by Cuban revolutionaries. Photo by Ernie Daley

In these past few years, I have devoted over seven thousand hours of fruitful and unforgettable labor to the tasks of exchanging ideas, analyzing and giving guidance to this group, the majority of whose members are YCL leaders and workers', students' and women's representatives, as well as CDR-members and peasants led by our Party.

be found so that all bodies and organizations participate with the understanding that the nation's interests are over and above bureaucratic contradictions, cravings for power and institutional jealousy.

- Secure high levels of

session of the International Pedagogy Congress 2003, which took place in the heat of the Battle of Ideas. This idea about the sad legacy of slavery, class society, capitalism and imperialism was something I had been carrying inside me and wanted to declare publicly.

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sino de una conciencia avanzada, es decir, una convicción a la que van a ir arribando inevitablemente cientos de millones y miles de millones de personas en este planeta, y que será sin duda la mejor alternativa para que esas ideas lleguen a triunfar en todo el mundo.

«No son las armas; son las ideas las que van a decidir esta lucha universal. Y no son las ideas por sus valores intrínsecos, sino por lo que tan estrechamente se ajustan a las realidades objetivas del mundo de hoy. Son ideas a partir de la convicción de que matemáticamente el mundo no tiene otra salida, de que el imperialismo no puede sostenerse, de que el sistema que han impuesto al mundo lo conduce a un desastre, a una crisis insalvable, y me atrevería a decir que más temprano que tarde.

«Es a partir de esas premisas y de esas convicciones que valoro lo que hemos analizado y lo que estamos haciendo en estos días; no es lo único ni mucho menos, pero tiene el valor de lo esencial.»

«Esta batalla que ustedes están librando no puede perderse. Sin las tareas que ustedes tienen que cumplir, sin el trabajo que ustedes van a realizar —y lo van a realizar, no tengo la menor duda, de forma absolutamente exitosa—, no se podría hablar de lo que soñamos, no solo para nuestros compatriotas sino para todos los habitantes de este planeta.

«Nunca, en ningún sitio, ningún pueblo hizo lo que el pueblo de Cuba está haciendo hoy. Y lo que está haciendo hoy con ideas, sembrando ideas, cultivando ideas y desarrollando ideas, será imposible que pueda terminar de otra forma sino con la victoria de las ideas, con la seguridad de que esta Revolución no desaparecerá ni se derrumbará, porque está sedimentada sólidamente sobre ideas que se profundizan y desarrollan.

«Las ideas justas son invencibles. Y Martí dijo de ellas: ‘Trincheras de ideas valen más que trincheras de piedras’; y ‘una causa justa desde el fondo de una cueva puede más que un ejército.’»

«Las ideas no solo son un instrumento para crear conciencia para que los pueblos luchen, sino que las ideas se han convertido en el principal instrumento de lucha en este momento; no en una inspiración, no en una guía, no en una orientación, sino en el principal instrumento de lucha.»

«No somos ni podemos ser dogmáticos; sin dogmas de ninguna clase, con una mentalidad verdaderamente dialéctica y flexible, lo cual no admite, ni en lo más mínimo, el oportunismo o el pragmatismo.

Había transcurrido un año exacto de estas últimas palabras cuando quiso el azar que se desatara la colosal Batalla de Ideas que nuestro pueblo ha estado librando desde hace hoy exactamente cinco años.

El 5 de julio del año 2000, al condecorar a Juan Miguel González con la Orden “Carlos Manuel de Céspedes”, recordaba cómo lo conocí un año antes, precisamente un 2 de diciembre, y cómo comenzó la batalla por el regreso de Elián. Aquel día señalaba:

«Le hice numerosas preguntas que él, en medio de su visible dolor y tristeza, respondía con argumentos persuasivos e incuestionables pruebas sobre su relación afectuosa, intachable y constante con el niño.

las Brigadas Técnicas Juveniles que concluían una conferencia nacional.

Así comenzó la épica lucha por la liberación de Elián. Aquel combate por un niño se transformó rápidamente en una batalla por la justicia y la felicidad de todos nuestros niños y todo nuestro pueblo.

Con la más profunda convicción, ya expresada en mis palabras al clausurar el VII Congreso de la Juventud que aquí recordaba, de que las ideas son el arma esencial en la lucha de la humanidad por su propia salvación, la batalla que emprendimos fue de pensamiento, de argumentos, de réplicas y contrarréplicas, pero también de hechos y realizaciones concretas.

En la coordinación y el impulso de alrededor



Estudiantes colocan la bandera Cubana en las escuela de Elian Gonzalez el 27 de Junio en Cardenas, Cuba; el dia anterior a su re regreso a Cuba en el 2000. Los jovenes estuvieron en la vanguardia de la principal campana masiva en Cuba demandando que Elian regresara a vivir con su Padre despues de haber sido secuestrado por los Estados Unidos en Noviembre de 1999.

«En ningún instante dejé de percibir en su rostro los rasgos de un hombre noble, sincero y serio. Le expresé mi convicción de que a través de trámites judiciales jamás devolverían al niño. Se trataba de un caso en que los tribunales de Estados Unidos no tenían jurisdicción alguna, y que solo correspondía a las autoridades de Inmigración de Estados Unidos el deber de proceder a la inmediata devolución de su hijo; pero conocía suficientemente bien cuán arrogantes, arbitrarias, parcializadas y cómplices se comportaban las autoridades de Estados Unidos en todo lo relacionado con las fechorías y crímenes que se cometían contra nuestro pueblo. La devolución de ese niño sólo podría lograrse mediante una intensa batalla política y de opinión pública nacional e internacional.»

Al día siguiente —como comenté en aquel acto— intercambié con los compañeros de nuestra dirección, y sin perder un minuto me comuniqué con los dirigentes de la Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas y de la Federación Estudiantil Universitaria. Los jóvenes y los estudiantes serían la vanguardia en esa lucha con el pleno apoyo de todas las fuerzas revolucionarias.

Cuarenta y ocho horas más tarde, un domingo por la noche —como hoy, hace exactamente cinco años—, se produjo la primera protesta ante la Oficina de Intereses de los Estados Unidos, en la que participaron mil jóvenes de

de 200 programas de la Revolución puestos en marcha como resultado de este combate, ha laborado la Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas como parte del grupo de trabajo de la Batalla de Ideas.

A las tareas de intercambio, análisis y orientaciones con ese grupo constituido en su mayoría por dirigentes de la Juventud Comunista y representantes de los trabajadores, los estudiantes, los cederitas, los campesinos y las mujeres, bajo la dirección de nuestro Partido, he dedicado en estos años más de siete mil horas de provechoso e inolvidable esfuerzo.

Se ha trabajado durante todo ese tiempo profundizando en la visión crítica y no autocomplaciente de nuestra obra y de nuestros objetivos históricos. Se han puesto en práctica revolucionarios conceptos que barren con el formalismo y el conformismo y aceleran los procesos de transformaciones necesarias para el futuro del país.

Entre ellos están algunos tomados de los propios apuntes de los cuadros de la Juventud y de otros participantes en nuestras reuniones:

• Ningún joven debe quedar abandonado y ningún ciudadano depender de su suerte.

• No hay problema sin solución, de lo que se trata es de encontrar alternativas.

• La labor de coordinación que se ejecuta debe contar con el estudio constante para la toma de decisiones, información actualizada que tome en cuenta con toda precisión los detalles; meditar y pensar bien cada acción, actuar con rapidez y no perder nunca un minuto.

• Encontrar nuevos métodos y mecanismos de coordinación para que todos los organismos y entidades participen bajo el concepto de que la prioridad está en los intereses del país por encima de contradicciones burocráticas, ansias protagónicas y celos institucionales.

• Lograr una alta implicación y compromiso de los cuadros y trabajadores que participen en cada uno de los programas.

• Aplicar la crítica y la reflexión oportunas.

• Cada idea nos conduce siempre a otra nueva y ésta a otras y otras. Una idea nueva, por buena que parezca, debe ser sometida a pruebas y experimentos serios en condiciones reales.

• La discreción y compartimentación son principios básicos en la labor de conducción y coordinación de los programas. Sólo se divulgarán éstos cuando ya sean realidades; evitaremos así promesas que puedan no cumplirse o promesas cumplidas que luego se descuidan, olvidan y abandonan.

• Las empresas que participan no deben tener ninguna ganancia ni tampoco pérdidas. Las obras se deberán ejecutar de manera rápida, al costo, con calidad y uso óptimo de los recursos.

• Se garantizará el mantenimiento de los equipos y de las instalaciones puestos a disposición de los programas. Todo debe estar siempre como el primer día.

A esta sencilla muestra de lo que quedaba en la mente de los cuadros se pueden añadir cientos de observaciones más ante la necesidad de actuar con urgencia y asegurar el éxito. Había que ganar todo el tiempo perdido por la rutina, el esquematismo y otros hábitos que detienen los avances y objetivos que sólo un sistema verdaderamente socialista puede alcanzar.

Un día expresé textualmente:

«La Revolución, más allá de los derechos y garantías alcanzados para todos los ciudadanos de cualquier etnia y origen, no ha logrado el mismo éxito en la lucha por erradicar las diferencias en el status social y económico de la población negra del país, aun cuando en numerosas áreas de gran transcendencia, entre ellas la educación y la salud, desempeñan un importante papel.»

Las palabras de este párrafo en concreto fueron pronunciadas por mí, sin vacilación alguna, el día 7 de febrero del pasado año en la clausura del Congreso Internacional Pedagogía 2003, que tuvo lugar en medio de la Batalla de Ideas. Era algo que llevaba por dentro y deseaba exclamarlo; triste herencia de la esclavitud, las sociedades de clases, el capitalismo y el imperialismo.

Nunca existió en ninguna parte una verdadera igualdad de oportunidades. La posibilidad de estudiar, superarse y obtener un título universitario fue siempre patrimonio exclusivo

«**Nunca, en ningún sitio, ningún pueblo hizo lo que el pueblo de Cuba está haciendo hoy. Y lo que está haciendo hoy con ideas, sembrando ideas, cultivando ideas y desarrollando ideas, será imposible que pueda terminar de otra forma sino con la victoria de las ideas**»

«**Trincheras de ideas valen mas que trincheras de piedras’; y ‘una causa justa desde el fondo de una cueva puede mas que un ejercito**»

de los sectores que poseían más conocimientos y recursos económicos. Sólo por excepción los pobres escapaban de este fatalismo.

Los enormes avances alcanzados por el socialismo habían creado las bases, pero faltaba

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Una cartelera en Cuba contra el bloqueo. Foto: Ernie Daley.

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dar el salto. Podemos afirmar que, gracias a la Batalla de Ideas, la vida de los niños, los adolescentes, los jóvenes y la familia cubana hoy no es igual a la de cinco años atrás.

En la escuela primaria un maestro atiende en la actualidad a sólo 20 niños, lo que permite una mejor instrucción, atención diferenciada a cada uno de los alumnos y su familia, y una educación más integral.

Cuentan con televisores, videos y laboratorios de computación, instrumentos de increíble eficiencia que, puestos en función de la enseñanza, permiten multiplicar los conocimientos de nuestros niños. Ni un solo niño de Cuba ha quedado sin acceso a estos modernos medios. Las escuelas que carecían de electricidad, hoy disponen de paneles solares para utilizar la computadora, el televisor y el video.

La computación comenzó a impartirse desde preescolar. Doce mil 958 profesores de computación básica formados en cursos emergentes llegaron a las aulas y a su vez todos los maestros de primaria recibieron cursos idóneos en esta materia.

Los niños con necesidades educativas especiales también han recibido nuevos y modernos medios de enseñanza para su formación. Hace dos años inauguramos la primera Escuela de Autismo, discapacidad olvidada en casi todos los países del mundo.

Ahora los niños comienzan a estudiar el idioma inglés desde tercer grado por video clases. Aprenden masivamente el ajedrez en las escuelas y reciben la labor cultural y de promoción artística a través de los primeros 3 mil 271 Instructores de Arte graduados el pasado 20 de octubre, los que serán reforzados cada año con una cifra similar o mayor de instructores que laborarán no sólo en el sector educacional sino también en el resto de las instituciones culturales y sociales de la comunidad.

Hemos logrado mejorar la alimentación en las escuelas que tienen servicio de almuerzo escolar, que son ya la inmensa mayoría de las que lo requieren.

Se brinda atención sistemática a todos los niños detectados con problemas nutricionales cuando se aplicó el primer programa para medir el peso y la talla de todos los niños hasta 15 años, en el 2001.

Hace poco concluyó un Estudio Integral de toda la Población Infantil, que evalúa aspectos como el estado nutricional, la atención educativa, el medio familiar y condiciones

de vida, que están recibiendo la debida atención.

Todas estas transformaciones han permitido tener un verdadero sistema de doble sesión de clases y han posibilitado que nuestros niños de Primaria aprendan hoy 2,2 veces más en Matemática y 1,5 veces más en Español que hace cuatro años, cifras que deben crecer a medida que nuestro sistema educacional prosiga el desarrollo programado. Se han igualado las posibilidades reales de conocimiento y oportunidades de desarrollo físico y mental para todos

«quizás lo más útil de nuestros modestos esfuerzos en la lucha por un mundo mejor será demostrar cuánto se puede hacer con tan poco, si todos los recursos humanos y materiales de la sociedad se ponen al servicio del pueblo.»

los niños sin importar su lugar de residencia, color de la piel y origen social.

Los extraordinarios cambios que tienen lugar en la Primaria se han hecho con modestos recursos, utilizados con inteligencia y sentidos de igualdad y justicia, y por encima de todo brindando las mismas oportunidades a todos los niños del país.

De igual forma se trabaja y continuará trabajando intensamente en el perfeccionamiento y desarrollo de los demás niveles de enseñanza escolar.

En las escuelas Secundarias Básicas también se emprendieron transformaciones radicales, al experimentar un modelo educativo diferente que rompe con las viejas concepciones de enseñanza para niños y adolescentes de séptimo, octavo y noveno grados, que en el resto de los países afrontan una profunda crisis.

Esta enseñanza cuenta ahora con un profesor general integral responsabilizado con la atención de 15 alumnos, el cual imparte todas las materias excepto Inglés y Educación Física. Es un tutor, un educador, un preceptor para cada estudiante, quien se libra con ello del excesivo número de profesores de diferentes asignaturas, con lo que no era posible lograr la integración de los conocimientos y la influencia educativa necesaria en esta etapa decisiva de la vida.

Gracias a este paso la relación de la escuela con la familia ha mejorado cualitativamente, lo que permite su más amplia cooperación e incluso cambios en las actitudes y el tratamiento de muchos padres a sus hijos.

Las clases de Matemática, Español, Historia, Inglés y Física las reciben a través de videos con clases elaboradas por los más prestigiosos docentes del país, lo que apoya considerablemente el esfuerzo de los profesores y eleva la calidad y profundidad de los contenidos que se imparten.

Se incrementó la frecuencia de clases en Matemática, Computación, Español e Historia, con lo que los alumnos reciben más contenido y multiplican sus conocimientos en estas materias.

Los nuevos instructores de arte también están en nuestras Secundarias Básicas promoviendo la cultura y acercando a nuestros adolescentes a las mejores tradiciones de Cuba y el mundo.

Se programó que los estudiantes de Secundaria Básica recibieran merienda escolar o almuerzo, lo que les permite afrontar en adecuadas condiciones alimentarias la doble sesión de clases y ofrece una mayor garantía de seguridad para los alumnos de este nivel, que no tienen que salir de sus escuelas hasta el final del horario docente.

El pasado 2 de diciembre de 2004, 307 mil 339 alumnos y 38 mil 246 trabajadores de 591 Escuelas Secundarias Básicas Urbanas estaban recibiendo ya gratuitamente la Merienda Escolar. Faltan por incorporar los estudiantes de 83 de estas escuelas, que recibirán los beneficios de este programa en los primeros tres meses del próximo año.

Los estudiantes de las Escuelas de Conducta cuentan con la atención de los trabajadores sociales, los cuales son los encargados de organizar la acción de la sociedad para modificar las causas y condiciones que originan la desventaja social y los trastornos de conducta de estos adolescentes.

Nuestros jóvenes, desde los 16 años

en adelante, han estado también en el centro de estas profundas transformaciones.

Se crearon las Escuelas de Trabajadores Sociales, que han graduado ya a 21 mil 485 jóvenes, como un verdadero contingente de apoyo y solidaridad social que actúa en casi todos los Consejos Populares del país. Cada año se preparan otros 7 mil jóvenes con el empleo de nuevos conceptos pedagógicos, organizados no sólo en las escuelas destinadas a ese objetivo, sino también en sus propios municipios, ubicados en las llamadas casas-escuelas, utilizando para ello televisores, videos, computadoras, bajo la guía de experimentados profesores y vinculados directamente a las realidades sociales de sus comunidades. Todos al graduarse tienen acceso directo a numerosas carreras universitarias afines a su multifacética actividad.

Se crearon los cursos de Superación Integral para Jóvenes de 17 a 30 años, que habiendo aprobado el noveno grado, que ya es el nivel general en esas edades, no estudiaban ni trabajaban.

Esto ha permitido que más de 150 mil jóvenes se vinculen a los programas de superación integral recibiendo un ingreso adecuado a su edad y necesidades.

Los resultados obtenidos han posibilitado que 48 mil 406 egresados de estos cursos hayan ingresado ya en diferentes carreras universitarias, incluidas las Ciencias Médicas, con resultados altamente positivos.

En el transcurso de la Batalla de Ideas se alcanzó un viejo sueño: la universalización de la educación superior, abriendo el acceso a las universidades a todos los jóvenes egresados de los Programas de la

revolucionario de alcanzar una cultura general integral para todos los ciudadanos, con independencia del trabajo social que desempeñen.

Estos programas han dado lugar a que el país cuente hoy con la mayor matrícula de su historia en la enseñanza superior, 380 mil estudiantes; de ellos, 233 mil 11 se forman en las 938 sedes universitarias existentes en los 169 municipios del país.

Respuesta decidida y comprometida han dado los 65 mil 427 profesores y tutores que trabajan en la Universalización, provenientes de la gran masa de más de 700 mil profesionales formados por la Revolución con que cuenta el país, a pesar del constante robo de cerebros de que son víctimas los países del Tercer Mundo.

Nuestra aspiración de contar con centros de excelencia en la educación superior dio lugar al surgimiento de la Universidad de las Ciencias Informáticas, primera institución de su tipo surgida en la Batalla de Ideas.

En apenas dos años y tres meses de inaugurada esa ya prestigiosa institución universitaria, estudian allí más de 6 mil jóvenes de todos los municipios del país, bajo novedosas concepciones y métodos revolucionarios de trabajo, obteniendo rápidamente significativos logros en la enseñanza y la actividad productiva.

El espíritu y los conceptos aplicados a la Universidad de las Ciencias Informáticas debemos extenderlos a los politécnicos de esta rama que en todo el país preparan a casi 40 mil técnicos medios en Informática.

Este proyecto relacionado con los Politécnicos de la Informática,



Revolución y a los trabajadores en general.

Este programa ha significado posibilidades inéditas para jóvenes y adultos que antes no podían llegar jamás a la Educación Superior y ahora se incorporan al propósito

acordado recientemente, pudiera calificarse como el último programa de la Batalla de Ideas correspondiente al período del 2000 al 2004. Para ello se asignarán los recursos materiales

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Fidel Castro December 5th Speech Continued

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Nowhere has there ever existed equality of opportunities. The possibility of studying, obtaining higher qualifications or a university degree was the exclusive privilege of the more knowledgeable and economically powerful sectors. It was only the exception among the poor who was able to beat the system.

The huge strides made by socialism had created the foundations, but we still had to take the great leap forward. Thanks to the Battle of Ideas, we can today say that the lives of children, teenagers, young people and the Cuban family is not the same as it was five years ago.

Today, a primary school teacher is responsible for only 20 pupils, something which allows him or her to provide better quality teaching, differentiated attention to each of his or her pupils and their families, thus, a more comprehensive education.

They have television sets, VCRs and computer labs at their disposal. These are incredibly efficient instruments

“Trenches made of ideas are stronger than those of stones’ and ‘a just cause—even one buried in the depths of a cave— is mightier than an army”

that, used as teaching tools, greatly expand our children’s knowledge. Not one child in Cuba is without access to these modern tools. Schools with no electricity are equipped today with solar panels that power computers, televisions and VCRs.

Computer science has begun to be taught at pre-school level. 12, 958 teachers of basic computer science trained in intensive courses and assigned to teach in our classrooms and all primary school teachers were given specially designed courses in the subject.

Children with special educational needs have also been taught using these new and modern educational tools. The first School for Autistic Children, a group that has been overlooked in nearly every country in the world, was inaugurated two years ago.

Today, children begin to study English through audio-visual courses from the third grade on. They learn to play chess at school and receive cultural and artistic instruction from the first 3, 271 art instructors who graduated this past October 20. A similar or greater number of instructors shall graduate every year and work not only in the educational sector but also in cultural and social institutions in the community.

We have improved meals in schools that have a school lunch program; these are now the immense majority of those that need this program.

Systematic attention is accorded to all children found to have nutritional situations when the first program designed to weigh and measure all children aged 15 and under was conducted in 2001.

Recently, a comprehensive study of the entire infant population was completed. Aspects such as nutritional

condition, schooling, family and living environment, which were measured in the study, are now being properly addressed.

All of these transformations have allowed us to implement an authentic full-day study program and have made it possible for our children in primary school to learn 2.2 times more Mathematics and 1.5 times more Spanish than they did four years ago. These figures should grow as our educational system continues to develop as planned. Opportunities for learning and for physical and intellectual development are equal for all children, regardless of where they live, skin color or social background.

The extraordinary changes that are taking place in primary school education have been accomplished with few resources cleverly used, following concepts of equality and justice and, above all, with a view to offering the same opportunities to all children throughout the country.

We shall continue to work just as intensely toward improving and developing the other levels of education.

Radical transformations have also been made to junior high schools by implementing a different educational model for children and adolescents in seventh, eighth and ninth grades—which are facing a grave crisis in other countries. This model breaks with previous educational concepts.

At this school level there is now a general all-round teacher who is responsible for 15 students and who teaches all subjects except English and Physical Education. He or she is a tutor, an educator, a mentor for each student; this gets rid of the excessive number of teachers for the various subjects under which system it was impossible to integrate the different branches of knowledge and the educational influences needed at this decisive stage of life.

Thanks to this step, the school’s relationship with the family has improved qualitatively which means they can cooperate more extensively and changes have even operated in the way many parents behave towards and treat their children.

Mathematics, Spanish, History, English and Physics classes are taught using videos whose contents have been designed by the most prestigious educational specialists in the country. This gives considerable reinforcement to the efforts made by the teachers and increases the quality and depth of the classes taught.

The frequency of Mathematics, Computing, Spanish and History classes has been raised, which means the students receive more information and improve their knowledge of these subjects.

The new art instructors are also working in our junior high schools, promoting culture and bringing the best of Cuba and the world’s traditions to our adolescents.

There is a program to provide free school snacks or lunch to junior high school students. This allows them to receive the nourishment needed to sit through the double session of classes and means the students of this level are safer because they don’t have to leave the school grounds until the end of the school day.

On December 2, 2004, 307,339 students and 38,246 workers in 591 urban junior high schools were receiving free school snacks. The students of 83 junior high schools still have to join the program; they will be receiving the benefits from this program in the first three months of next year.

The Behavior School also has social

workers working with the students. These are responsible for organizing the way society can act to modify the causes and conditions from which social disadvantage and behavioral problems arise.

These far reaching transformations have also targeted our young people, from the age of 16 on.

We founded the social worker schools from which more than 21,485 youths have already graduated. These constitute a veritable detachment of social support and solidarity that is now working with almost all of Cuba’s People’s Councils. Every year another 7,000 youths are trained using new educational concepts, and not only in the schools designed for that purpose but also in their own municipalities, in what we call Home-Schools, using television, videos, and computers under the guidance of experienced teachers and in direct contact with the social conditions in their own communities. When they graduate, all have direct access to many university degree programs related to their multifaceted

ceased to either study or work.

This has allowed more than 150,000 youths to study in these secondary school upgrading programs and receive an income appropriate to their age and needs.

The results obtained have meant that 48,406 graduates from these courses have already enrolled in various university programs—including that of medical science—and achieved very positive results.

Throughout the Battle of Ideas we have made an old dream come true: the universalization of higher education, thus making universities accessible to all the young people who graduate from the Revolution’s programs and to workers in general.

This program has given unheard of opportunities to young people and adults who were not previously able to attend higher education institutes but who now can join in the revolutionary aim of having all citizens, regardless of the work they do, obtain a comprehensive education.

The spirit and concepts applied in the University of Information Sciences are those we must also use in those polytechnics where this subject is taught. They are educating almost 40,000 mid-level information science technicians throughout the country, thus securing Cuba’s future development—something that is only possible thanks to the vast human capital created by the Revolution over more than four decades.

This recently approved project for Information Science Polytechnics is only the latest of the Battle of Ideas’ programs for the 2000-2004 period. We shall allocate the necessary material resources and equipment to it. The ministry of Education, the ministry of Information Sciences and Communication and the Young Communist League have already received the relevant instructions.

The Battle of Ideas has done much for the Cuban family, for the safety and the mental and physical development of their children, without exceptions.

With regards to such an important field as healthcare, these families



Students in Cuba.

activity.

We set up the secondary school upgrading courses for young people aged 17 to 30 who, once they had completed ninth grade, which is now the general level for these ages,

“Never before or anywhere else, has a people done what the people of Cuba are doing today. And what it is doing today with ideas, sowing ideas, cultivating and developing ideas; this cannot lead to anything but the victory of ideas”

The result of these programs is that the country today has the highest number of students registered in higher education than at any other time in its history: 380,000 students, of whom 233, 011 are being educated in the 938 university chapters that already exist in the country’s 169 municipalities.

The 65,427 teachers and tutors working in this universalization program, who have given a committed, determined response to this call of the Revolution, are part of more than 700,000 professionals educated by the Revolution who work in Cuba, despite the constant brain drain which victimizes Third World countries.

Our aspiration of having higher education centers for excellence resulted in the creation of the University of Information Sciences, the first institution of this kind to be created during the Battle of Ideas.

Just two years and three months after it was opened, more than 6,000 youths from every municipality in the country study in this already prestigious university where novel concepts and revolutionary working methods are used; these have obtained significant achievements in teaching and productive activity in a very short space of time.

benefit from the large amounts of money invested in our 444 polyclinics, 107 of which have been completely remodeled and 34 of which are in the process of being remodeled. On top of this, reconstruction and modernization work is going on in 27 hospitals, as part of a program that will affect all of them equally and 217 physiotherapy wards are being opened in the polyclinics, all of which will offer this service by the end of next year. 24 new facilities offering hemodialysis have been opened, as have 88 offering optician services and 118 intensive therapy centers in those municipalities which, because they have no surgical hospitals, did not have this extremely valuable medical resource which has already saved thousands of lives to date.

The program of technical refurbishment now in full swing will bring benefits to all of the primary and secondary services we have and will have the added benefit of bringing the most important and highest quality medical services closer to the population’s homes and places of residence.

In the same token, 1905 television rooms have been opened in isolated rural settlements having no electricity, thus providing access

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Discurso de Fidel Castro Sobre 5 de Diciembre

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y equipos necesarios. El Ministerio de Educación, el Ministerio de la Informática y las Comunicaciones y la Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas han recibido ya las instrucciones pertinentes.

Para todas las familias cubanas la Batalla de Ideas ha significado mucho por las perspectivas de seguridad y desarrollo físico y mental que ofrece sin excepción alguna a sus hijos.

En una esfera tan vital como la salud, reciben el beneficio de importantes inversiones, que abarcan la totalidad de los 444 policlínicos, 107 de ellos ya totalmente transformados y 34 en ejecución. A esto se añaden las labores de reconstrucción y modernización que se llevan a cabo en 27 hospitales, como parte de un programa que abarcará igualmente a todos; la apertura de 217 salas de fisioterapia en los policlínicos, los que en su totalidad contarán con este servicio a fines del próximo año; se han creado 24 nuevos servicios de hemodiálisis, 88 ópticas y 118 centros de terapia intensiva en los municipios que por carecer de hospitales quirúrgicos no disponían de este valiosísimo recurso médico que ha salvado ya miles de vidas.

El programa de reequipamiento tecnológico en plena marcha beneficia a la totalidad de los servicios primarios y secundarios con que cuenta el país, con la gran ventaja adicional de acercar los servicios médicos más importantes y de calidad a los hogares y lugares de residencia de la población.

En los asentamientos campesinos sin electricidad y con difícil acceso, se han inaugurado mil 905 salas de televisión, que permiten la información, la recreación y el

Las Ferias del Libro se han convertido en una gran fiesta de la familia cubana. Ampliada de su recinto tradicional en

« **Baste decir que en Haití, el pueblo más pobre del hemisferio, Cuba tiene 450 médicos; los países industrializados no pueden enviar 50** »

la Capital a 19 ciudades del país en el 2002, y este año hasta 34 de ellas, ha acogido en las últimas tres ediciones a 9 millones y medio de participantes y se han puesto a la venta más de 15 millones de libros.

La Biblioteca Familiar contribuyó al acceso de nuestro pueblo a lo mejor de la literatura cubana y universal, a precios asequibles. Se produjeron 100 mil colecciones de 25 títulos. Está lista editorialmente una segunda colección.

Dos nuevas y modernas imprentas de gran capacidad han sido adquiridas, una de ellas está en pleno funcionamiento y la segunda en proceso de inversión. Se asignaron recursos para la reparación y modernización de todas las instalaciones de la Unión Poligráfica Nacional.

La Universidad para Todos, vinculada

Los estudios a personas discapacitadas han posibilitado resolver situaciones críticas de atención a estos ciudadanos y sus familias. Han permitido alertar a éstas sobre riesgos de enfermedades hereditarias, y han posibilitado que 6 mil 52 madres hayan podido dedicarse totalmente a la atención de sus hijos con graves discapacidades, recibiendo para ello un salario.

Fueron estudiadas 366 mil 864 personas con discapacidades físico-motoras, sensoriales, orgánicas y otras, incluido el retraso mental. Participaron en el estudio nacional más de 30 mil profesionales de las ciencias y personal de dirección y apoyo.

El 5 de agosto del 2003 se inauguró el nuevo Centro Nacional de Genética Médica.

Como resultado de este colosal esfuerzo por lograr el más alto nivel de justicia para nuestro pueblo y propiciar la más plena igualdad de oportunidades para todos se han creado en estos cinco años, fruto de los Programas de la Revolución, más de 380 mil empleos, que benefician mayoritariamente a los jóvenes.

Según información recibida del Ministerio de Trabajo, se ha reducido ya el desempleo, a fines del presente año, a menos del 2%, algo absolutamente imposible en ningún país capitalista industrializado.

Se han formado 44 mil 979 nuevos maestros y profesores en apenas tres años, lo que equivale a once graduaciones de los cursos regulares diurnos de los Pedagógicos entre 1988 y 2000.

Contamos, como ya se dijo, con 21 mil 485 trabajadores sociales. En el año 2000, cuando comenzó la Batalla de Ideas, la Seguridad Social tenía



1 de mayo del 2004, en Habana.

con 5 mil 270 nuevas aulas para la educación.

Se han producido más de 25 millones de casetes en apenas año y medio de labor y se edifica una nueva fábrica productora.

Los acuerdos que acabamos de suscribir con China garantizan la adquisición de 100 mil computadoras por año, que serán dedicadas fundamentalmente a la docencia de niños, jóvenes y adultos y a la superación de la creciente masa de técnicos y profesionales de nivel superior en nuestro país.

También llegará el día de su uso masivo para dialogar con el mundo. Ningún pueblo tiene más cosas que informar ni preparación para hacerlo mejor, tomando en consideración su cultura política y el creciente esfuerzo por el dominio del Inglés y otros idiomas.

El primer millón de televisores comprados a la República Popular China ha posibilitado que 827 mil 322 núcleos familiares del país tengan un televisor a color de 21 pulgadas y excelente calidad, que consume 120 watts menos que el televisor soviético en blanco y negro. Esto tiene un profundo y masivo impacto en el nivel de información y cultura de nuestro pueblo y sus posibilidades de recreación. El resto de los televisores se ha dedicado a los programas de educación, salud y otros de carácter social del país; ochenta mil de ellos se emplearon en la cooperación internacional; se están recibiendo también de China 300 mil adicionales de 21 pulgadas, que están siendo ya usados en la docencia, son de otras procedencias.

El sistema educacional dispone en las aulas de 109 mil 117 televisores y 40 mil 858 videos, convertidos en excelentes medios de enseñanza.

Han surgido dos nuevos canales educativos que, junto a Cubavisión y Tele Rebelde, transmiten 394 horas semanales de programación educativa; que representan el 62,7% del total de las transmisiones de la Televisión Nacional. De ellas, 247 son destinadas a los planes de estudios.

Si cuando realizábamos el anterior Congreso de la Juventud discutíamos con preocupación la baja producción de libros y publicaciones para nuestros niños y jóvenes, hoy podemos decir que se han producido en estos cinco años 457 millones 840 mil 862 ejemplares

de libros, tabloides, folletos y otras producciones poligráficas para los distintos programas y misiones.

De ellos:

41 millones 25 mil 778 libros, tabloides y folletos para los programas de formación educacional.

15 millones 979 mil 198 libros para las Ferias del Libro

35 millones 371 mil 157 tabloides de las Mesas Redondas y Tribunas Abiertas.

15 millones 905 mil 758 tabloides de Universidad para Todos.

En el año 1999 existían solo ocho escuelas de artes plásticas en el país. Hoy se ha extendido esta enseñanza a todas las provincias existiendo escuelas de ese tipo en 17 ciudades.

« **Hemos conocido la independencia real y la verdadera libertad. ¡Jamás nos resignaremos a vivir sin ella!** »

La matrícula de la nueva Escuela Nacional de Ballet con capacidad para 300 alumnos se amplió a estudiantes de todas las provincias.

Hoy 4 mil 21 niños de todos los municipios de la capital acuden dos veces a la semana a los talleres vocacionales que se desarrollan en la Escuela Nacional de Ballet. Otras escuelas de danza realizan actividades similares.

Seis mil 789 bibliotecas públicas y escolares recibieron colecciones de enciclopedias, diccionarios, atlas y otros libros con los que renovaron su fondo bibliográfico.

Dos millones 365 mil 234 niños y jóvenes han recibido un libro de estímulo en su acto de graduación.

Unos 10 millones 900 mil compatriotas han participado en las 161 Tribunas Abiertas realizadas. Once millones 800 mil participantes han sumado las 18 Marchas efectuadas.

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Hugo Chavez, Presidente de Venezuela y Fidel Castro el 14 diciembre del 2004. En este encuentro, Castro y Chavez firmaron un nuevo acuerdo al cual fortalece los lazos economicos entre Cuba y Venezuela

acceso a los programas televisivos docentes a más de medio millón de cubanos que residen en esos lugares, los últimos que carecían de ella.

La ampliación de los Joven Club hasta 300 centros ha permitido la formación de 436 mil 753 compatriotas en técnicas de computación en los últimos cuatro años, desde principios de abril del 2001, cuando fueron inauguradas las nuevas instalaciones, elevando hasta 3 mil las computadoras asignadas. Este excelente programa se está ampliando con otros 300 centros adicionales, 100 de los cuales están ya concluidos.

a la televisión, surgida el 2 de octubre del 2000, se ha convertido en la más masiva y variada Universidad del país. A través de ella se han impartido 43 cursos con mil 721 horas de contenido. En este momento se transmiten seis cursos. Han participado en los cursos impartidos y en marcha 775 profesores, de los cuales 265 son Doctores en Ciencias y 134 son Másters.

Los programas desarrollados para convertir las prisiones en escuelas han tenido notable impacto en las familias, contribuyendo a fortalecer la vinculación entre la familia y los jóvenes sancionados.

sólo 795 trabajadores sociales en todo el país

Se han concluido hasta el 20 de noviembre labores de construcción, reconstrucción o ampliación en 5 mil 810 obras; de ellas, mil 732 de la educación, mil 537 de la salud, 32 importantes instituciones de la cultura, entre las cuales está la reconstrucción capital y la ampliación del Instituto Superior de Arte, y 2 mil 508 de otros programas de la Revolución.

Han recibido reparación capital 913 escuelas. Se han construido 32 nuevas. La nación cuenta hoy

Fidel Castro December 5th Speech Continued

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to information, recreation and to educational television programs to more than half a million Cubans who live in those areas and who were the only ones who still did not have these services.

Extending the Youth Clubs (Joven Club) to 300 facilities has allowed 436,753 Cubans to learn about computing, that is, since the beginning of April 2001, when the new Youth Clubs were opened thus raising the number of computers allocated to 3,000. This excellent program is being expanded with another 100 additional clubs already completed, the aim being to double the existing 300 facilities.

The Book Fairs have turned into a huge festivity for the Cuban family. In 2002, they spread from their traditional home in Havana to 19 other Cuban cities and this year they will extend to 34. Nine and a half million people visited the last three Fairs, with more than 15 million books on sale.

The Family Library made the best of Cuban and world literature available to our people at reasonable prices. 100,000 copies of 25 titles were produced, and a second collection is ready to go to print.

Two new, modern, high capacity printers have been bought, one of which is working to full capacity and the other is being installed. Resources have been allocated to repair and modernize all the equipment in the National Print Works.

The University for All, broadcast on television, which went on air on October 2, 2000 has become the

“perhaps the most useful of our modest efforts in the struggle for a better world will be to demonstrate how much can be done with so little when all of society’s human and material resources are placed at the service of the people”

biggest university in the country, the one offering the widest variety of subjects. 43 courses with 1,721 content hours have been taught using this resource. Six courses are being broadcast now. 775 professors, of whom 265 are PhDs and 134 have Master’s degrees, have taught courses.

The programs developed to turn prisons into schools have had a marked impact on the inmates’ families by helping to strengthen the bonds between the young offenders and their relatives.

Studies made of people with disabilities have made it possible to resolve some of the crises in the care offered to them and their families. They have allowed us to warn the families about hereditary diseases and have made it possible for 6,052 mothers to devote themselves full-time to looking after their children with serious disabilities since they

receive a salary for doing so.

A total of 366,864 people with physical and motor, sensory, organic and other disabilities,

“Cuba has 450 doctors in Haiti, the poorest country in the hemisphere; the industrialized countries cannot send even 50”

including mental disabilities were studied. More than 30,000 science professionals and management and support staff took part in the nationwide study.

On August 5, 2003 the New National Center for Genetic Medicine was established.

As a result of this huge effort to attain the highest possible level of justice for our people and to provide full equality of opportunities for all, more than 380,000 jobs have been created, the outcome of the Revolution’s Programs, most of which basically benefit the youths.

According to information received from the ministry of Labor, by the end of this year unemployment had fallen to less than 2%, something that is absolutely impossible in any industrialized capitalist country.

In only three years, more than 44,979 new primary and junior high school teachers have been trained. This is equal to eleven years output from the teacher training institutes’ regular day courses between 1988 and 2000.

As I already said, we have 21,485 social workers. In 2000, when the Battle of Ideas began, Social Security had only 795 social workers in all of Cuba.

As of November 20, 5,810 building, rebuilding or expansion public works had been completed; 1,732 of these were for education, 1,537 for health, 32 for major cultural institutions, including major rebuilding and expansion work on the Higher Institute of Art, and 2,508 for other of the Revolution’s programs. 913 schools have sustained capital repairs while 32 new schools have been built. Our country has today 5,270 new classrooms.

Over 25 million cassettes have been produced in about a year and a half and another new cassette factory is under construction.

The agreements we have just signed with China mean we will be able to acquire 100,000 computers annually; these will be used mainly for the education of children, young people and adults and for retraining our country’s growing number of university graduate technicians and professionals.

The day will also come when computers will be widely used to dialogue with the world. When one takes into account this country’s political education, the growing efforts to give Cubans a good command of English and other languages, there is no other people which has more things to give information about nor more training to be able to do so in a better way.

The first million television sets we bought from the People’s Republic of China has meant that 827,322 families in Cuba have a top quality 21-inch color television which uses 20 watts less electricity than a LG color television and 120 watts less than a

Soviet black and white television. This has had a profound and widespread impact on our people’s level of culture and information and on its recreational opportunities. The rest of the television sets were given to education, health and other of the country’s social programs; 80,000 of them were used for international cooperation, and we will be getting another 300,000 21-inch television sets from China. Several thousand 29-inch televisions, which are now being used in education, are not from China.

Our educational system has 109,117 television sets and 40,858 VCRs in the classrooms; these have become excellent teaching aids.

Two new educational channels have been established, which combined with Cubavision and Tele Rebelde broadcast 394 hours of educational programming weekly. This is 62.7% of the total hours broadcast by Cuban television. 247 of these hours are devoted to courses on the curricula.

If at the last YCL Congress we expressed our concern about the low output of books and other publications for our children and youths, we can today announce that 457,840,862 copies of books, newsprint editions, pamphlets and other printed material have been produced for our various programs and projects.

These include:

41,025,778 books, newsprint editions, and pamphlets for educational programs.

15,979,198 books for the Book Fairs.

35,371,157 newsprint transcripts of Round Tables and Open Forums.

15,905,758 newsprint study materials for University for All.

In 1999, there were only eight visual art schools in the country. Today this type of education has spread to all the provinces, with visual art schools in 17 cities.

The registration in the new National Ballet School that can take 300 students has been extended to students from all provinces.

Today, 4,021 students from all of the capital’s municipalities attend vocational workshops given in the National Ballet School twice a week. Other dance schools offer similar courses.

6,789 public and school libraries have received encyclopedias, dictionaries, atlases and other books with which they have renovated their bibliographic stock.

2,365,234 children and youths have been given a book as a prize in their graduation ceremonies.

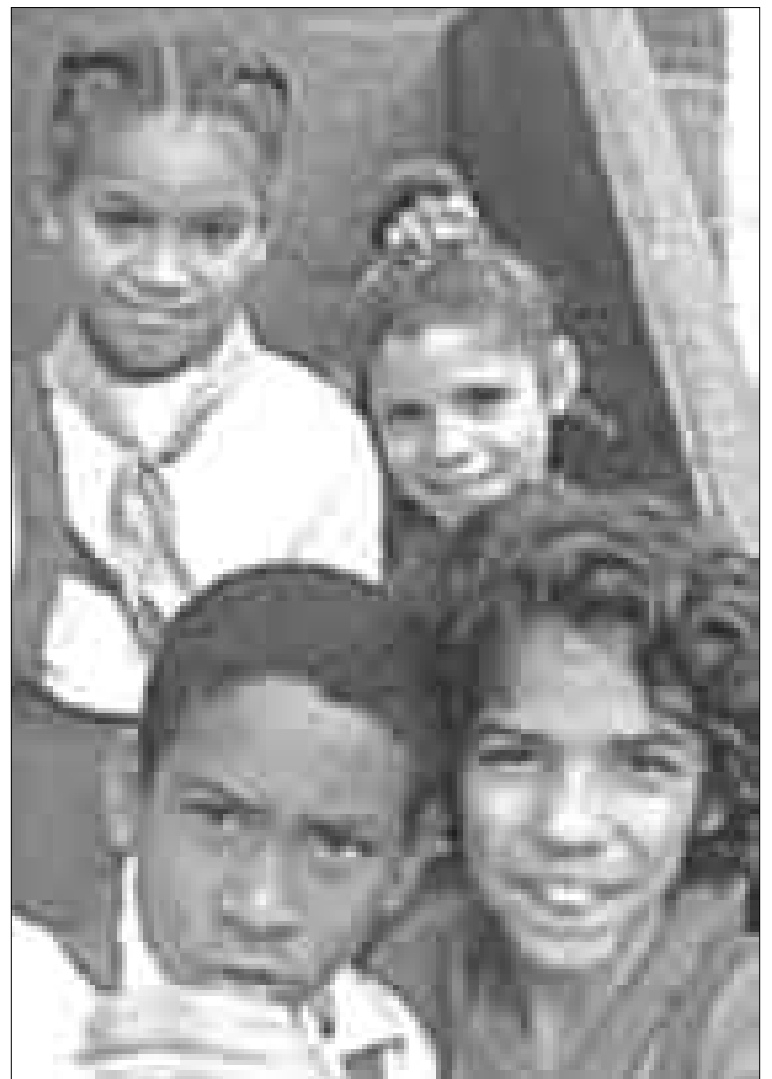
About 10,900,000 Cubans have taken part in the 161 Open Forums that

“We have known true independence and real freedom. We shall never resign ourselves to living without them!”

have taken place.

11,800,000 people have joined in the 18 marches we have had.

1,030 Round Tables have been aired to date. These have become a kind of political university offering up-to-the-minute relevant information and profound and truthful analyses of



Youth in Havana, Cuba.

the empire’s crude lies and perfidious aggression against our people, while also discussing important aspects of international politics, economics, culture, sciences, sports and other issues of interest.

Since the Battle of Ideas is --as I once said-- “the battle of humanism against dehumanization, the battle of brotherhood and sisterhood against the most blatant form of selfishness [...] the battle of justice against the most brutal form of injustice, the battle for our people and the battle for other peoples” we at this time have 23,413 doctors and health technicians working on humane missions of solidarity in 66 countries. A very large number of them are working in the poorest neighborhoods in Simón Bolívar’s great homeland, which is at this moment in the midst of revolutionary changes under the leadership of an amazing new political leader, a follower of Bolívar and Martí, a beloved friend of Cuba, Hugo Chávez Frías.

The impact of the Battle of Ideas, its principles and work methods have not only transformed our educational system, and the lives of our people, but have also strengthened and increased the prestige of the Young Communist League, which, at the moment this Congress is taking place, has the highest number of YCL members in the last decade: 557,298, which is 104,692 more than at the 7th Congress.

Today our youth organization has 49,054 local chapters, 8,756 more than in 1998.

If we criticized the YCL at the last Party Congress for its weaknesses in grooming members for our vanguard party, we are today happy to see that the attention they gave to this crucial matter and the growing strength of the organization itself have resulted in the YCL supplying the Party with 63 of every 100 members who have come to their 30th birthday. So, in total, if we count those young members who are under 30 who were allowed to join under a special plan, the YCL has strengthened the Party with 133,283 new members. This is their concrete response to the fair criticisms they received.

Those chiefly responsible for these results have been the young cadre. This battle has demanded that they increase their capacity for action and their readiness and has obliged them to make a qualitative change in their working methods so that they may devote their attention to the internal functioning and daily work of the YCL and may also take up the new tasks that stem from the Revolution’s programs.

The organization’s experience, perseverance and its achievements have meant that it has been able to provide the Party with more cadres. In the last two years, 215 YCL cadres have become professional Party workers.

What we have achieved to date is the result of our people’s and our wonderful youths’ heroic efforts. We still have a lot left to do. You know where the old and new problems are.

We must ensure that the teachers working in our classrooms today stay working there, we must add to their reserves, jealously guard the young human resources we have trained over the last few years, paying special attention to their professionalism and up-grading. We must continue to analyze the inescapable changes that our technical professional and senior high school education must undergo; we must improve the way higher education is made accessible to all and we must make sure that all of the country’s universities move forward from this idea towards the academic and revolutionary excellence that the country demands from its university students and professors.

We must do further more intensive political work with all of our health workers, so that the quality of the services offered to the public are in step with the investments in buildings and technology made in this sector and with the prestige that Cuban medicine has obtained by sending its doctors and technicians to other parts of the world in solidarity.

We have to continue with the task of promoting healthy, enlightened and useful recreational opportunities for our young people, which make use of

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'Seguiremos Creando y Luchando'

From page 17

Mil treinta mesas redondas se han realizado hasta hoy. Éstas se han convertido en una universidad política, con información actualizada y oportuna y análisis profundos y veraces sobre las groseras mentiras y pérfidas agresiones del imperio contra nuestro pueblo, y sobre importantes temas de política internacional, economía, cultura, ciencias, deportes y otros tópicos de interés.

Por ser la Batalla de Ideas como dijimos una vez "la batalla del humanismo contra la deshumanización, la batalla de la hermandad y la fraternidad contra el mas grosero egoísmo la batalla de la justicia contra la mas brutal injusticia; la batalla por nuestro pueblo y la batalla por otros pueblos," tenemos en estos momentos 23 mil 413 profesionales y técnicos de la salud cumpliendo humanas y solidarias misiones en 66 países. Un elevado número de ellos desempeñan su actividad en los barrios más pobres de la gran Patria de Simón Bolívar, actualmente en pleno proceso de cambios revolucionarios, bajo la conducción de un nuevo y extraordinario líder político, bolivariano y martiano, amigo entrañable de Cuba: Hugo Chávez Frías.

El impacto de la Batalla de Ideas, sus principios, sus conceptos de trabajo, no sólo se han revertido en la transformación de la educación y la vida de nuestro pueblo, sino también en el fortalecimiento y el prestigio de la Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas, que arriba a este congreso con la mayor cantidad de militantes de la UJC de la última década:

557 mil 298, lo que representa 104 mil 692 militantes más que los que tenían en el VII Congreso.

Hoy la organización juvenil cuenta con 49 mil 54 organizaciones de base, 8 mil 756 más que en 1998.

Si en el último Congreso del Partido le señalamos críticamente a la Juventud sus debilidades en el aporte de militantes a nuestra organización de vanguardia, hoy vemos con satisfacción que la atención que le han brindado a este vital asunto y el propio fortalecimiento de la organización permiten que la UJC le esté aportando al Partido 63 de cada 100 militantes que cumplen 30 años, y que en total, incluyendo aquellos jóvenes militantes menores de esa edad que han sido procesados de manera especial, la UJC haya fortalecido al Partido con 133 mil 283 nuevos militantes como respuesta concreta a aquellas justas críticas recibidas.

El sustento principal de estos resultados han sido los cuadros juveniles, para quienes la batalla ha exigido multiplicar su capacidad de acción y su preparación, y les ha obligado a transformar cualitativamente sus métodos de trabajo para mantener la atención a la vida interna y al accionar diario de la UJC, y a su vez responder a las nuevas tareas emanadas de los programas de la Revolución.

La experiencia, estabilidad y resultados de trabajo han permitido que la organización aporte más cuadros al Partido. En los dos últimos años 215 cuadros de la UJC han pasado al trabajo profesional del mismo.

Lo logrado hasta aquí es fruto del esfuerzo heroico de nuestro pueblo y de su magnífica juventud. Mucho aún nos queda por hacer. Ustedes saben dónde existen viejas y nuevas dificultades.

Hay que mantener a los profesores que hoy están en nuestras aulas, e incrementar su reserva, cuidar celosamente los recursos humanos jóvenes que hemos formado en estos años, enfatizando en su profesionalidad y superación; continuar analizando

las necesarias transformaciones a que debe ser sometida la enseñanza técnica profesional y el preuniversitario; perfeccionar el proceso de universalización de la educación superior, y lograr que todas las universidades del país transiten a partir de esta idea hacia esa excelencia académica y revolucionaria que el país demanda de sus estudiantes y profesores universitarios.

Debemos intensificar y profundizar el trabajo político con todo el personal de la salud para que la calidad de los servicios a la población se corresponda



Los jóvenes en Habana, Cuba.

con el esfuerzo inversionista que desde el punto de vista constructivo y tecnológico se desarrolla en el sector, y con el prestigio que ha alcanzado la medicina cubana con la presencia solidaria de nuestros profesionales y técnicos en diversas partes del mundo.

Urge proseguir la tarea de propiciar una recreación sana, culta y útil para nuestros jóvenes, en la que utilicemos todas las posibilidades abiertas y los recursos con que hoy contamos gracias a los programas de la Revolución.

Deberemos continuar nuestro más decidido combate contra los casos de corrupción, las indisciplinas sociales y cualquier indicio de consumo de drogas.

Se requiere la mayor integración entre todas las instituciones implicadas en

el trabajo de difusión masiva, las que pueden y deben estar enteramente al servicio de los conocimientos, la cultura, la recreación y la defensa de los valores e intereses más sagrados de nuestro pueblo.

Hay mucho que reparar, edificar y mejorar todavía en todas nuestras instituciones sociales. Se ha demostrado que es posible.

Como ya señalé una vez "quizás lo más útil de nuestros modestos esfuerzos en la lucha por un mundo mejor será demostrar cuánto se

puede hacer con tan poco, si todos los recursos humanos y materiales de la sociedad se ponen al servicio del pueblo."

Los gastos en divisas de la Batalla de Ideas, incluidos las construcciones, los materiales de todo tipo, miles de equipos médicos, estomatológicos y ópticos de alta calidad y estandarizados, computadoras, videos, incluyendo los pagos realizados por el crédito para televisores que se destinaron a la población y a las instituciones, y otros pagos similares, son inferiores al 2% del gasto total en divisas del país en los 5 años transcurridos.

A esto hay que añadir, a modo de ejemplo de racionalidad, que el costo del millón de televisores procedentes de China se compensa prácticamente

con el ahorro en electricidad que se logra durante los 8 años de amortización del crédito recibido.

Cuando hacemos un recuento de lo que han sido estos años heroicos, de intenso trabajo y no pocos desafíos, tenemos que sentirnos orgullosos de nuestra juventud, de sus valores, de su estirpe, de su temple.

De ella surgen hombres como Juan Miguel, quien tan ejemplarmente ha cumplido sus deberes de padre y de patriota.

De nuestra juventud salieron nuestros cinco héroes prisioneros del imperio, que, víctimas de la venganza y el odio, sufren injusta y cruel prisión en las cárceles norteamericanas sin que su honor, su entereza y su lealtad a la Revolución y a nuestro pueblo hayan podido ser quebrados.

Ellos son símbolos e inspiración para los que harán cambiar el mundo. No descansaremos un segundo hasta que se haga justicia y sean devueltos a nuestra Patria. ¡Tarde o temprano, con el apoyo de los demás pueblos del mundo, ganaremos también esa batalla!

Los datos contenidos en estas palabras con que respondo a la invitación de ustedes pueden producir asombro a muchos, algunos ni siquiera los creerán, otros los ignorarán olímpicamente.

El imperio se enfurece y proclama con pasmoso cinismo que hay que liberar a Cuba, traer la democracia a este pueblo esclavizado y enseñarlo además a leer y a escribir, según proclaman en su programa de transición hacia el capitalismo. Las masas, en parte todavía engañadas por el diluvio de mentiras y calumnias que emanan de los poderosos medios de divulgación imperialistas, nos crearán cada vez más a medida que vayan despertando a las realidades que les esperan y comprendan que la diferencia entre nuestro sistema y el que propugna el imperio es abismal.

El capitalismo ha perdido toda esencia humanista, vive del derroche y para el

derroche, de esa enfermedad congénita e incurable no puede escapar. Baste decir que en Haití, el pueblo más pobre del hemisferio, Cuba tiene 450 médicos; los países industrializados no pueden enviar 50, poseen capital financiero, pero carecen de capital humano.

Ni agresiones, ni bloqueos, ni acciones terroristas, ni desintegración del campo socialista, ni dominio unipolar del mundo, ni la toma del poder en Estados Unidos por la extrema derecha que advertimos en 1998 como algo posible y hasta probable, ni las amenazas de exterminio, pudieron quebrantar el espíritu de lucha de nuestro pueblo heroico.

Hemos conocido la independencia real y la verdadera libertad. ¡Jamás nos resignaremos a vivir sin ella! ¡Y estamos dispuestos a pagar el precio necesario de que habló Martí!

Seguiremos creando y luchando. Ya nadie tendrá jamás fuerzas para volver a encerrar en la botella el genio de un pueblo que escapó para siempre del saqueo, la humillación y el oprobio.

Como dijo Camilo Cienfuegos, aquel extraordinario combatiente que aparece junto a Mella y el Che en el emblema de la Juventud Comunista de Cuba y que al morir tenía sólo 27 años, en su último discurso el 26 de octubre de 1959: "De rodillas nos pondremos una vez y una vez inclinaremos nuestra frente, y será el día que lleguemos a la tierra que guarda 20 mil cubanos para decirles: '¡Hermanos, la Revolución está hecha, vuestra sangre no cayó en vano!'"

El pueblo de Cuba dijo hace rato ¡Patria o Muerte! y llevará su Batalla de Ideas hasta las últimas consecuencias.

¡Viva el pueblo que ha hecho frente con honor al más poderoso imperio que ha existido jamás!

¡Viva eternamente el ejemplo que hoy ofrece al mundo la juventud cubana!

¡Viva para siempre el socialismo!

'We shall continue to create and to struggle'

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all the opportunities and resources we have today thanks to the Revolution's programs.

We will have to continue to wage our hard-fought battle against corruption, social indiscipline, and any surge in drug use.

The highest possible integration of all the institutions involved in public broadcasting must take place. These are the institutions, which can and must be completely at the service of knowledge, culture, recreation, and the most dearly held values and interests of our people.

There is still a lot to repair, build and improve in our social institutions. We have proof that this is possible.

As I once said, "perhaps the most useful of our modest efforts in the struggle for a better world will be to demonstrate how much can be done with so little when all of society's human and material resources are placed at the service of the people".

The hard currency cost of the Battle of Ideas, including, the buildings, materials of all kinds, the thousands of pieces of top quality, standardized medical, dental and optician's equipment, the computers and videos, including payments made for the credit to buy televisions for the population and for institutions and other similar payments is less than 2% of the country's total hard

currency expenditure in the last five years.

To this we must add, as an example of the best use of scarce resources, that the

cost of the million Chinese television sets is almost completely offset by the saving in electricity that will be achieved in the 8 years needed to repay the credit obtained.

When we look back on these heroic years of intense labor and not a few challenges, we cannot help but feel proud of our youth, of its values, of its caliber, of its mettle.

Men like Juan Miguel, who has discharged his duties as a father and a patriot in such an exemplary manner, was a member of the YCL.

Our five heroes imprisoned by the empire were members of the YCL, they who are the victims of vengeance and hate, who are suffering through cruel and unjust prison terms in American jails without letting anyone stain their honor, break their integrity and loyalty to the Revolution and to our people.

They are symbols and serve as inspiration to those who will change the world. We shall not rest for a second until justice be done and they are returned to our country. Sooner or later, with support from the rest of the world, we shall win that battle, too!

The information I have given in

these remarks which are my reply to your invitation may astound many people, some might not even believe them, others will totally ignore them.

The empire will be furious and announce with incredible cynicism that Cuba must be liberated and democracy brought to this enslaved people and what is more, teach it to read and write, as they announce in their 'program for the transition to capitalism'. The masses, still partially deceived by the hail of lies and invectives coming from the powerful imperialist media, will believe us more and more, as they begin to awaken to what is in store for them and to understand the huge difference between our system and the one advocated by the empire.

Capitalism has lost any humanist essence; it lives from waste and to waste; it cannot escape from that congenital, incurable disease. Suffice it to say that Cuba has 450 doctors in Haiti, the poorest country in the hemisphere; the industrialized countries cannot send even 50, for they have finance capital but lack human capital.

Neither aggression nor blockade, terrorist acts or the disintegration of the socialist block, unipolar domination over the world or the extreme right's rise to power in the United States which we, in 1998, warned was possible and in fact likely, have been able to break our

heroic people's spirit of struggle.

We have known true independence and real freedom. We shall never resign ourselves to living without them! We are willing to pay the necessary price of which Martí spoke.

We shall continue to create and to struggle. No one now will ever be strong enough to push back into the bottle the genie of a people which has escaped for ever from plunder, humiliation and ignominy.

As Camilo Cienfuegos, that extraordinary fighter who is there with Mella and Che on the Cuban YCL badge and who was only 27 when he died, said in his last speech on October 26, 1959: "We shall kneel down once and we shall bow our heads once, and that will be on the day when we reach the land that watches over 20,000 Cubans and say to them, 'Brothers and sisters, the Revolution is complete, your blood was not shed in vain'".

Long ago, the Cuban people said Homeland or Death! And it will carry on its Battle of Ideas to its logical conclusion.

Long live the people that have faced up honorably to the most powerful empire ever to exist!

Eternal life to the example the Cuban youths are setting for the world today!

Long live socialism forever!

Democratic Rights! Women's Rights! Students' Rights!

Support the Case of the Langara 2

An interview with Kira Daley and Nicole Burton *By Tamara Hansen*

In October of this year Nicole Burton and Kira Daley, two young women (19 and 22 years old) activists and students, were banned from their Students' Union property at Langara College. This banning took place after the two women had made a complaint of harassment to the Langara Students' Union (LSU) about a member of their staff, Richard Bell. The banning also took place after the two students had been organizing with a very active antiwar committee on campus, the Peace and Social Issues Committee (PSI).

The women activists took on working with PSI in the summer of 2004 and in September along with other student activists at Langara and Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) -A Vancouver antiwar coalition-hosted the Student Week Against War and Occupation (SWAWO), which happened on 9 different campuses across the Lower Mainland and pulled out over two hundred Langara Students to different antiwar events.

On October 25th, Kira and Nicole attended the LSU Executive meeting to bring the charges of harassment to them. However, instead of having their complaint heard, the Executive Board had six guest speakers come in to speak against MAWO and the two women. Most of these speakers each had their own political affiliation with groups and political tendencies who have a hostile and/or factional history with MAWO, Kira and Nicole.

Each of these speakers had prepared a statement and spoke out against the women and their political organizing on campus. None of these speakers mentioned how they got involved with the LSU Executive in the character assassination of Kira and Nicole just after the issue of harassment became known on the Langara campus. It was clear that regardless of their opinions and politics, from left to far-right, that there was a mutual agreement amongst them to attack and bash MAWO and the two young women activists. This leads to the clear conclusion that most or all of them volunteered to participate in this unprincipled campaign against MAWO, Kira and Nicole. At the meeting Kira and Nicole were not given a chance to speak about the harassment case or in defense of themselves, nor were any of the other off-campus groups who were attacked and slandered during the meeting. After this the LSU Executive passed a motion to ban the two women students along with MAWO from the Students' Union property.

Since the banning the two women and the newly formed "Langara



The Langara 2: Nicole Burton (left) and Kira Daley (right).

2 Defense Committee" have been actively organizing on campus demanding that the ban be lifted and that there be an investigation into their claim of harassment.

FTT: On October 25th you were banned from your Students' Union, the LSU. There were four stated reasons for the banning. Could you outline each reason for us and explain their importance?

Nicole Burton: Well it wasn't that there were four different reasons for the banning, there were four different parts that essentially attacked what Kira and I represented in different ways. One of them was the disbanding of the sub-committee we worked in called the Peace and Social Issues Committee

(PSI) which essentially dissolved organizing on campus around war, occupation and social justice issues. The second was the physical banning of Kira and myself from the Students' Union property based on, "concerns of defamation, general health and well-being". The third aspect of the banning was the organizational banning of Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) from organizing on the Langara Students' Union (LSU) property. The fourth aspect of it was for the Langara Students' Union Executive Board, which represents all students at Langara, to cease any sort of support for MAWO or groups that work with it.

Kira Daley: Just to clarify we were banned from Students'

Union property and not the Students' Union itself. Nicole just outlined what they said in the motion where they banned us but in particular the dissolution of the Peace and Social Issues Committee and the banning of Mobilization Against War and Occupation clearly show that the motivation behind the banning was more to suppress and to silence the organizing that we'd been doing on campus and that we're apart of.

The physical banning of myself and Nicole represents a very clear example of what happens to organizers for social justice when particular institutions feel threatened by their work and seek to silence and slander honest and effective activists.

The wording of the motion says that we represent a threat to students' security or their general well-being. This was said without any back up explanation such as, where, when and how.

FTT: Were there any other motivations behind the banning?

Kira: In the last part of the motion to ban us the Students' Union Executive stated that they were going to issue a press release that explained their actions. They refused to give us any explanation for their actions other than saying that we should refer to the press release. The press release is entirely centred around their allegation of misappropriation of

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Lift the Ban on the Langara 2!

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Students' Union funds by us. That is one of the accusations they consistently bring up but can't substantiate because essentially it's being used to discredit us or slander us and isn't true.

Nicole: Some of the language within the press release really reveals the true intentions of the Students' Union Executive at this time. This is something we can not only see within the context of our organizing at Langara, but in the larger context of organizing around issues like war and occupation which have the ability to really politicize students in a short period of time. In the press statement Mobilization Against War and Occupation is referred to as an 'extremist' organization that the LSU would not agree to support. However, within the Executive Board meeting the LSU aligned itself with pro-occupation groups such as the Israeli Advocacy Club which advocates for the continued occupation of Palestine. This shows that the banning itself was political in nature and was an attack on antiwar organizing on campus, especially with the reference to one of the most active groups in the city, MAWO, as being extremist.

FTT: At the meeting where the banning took place there were six speakers who were lined up together against you by the LSU. Can you tell us about this grouping of people and what was said at the meeting? What I mean here exactly is what politics are really involved?

Kira: When we arrived at the LSU meeting that night on the agenda there was a point which included the six speakers. The first speaker was Bradley Hughes, an instructor at Langara who is a member of International Socialists (IS), Stopwar.ca (another antiwar coalition in Vancouver) and very hostile to MAWO. He was followed by Rick Gordon, another instructor who works with Stopwar.ca and is hostile to MAWO. He was followed by Jennifer Vasco who was member of the Peace and Social Issues Committee who was pressured by some LSU Executives to speak out against us. The remaining three speakers were Nic Brown who is a former Langara Students' Union Executive, as well someone who used to work with MAWO during the first five months after MAWO's inception. After the military consolidation of the US/UK in Iraq he was, like many other antiwar activists, demoralized by the imperialist occupation of Iraq. He then stopped working with MAWO without any explanation or any apparent political differences or hostility. Then suddenly he reappeared at our lynching in the LSU Executive Board meeting with a written statement against us and MAWO, he was basically saying to the status-quo left (SQL) that he had switched to their camp. Anyway, after a long period of inactivity and

demoralization, he seems to have currently joined the SQL and maintains a low key sort of activity. Kinney Butterfield, the president of the Israeli Advocacy Club- a reactionary organization that advocates for the brutal suppression of Palestinians by Israel and is a strong supporter of the occupation of Palestine- then spoke. Like Mr. Brown and other speakers, Butterfield was very hostile to MAWO and PSI's antiwar and anti-occupation activities at Langara and on other campuses. Finally Tanya West, a staff member of the Gleaner-Langara's student newspaper-spoke. She too was hostile to MAWO's activities at Langara College from the very beginning of our activity on the campus.

FTT: What was the main trend between all of these people?

Kira: I think the main trend that was common in all of these presentations was that they were all based on the political differences between the speakers and Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) or the antiwar, anti-occupation

“The physical banning of myself and Nicole represents a very clear example of what happens to organizers for social justice when particular institutions feel threatened by their work and seek to silence and slander honest and effective activists.”

movement building tendency that we are a part of. The two small exceptions to this were Kinney Butterfield, who is ultra reactionary and Mr. Brown, who we later found out has some problems with MAWO's leadership like myself, Nicole and Shannon [Bundock]. Basically he was upset that he was not recognized as a leader or main organizer in MAWO.

The fact is that part of the status-quo left (SQL) or part of the progressive trends in this city, like International Socialists and a section of Stopwar.ca, are very factional and hostile to us. They are desperately trying to maintain their political hegemony in Vancouver in order to maintain and consolidate their political agenda. They are truly against any independent organizations like MAWO. Because of this sectarian attitude they unfortunately put themselves in a situation where they spoke from the same platform and united against us with the reactionary



Langara 2 forum, November 4th 2004. The forum was moved outside to the front of Langara College after the original room booking was cancelled by Langara officials.

pro-imperialist status-quo (ISQ) Israeli Advocacy Club. In Vancouver, because organizations like IS are organizationally weak, they act like henchman for bigger and more solid organizations like some Labour Unions or the NDP. By giving lip service to those organizations, these organizations beg for a little political space for themselves in order to be able to build their own organizations. It is no wonder that they are very threatened by us and they are very much hostile to us because we are representing in my opinion an effective independent working class and poor people's movement against war and occupation. However, let me clarify that I'm not suggesting that these left groups or progressive individuals support the occupation of Palestine by Israel. My point is simply that because they are practicing factional and sectarian politics they are willing to position themselves united with ultra reactionary groups like Israeli Advocacy Club at Langara College.

Another main thread between these speakers was that their presentations were based on a lot of slander and fabrication of facts. We were not able to counter this slander because during a presentation point on the agenda people in the meeting are not allowed to defend themselves, bring up any new points or speak. The only speaking that can be done must be in the form of questions to the presenters and after the presentations happened the time for the agenda point had run out so there was no discussion. We were not offered an opportunity to defend ourselves or even to present evidence against the different slanderous and false claims that were made.

Nicole: Another important aspect was the opportunistic alliance with the Israeli Advocacy Club. In the meeting Kinney Butterfield (IAC) specifically said that we organize anti-Semitic events -because we, along with MAWO

and PSI, organized events in support of Palestinian rights and against the Israeli apartheid regime- on campus. As a Jewish person and a social justice activist and specifically as someone who has worked on campus against war and occupation in Iraq, Haiti, Afghanistan, Palestine and many other places under imperialist domination, I found it quite ironic to be attacked on this front.

Also, this is somewhat related but I would like to urge activists, especially in Vancouver, to read a book which I found to be a powerful and important tool to understand politics and class struggle. It's called SOLIDARITY-The Rise & Fall of An Opposition in British Columbia by Bryan D. Palmer. I believe every activist must read this book. Our problem in BC and in Vancouver is very similar the problem existed in the Solidarity movement in the early 1980's. Of course there are different peculiarities that stem from the current class struggle in Canada and British Columbia. But I would like to say that these groups have become insignificant in politics because they can't organize independently and effectively, that's why they rely solely on Labour and NDP. They try to maintain their low key activity in the antiwar anti-occupation movement as the SQL wishes, by organizing small and sporadic events in opposition to war and occupation. Basically with following SQL they seek a better position in return. But I must also say, regardless of our differences- like on campaigning on Missile Defense System and so on- we have always supported them in their actions and political work that we have found useful and valuable. We believe that we don't need to fight with each other or sabotage each others work, we need a united front against war and occupation based on our common demands: Out now! End the Occupation Now! Bring the Troops Home Now! and such. I would like to say

that generally the SQL, including Stopwar.ca, IS, Labour and the NDP have made many policies and campaigns that I agree with. I have also supported, promoted and participated in many actions and events by these groups and tendencies. I don't have any problems with them doing good, progressive, and healthy political campaigns or any campaigns at Langara or at any campus. It is very unfortunate and painful to see that rather than uniting with us against imperialist war and occupation, these groups follow their factionalism and sectarianism against others, especially us, MAWO, who basically consist of young people and people of the third world. I believe, like Che said, everyone and every group can show who they are by setting examples for others. Within the working class movement it is very unhealthy, unprincipled and reactionary to try to isolate other groups by framing them up and engaging in a slander campaign or joining a ruling class campaign against any organization who represents oppressed people.

I think generally what we saw in the meeting was over 3 hours of undemocratic process in which the invited speakers essentially created an unprincipled alliance with the purpose of crushing a certain political trend on campus. Also within this meeting there were two students, Kira and myself, who had come to the meeting in order to deal with a complaint of harassment, which was never dealt with.

FTT: What did their opportunistic and unprincipled alliance mean for your case?

Kira: I think this alliance makes it clear that although some of the tendencies are different, like Stopwar.ca or International Socialists versus the Israeli Advocacy Club, the point is that these people and these tendencies were willing to compromise

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Defend the Right to Organize! Defend the Langara 2!

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their principals despite their fundamental differences to unite against us. This is because they both recognized that the work of the Peace and Social Issues Committee was essentially a reflection of the radicalization and politicization of students on and off campus.

Nicole: I think what we also see is that this movement building on campus and in the city, as Kira mentioned, showed itself to be a significant threat to the leadership of what we refer to as the status-quo left (SQL). In the past what has been considered the norm for student organizing was challenged by a large amount of activities that the Peace and Social Issues Committee was doing at Langara.

Kira: Also, I think this shows the corruption of some of the Langara Students' Union Executives and the six speakers and tendencies involved, because they were willing to line up with a reactionary tendency like the Israeli Advocacy Club with the end goal of attempting to eliminate this movement building tendency [MAWO] from the campus. This opportunistic and ugly alliance of the speakers against us exposed them as being unprincipled and corrupt, both in their tactics and in being so-called antiwar and anti-occupation activists. In this case, they were so desperate to eliminate us as an alternative student and women led leadership that they were willing to work together with a major advocate for the occupation of Palestine, the Israeli Advocacy Club. Interestingly these political tendencies and individuals, through correspondence, connections, or putting pressure on Students' Unions, with slander campaigns and witch hunts against us are trying to sabotage our effort to broaden the antiwar, anti-occupation movement. This is despite the fact that many of them claim to be representing the interests of working people and the antiwar and anti-occupation movement.

FTT: Despite not being mentioned in the motion for the banning, different LSU Executives have since claimed that you were banned for misuse of LSU funds. What can you tell us about this?

Kira: Specifically to the question of misappropriation of funds the main thing that the LSU has alleged is that Nicole and myself were involved in funneling Students' Union funds from the Students' Union to our off-campus organization which is Mobilization Against War and Occupation. The question is not whether or not the LSU ever gave MAWO any money. In the past the LSU did donate money to MAWO when the composition of Executive was different, and the donations were entirely of the LSU's own initiative. However, specifically the question is around certain buttons that were made to hand out at the Student Week Against War and Occupation 2004 events. Initially Nicole paid for the buttons and did submit a requisition form to the LSU, the LSU did not reimburse her for the buttons. Nicole then made a requisition for reimbursement to MAWO and MAWO reimbursed her. So the question of who the buttons belong to or whether or not the LSU outsourced any funds for the Student Week Against War and Occupation is simply that no money left the budget of the Peace and Social Issues Committee while we were on it and no money left the LSU.

FTT: I'd like to go back a little bit to the issue of harassment. You originally went to the Langara Students' Union Executive Board meeting on October 25th to make a complaint of harassment against staff person Richard Bell. Can you tell us about the incident of harassment that gave rise to the

complaint?

Nicole: On October 20th, the Peace and Social Issues Committee was holding its weekly meeting. When members of the committee arrived at the Langara Students' Union office to hold the meeting, we were essentially told by an LSU staff person named Richard Bell, that the meeting was under his control and he was going to be chairing and taking minutes for the meeting. For the last three months the Peace and Social Issues Committee has been a committee of students. PSI meetings have been chaired and facilitated by myself and Kira, two women students, as well as the majority of the organizing by the committee was done by students and by young people.

At this meeting when Richard Bell, who is not a student, was questioned for his unilateral and draconian take over of the committee he intentionally used his presence as an older male staff person speaking to young students and young women to silence them. He did this by shouting people down, physically intimidating them and at certain points telling us to "shut up".

Based on the Langara Students' Union's policy manual Kira and I saw this behavior as harassment and also saw this behavior as sexist behavior. In the context of the society we live in where women are systemically oppressed, Richard Bell used his position as a staff person in the LSU and as an older adult and man to dominate and suppress the committee's student members and the meeting that was being led by young women. I must add that we are not the only ones who witnessed this and documented it. Four other participants in the PSI meeting wrote statements in opposition to what they saw and experienced in that meeting. They documented it and then they sent them to LSU Executive. These statements

are public statements and documents and could be obtained from LSU.

Kira: This was also the first meeting the Peace and Social Issues Committee had held in the LSU office and was the first meeting Richard Bell had attended. At this meeting when he assumed both the position of chair and minute-taker he excluded our agenda by putting his own points first, denied us any opportunity to put forward a motion that someone else chair the meeting or that someone else take minutes, his response to this was 'stop doing that, be quiet'. He then proceeded to ask students' in the room as to whether or not they were members of Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) without explaining his motivations or reasons were for that line of questioning and carrying out what was essentially political intimidation and harassment. Also, as a staff person he didn't have the authority to take over the committee or direct what happened at the meeting. LSU staff can act as a resource coordinator or help for students when they need it.

Throughout the meeting Bell's response to points we brought up about procedure or when we questioned his motivations for interrogating people was to shout at people and to intimidate them verbally and eventually he told us to 'shut up' several times. This incident of harassment and verbal abuse violates the LSU's Code of Conduct in terms of members treating each other with due respect and creating an environment of trust and accountability.

FTT: What were the motivations behind Richard Bell and, from what I understand, other LSU Executives, for attacking you both during this meeting and while you were members of the Peace and Social Issues Committee?

Kira: The motivation behind some of the LSU Executives' attacks on us and Richard

Bell's attacks on us come from the fact that the PSI Committee, since becoming active again in July, had begun to show itself as quite a force on campus. PSI was mobilizing students, getting them out to events, and having very productive and important debates on issues that affect students like

“...[It's] important to know how the dynamics of defending and consolidating democratic and human rights can be used as an avenue to expand them. Every victory for oppressed people puts them in a better position to drive for the next stage...”

war and occupation around the world. In this I think we posed a threat to the politically slow moving LSU Executive's leadership. Because historically Students' Unions have often become a voice and an organizer for students which advocates for students' rights and other social issues and the LSU was not doing this. I must add that unfortunately LSU is not a member of Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) therefore they don't feel that they are accountable to any student movement or any student institution. When the PSI Committee organized the Student Week Against War and Occupation (SWAWO) on campus and saw quite a jump in its membership it posed the threat of an alternative student leadership to the LSU at Langara although that was not the intention of its organizers. They saw and clearly feared that the new initiative by us and PSI could not be controlled or pressured by them like before. There was also a fear that the Peace and Social Issues Committee, and especially MAWO members of PSI, would put more pressure on LSU Executives to get more active with antiwar activities as well as put more pressure on them to cut their ties with reactionary campus groups like the Israeli Advocacy Club.

There is one more issue though, Richard Bell and some LSU Executives are very much concerned with us becoming a voice on campus because there seems to be some unresolved issues in the LSU around misuse of funds or some missing money or unnecessary expenses which have been discussed throughout the campus and student body for sometime now. We would like to investigate these issues and would like the LSU to be accountable and transparent. This is key to finding out why Richard Bell and some of the LSU Executives are so protective and secretive about these mentioned issues. We don't know for sure why or how these issues have come up, but many students and some former LSU Executive members have brought it to our attention. These missing funds have also been mentioned in the Voice, the college's journalism students' newspaper. Basically, whatever has happened, all students should learn why this information and discussion has been going around for sometime now and if there is any merit to it.

Nicole: I would like to go back to the level of pressure that was coming on the Executive Board based on the Peace Social Issues Committee's organizing.



Nicole Burton leads chanting against war and occupation, October 23 2004.

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Democratic Rights! Students' Rights! Women's Rights!

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We believe this pressure led to what was some Executives' decision, or at least Richard Bell's decision, that the only manner in which to confront this growing force on campus was to use a certain amount of intimidation and a certain amount of harassment. This was in order to not deal with any sort of political differences on a level playing field, but to use all out political and organizational intimidation and discrimination to intimidate and silence what was a growing presence on campus.

From that time to when we organized our last event, before the committee was dissolved by the LSU Executive, people on the PSI Committee faced almost daily interrogations by some members of the Executive or Richard Bell in the hallways or in the Students' Union Building about what our activities were or who our membership was and were always questioning whether or not we were actually students at the college. Ultimately what this culminated in was the attack by Richard Bell. This attack was intended to shut down our work and to intimidate us into stopping

the activities that you have organized in the last six months at Langara?

Nicole: As Kira outlined, the PSI Committee on campus has essentially been the most active committee within the Students' Union within the last couple of years. In two months beside regular and routine tabling every week, we organized five different events on campus four of which were part of the Student Week Against War and Occupation (SWAWO). SWAWO was a major event that went to 9 different campuses around the Lower Mainland and was co-organized with MAWO, along with other student groups, and Students' Unions. After SWAWO, we held a forum and discussion on Cuba. At the forum we presented and led discussion around the ongoing blockade on Cuba and essentially what our role is as students and young people in leading a movement in solidarity with oppressed nations around the world. Our group's organizing attracted hundreds of students to these activities.

FTT: So far, how has the issue of harassment be dealt with by the Langara Students' Union?



Victor Finberg, Langara College staff member; Kasia Machelak, Kwantlen College student and Nicole Burton, Langara 2; speaking at a forum against the banning in November 2004.

This was also the meeting where we were banned. Since that time different LSU Executives have mentioned things about an investigation into the case of harassment but there has been no official communication by the LSU to Nicole or myself about an investigation. Also, we have no information explaining the investigation process, such as which codes or policies an investigation would fall under or how investigation processes are outlined by the Students' Union.

FTT: You've both been actively organizing at Langara College since the ban. What are you currently demanding of the Langara Students' Union?

Nicole: Right now our demands are quite clear. They are around a defense campaign in objection to the attacks that have been waged against myself and Kira. The first of the demands has been to lift the ban against myself and Kira immediately, which is a violation of the Langara Students' Union's own mandate and policy in advocating and defending students. We are still members of the Students' Union in good standing, and we both pay our Students' Union fees so we are demanding that this ban be lifted and that we have access to our Students' Union.

The other demand is that the charges of harassment that Kira and I filed be investigated. By that we are asking for accountability. We are asking that Richard Bell, who has a documented history of harassing and intimidating students and especially women students, be held accountable.

FTT: How have you been raising awareness about this campaign and about these demands?

Kira: The way that we have been popularizing this campaign on campus has been through handing out newsletters, facts sheets, leaflets and talking with students. We've also held three public forums on campus so far where we have presented an outline of the case and why we think this is an issue of democratic rights for students and

also women's rights. We've also started a petition campaign on campus asking students to sign a petition which has two demands: 1) That the ban be lifted and 2) that the complaint of harassment be investigated. The way we have been approaching our case with students has been to discuss it as much as possible with as many students as possible. This is in order to expand the understanding of this issue as one that affects all students on campus and that it is not isolated to just the two of us.

FTT: What has been the response of students? Do they feel connected to the case and your demands on the Students' Union?

Nicole: I think the response to the case has been very very positive. As Kira mentioned the petition campaign has been something that we have launched for the last month and it has received an overwhelming amount of support from both students on campus as well as different faculty members within the college. There are two different reasons students have shown support and felt a connection with the campaign: First, is the aspect of defending women's rights and defending their right to raise their voices in defense of themselves for their safety against harassment and abuse. The other is the issue of democratic rights, students' rights and basic human rights in terms of being able to organize on campus. In response to the petition campaign specifically we've received over 500 signatures. With the three forums that we have held on campus we have brought out around 100 students to discuss the case and discuss how it relates to larger issues of women's rights and students' rights. Generally the response from students has been one of either disbelief or outrage that a Students' Union (that is supposedly advocating students' rights) would ban two of its own very active members and then proceed with a slander campaign against them.

Kira: Yeah, students' responses have been overwhelmingly

positive. Especially around the issue of this being a case about basic human rights, free speech and even just the right to assembly which are three things that students fundamentally identify with. As well as the demand of having the harassment investigated, students feel there is no case where there should be some pre-judgment on the validity of the claim and that the complaint should be investigated accountably in all cases.

FTT: You have also received support from a couple of other Students' Unions how do you feel this strengthens your case?

Kira: We've made presentations to several Students' Unions across the Lower Mainland to inform them about the case. The support that we have received is really important especially because this is also an issue of maintaining the integrity of all Students' Unions. Especially in an environment where students' rights are continuously under attack, with the increases in tuition fees, issues around student loans and cuts to funding for grants. I think that having support from other Students' Unions strengthens our case because: First, we are not isolated in our demands and that along with Langara students, students at other universities and colleges understand this. Second, that they too must see this case as an issue of basic democratic rights and students' rights. Third, this is also a case where we have to push for accountability and set a precedent where Students' Unions will be accountable to their members and also uphold the historic importance of Students' Unions in advocating for students' rights and in organizing for students.

The other thing I wanted to mention, especially around having support from other Students' Unions and being connected to students themselves is that, as Nicole mentioned, the number of signatures we've gotten for the petition is over 500, which is actually more

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Kira Daley address the protest at an antiwar demonstration, August 28 2004

our organizing by showing us that if we did continue our work on campus this was the kind of opposition we would face.

FTT: Can you tell us about

Kira: At the Executive meeting on October 25th, we went to present our complaint to the LSU and ask that they strike a Code of Conduct committee to investigate the complaint of harassment.



The Haida Decision: A Case of Lies and Theft by the Colonialist Government of Canada

By Mike Krebs

On November 18th 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada issued its ruling on the Haida Case (*Council of the Haida Nation et al v. Minister of Forests and Weyerhaeuser*). In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that the provincial government has 'a duty to consult with and accommodate the Haida' around the continued logging of an area designated by the provincial government as Block 6.

Block 6 is a forested area of Haida Gwaii, or the Queen Charlotte Islands, which is the traditional territory of the Haida Nation.

A license to harvest lumber from Block 6, known as the Tree Farm License 39, was originally given by the provincial government in 1961 to Macmillan Bloedel. Since this time, the provincial government renewed the license 3 times, including in 2000. In 1999, the license was transferred to Weyerhaeuser, an international logging company based in Washington State, when the company took over Macmillan Bloedel.

The Haida never gave consent for this logging of their resources, have never signed a treaty with any government giving up their sovereignty over these lands, and

have been fighting with the provincial government to determine what will and will not happen on their land for over 100 years. For this Indigenous community plagued by conditions of poverty, drug abuse, and humiliation at the hands of Canadian colonialism, the battle over Weyerhaeuser's logging of Haida forests is significant. An estimated 80 billion cubic meters of timber have been taken from Haida Gwaii since 1961, with a total estimated value of \$8 Billion. To this day the cedar in these forests is highly valuable, economically and culturally, for the Haida people, who use cedar in the production of their world famous totem poles, canoes, and other amazing works of art.

The Haida Case is the latest in a series of court battles that the Haida people have been pushed into as a way to block the criminal theft of their land and resources, which is carried out by Canadian and American capitalists and administered through the federal and provincial governments.

How the government of Canada justifies its colonial policies

The legal arguments made by the BC government in the Haida Case are a painful reminder of this government's long-standing racist policies towards Indigenous



'Spirit of the Earth' march and rally hosted by the Council of the Haida Nation. Vancouver, November 25th 2004.

people.

The provincial government's lawyers argued that because the Haida's title to their land has yet to be 'proven' and recognized formally by the provincial government or court, that they have no right to consult with or accommodate the Haida Nation. They also argued that the government of BC can continue granting access to Haida lands and resources to Weyerhaeuser until some unspecified time in the future, when the Haida 'proves' to the provincial government that they have title to this land. Essentially the same arguments were put forward by the other interveners in the case, which included the Federal government, 6 of the 10 other provincial governments, and the Business Council of BC.

Previous to the *Delgamuukw* decision of 1997, where the Supreme Court ruled that Aboriginal Title exists throughout virtually the entire province of BC (97%), the provincial government argued that this title did not exist at all, and therefore had no reason to consult with Indigenous people because they had no rights to the lands that are now BC.

With both cases, the arguments made by the provincial government and its associates lead to one ridiculous question: *Did Indigenous people exist in BC prior to its formation as a province?* The majority of Indigenous nations in BC never gave their right to self-determination over to any other government. The only way then that the provincial government could argue that these rights don't exist now is if they never existed in the first place.

With the Haida Case, the nonsense arguments of the provincial government were only slightly more refined: 'Until the Haida 'prove' in the provincial government's court that they inhabited their territory before it was taken by that same provincial government, how does anyone really know if that land belonged to anyone or not?'

Some basic questions need to be asked by intelligent human beings about the provincial government's reasoning: If Haida Gwaii was not the territory of the Haida people, where did the Haida come

from? Are they actually recent arrivals from the moon?!

There is vast historical and anthropological evidence, from both Haida and non-Haida sources, which point to the presence of Haida people and their rich culture on what is now called the 'Queen Charlottes' going back hundreds (if not thousands) of years. Is this all a big complicated hoax? Maybe Indigenous people and the majority of people in BC forced to live under this provincial government need to take these government officials and lawyers to a doctor to 'prove' whether or not they have brains.

Certainly when it comes to their treatment of Indigenous people, the provincial and federal governments are racist, and in many ways stupid. But they are not stupid enough to actually believe the racist arguments they made in the Haida Case. The real crime lies in the fact that whichever specific arguments these colonialist governments use when justifying their theft of Indigenous lands and resources, the Haida, or any Indigenous people, are forced to go into court to prove ANYTHING to the provincial government concerning their land.

What legitimacy does the government of BC have to determine whether or not the Haida have a 'legitimate' claim to their land? Even by the admission of its own courts, 97% of the land in British Columbia is *unceded*, and was stolen from Indigenous people without their consent. Given this fact, what legitimacy does the government of BC have at all?

Buying time, not paying for anything else

The strategy that the provincial government is pursuing against the Haida is the same one it has been using for decades, and is a common trick of colonialist and imperialist governments around the world- When people under occupation take action against the theft of their lands and resources, offer to negotiate on ridiculous terms for some 'future' settlement. Then continue to steal from them, watch the negotiations fail, and start the whole charade over again.

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Song of Truth

Blood is on the ground,
red on red,
there can be no denial,
death has been delivered
by a white hand,
elders and children with eyes closed,
future generations murdered in rage,
dream for their voice on the survivor's tongue,
would anyone wipe this from memory,
erase the pain of loss,
smile on the killers,
bow in thanks,
be silent to this slaughter
and others to come,
there will be no silence,
no drinking of genocide,
the speaker must cry a truth,
that knife will be met with knife,
that the generations will be protected
with the sharpness of love.

- By Phil Goldvarg, R.I.P. 2004

Colonization, Indigenous People and Poverty in Canada

By Aaron Mercredi

"Once I was in Victoria, and I saw a very large house. They told me it was a bank and that white men place their money there to be taken care of, and that by and by they got it back with interest."

"We are Indians and we have no such bank; but when we have plenty of money or blankets, we give them away to other chiefs and people, and by and by they return them with interest, and our hearts feel good. Our way of giving is our bank."

- Chief Maquinna, Nootka

Like every Indigenous nation that has existed within the borders of what is now Canada, the history of the Nootka from first contact with European colonizers is a story of theft, war and genocide. In fact, the land that the British acquired from the Nootka, on the South-East tip of Vancouver Island, is what enabled them to begin to lay claim to all of the Western coast of North America. The clashing of two cultures with opposing economic needs and aims led to the destruction of communal Indigenous society and has brought with it the state of poverty and displacement that exists among them today.

The impact of colonization is still felt by every Indigenous person living in Canada, because the war of extermination and destruction that began with first contact has never ended. Indigenous people are kept poor and displaced within a country rich in land and resources.

According to the 2004 'Report Card on Child Poverty', issued by Campaign 2000 (a cross-Canada organization that builds awareness about the Canadian government's resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000), the child poverty rate was 40% among the Native children living off-reserve, which is more than double the average for all children in Canada. Despite the growing Native population in urban centres, few supports are available for Aboriginal families who live in the cities. The report also found that Aboriginal people are still less likely to be employed than non-Native workers and when they are employed, they have the lowest average employment earnings of all workers.

Housing conditions that Indigenous people live under are also drastically affected by the poverty that is so entrenched in everyday life. According to Statistics Canada, Aboriginal people were more than twice as likely to live in homes requiring major repairs than non-Indigenous people living in Canada, and the homes of all Aboriginal people were more crowded than those of all other Canadians throughout the country.

Through these conditions of poverty, the health and well being of Indigenous people is severely affected. Campaign 2000 reported that Aboriginal children were four times as likely to go hungry as non-Aboriginal children. The desperation felt by this hardship is represented by the high level of alcoholism, drug abuse and suicides that run rampant from

the plight of Indigenous children committing suicide in the 1990s, when it was discovered that of the 169 Innu children living in the isolated community of Davis Inlet, 80 of them were chronically addicted to sniffing gasoline, and the town began to have one of the highest suicide rates in the world. The conditions that the Innu were living under were a direct result of being displaced from their traditional territory and culture. The Government of Canada established Davis Inlet in 1967 for the nomadic Innu people. With promises of comfortable homes, indoor plumbing and a decent standard of living, the Innu settled there. The promises, of course, were never kept and as a result of living in third world conditions, without running water or a proper sewage system, and being displaced from their traditional livelihoods, alcoholism, drug abuse and tuberculosis began to run rampant.

Chief Maquinna's observations on the difference between the values of generous Indigenous nations that inhabit North America and the values of European colonizers ring true when looking at cases like Davis Inlet, the high concentration of Indigenous people in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and the position of the majority of Indigenous people within Canada. The very core of this problem is that in order to establish a settler state on top of the backs of Indigenous nations, the destruction of those nations and suppression of their development and their communal economies became the first criminal choice for European



solution to hundreds of years of poverty

"The dominant society teaches us to be in front, be aggressive...Our culture teaches us not to compete but to cooperate with each other, to find balance [and] unity. We go as fast as the slowest person. The warriors need to lead from the back." - Phillip Whiteman, Northern Cheyenne

As Canada was consolidating itself and figuring out how to deal with the 'Indian problem,' the solutions that it has come up with have been in the form of different Acts and Bills. All of this legislation was designed to exterminate Indigenous people's inherent rights and to suppress any independent governance that existed among the different nations. Through the White Paper, and more recently, the First Nations Governance Act, the Government of Canada is not actually interested in Indigenous people having full self-determination, but rather in further entrenching the Government of Canada's interference in these affairs.

As long as the Government of Canada maintains its grip on suppressing Indigenous nations from developing their own governance, and from having control over their own land and resources, Indigenous people will be kept poor. In order for Indigenous people to pull themselves out of the depths of hunger and homelessness that Canada has plunged them into, Indigenous people need to regain their self-determination.

The 'Indigenous Problem:' not just a problem for Indigenous people

For as long as the Canadian ruling class has been suppressing the self-determination of Indigenous people, and trampling their inherent rights to the land and resources, resistance to colonization has existed. Just as millions of Indigenous people lost their lives fighting for their dignity and livelihood throughout the beginning of the conquest of this land, resistance continues today. Looking at what hundreds of years of colonization has done to Indigenous people, they have continually been put in the position

to fight back. Whether it is the current struggle of the Secwepemc people against the expansion of Sun Peaks ski resort on to more of their unceded territory, or the continuing fight for Mi'kmaq fishing rights at Burnt Church, the foundation of these struggles is deeply rooted in the history and relationship that has always existed between the Canadian ruling class and Indigenous people here.

As the Canadian ruling class continues to try to solve its economic crisis by plundering third world countries like Afghanistan and Haiti, and as it continues to steal more Indigenous land in Canada, it also continues its attacks on all oppressed people within its borders. Whether it is the cuts to welfare and minimum wage, or attacks on unionized and non-unionized labour, poverty is on the rise among all working and oppressed people. The shaky and destructive system that is exploiting all people in Canada benefits from the divisions created among different oppressed layers of our society. When Mi'kmaq at Burnt Church were asserting their rights to fish for lobster in their waters, the Canadian government and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans clouded the actual issue of the Mi'kmaq's rights by pitting non-Indigenous fishermen, who also depended on the lobster, against them.

Overcoming the divisions created and fuelled by the Canadian ruling class is essential for any gains to be made by oppressed people on this land. By overcoming these divisions, Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people can work together, as we each have a lot to offer. Just as the government of Canada makes attacks on workers and Indigenous people alike, both have the ability to defend themselves on their own front. Looking at the waves of solidarity that come any time Indigenous people assert their rights on this land, or looking at the huge blow to the functioning of every day life that can be caused when workers strike against unfair wages and unsafe working conditions, we can see that allying ourselves together is key to achieving any justice on this land.



Indian Reserve house with missing windows on Guilford Island, BC.

Of the many ways that Indigenous people fare much worse than the average person in Canada, one of the most blatant examples is the level of poverty that exists among Indigenous people. Through research that has been collected over the last decade, Statistics Canada reported in 1995 that 55.6 percent of Aboriginal people living in cities were living in poverty, compared to 24 percent of non-Aboriginal people. Since then, the economic conditions that Indigenous people have lived under have not changed.

North to South, and East to West along Indigenous communities. According to Statistics Canada, Indigenous people are three times more likely to commit suicide than the general Canadian population, with the highest rate being among women between the ages of 15 and 24, who are overwhelmingly 8 times more likely to commit suicide than the general Canadian population.

Colonization: the Source of Indigenous poverty

World attention was brought to

settlers. This trend enforced and accelerated stealing more land and resources from Indigenous nations. As a result of the hundreds of years of war that ravaged Indigenous nations, most have been displaced from their original territories and cut off from their traditional economies, forced on to small parcels of land through the reservation system. Every problem facing Indigenous people today is a direct result of the theft of land and resources by the colonial forces.

Self-Determination: the only

The Haida Case and the Indigenous Struggle for Self-Determination

From page 24

In BC, this strategy has a long and criminal history, where in many situations Indigenous people have spent decades fighting the same court case over something as basic as title to their land.

'Government' interests and 'Industry' interests: Two limbs of the same beast

The Haida Case highlights another historical aspect of BC, which is the relationship between the companies that pillage Indigenous lands and resources, and the provincial and federal governments that administer this.

Before the region that is now British Columbia was established as a Canadian province, it was

Part of the decision in the Haida Case actually clarified the capitalists' division of tasks for future pillaging of Indigenous resources. The court did this by ruling that the prime responsibility for 'consulting with and accommodating' Indigenous people lies with the government, NOT with Weyerhaeuser. This puts the heat on the provincial and federal governments to do a better job of ensuring access to Indigenous lands and resources without disruption, while the companies that pull in the bulk of the profits from these deals are unlikely to ever have to cough up in the event that Indigenous people successfully assert their rights and challenge the legitimacy of these deals.

people. It is a reminder of how much these governments have taken, and continue to take, from the original inhabitants of what is now Canada, a first-world country which tries to force Indigenous people to live as beggars on their own land. This is the continued theft, not only of Indigenous lands and resources, but the theft of hopes and dreams. So long as the government of Canada continues to suppress the right of Indigenous people to self-determination, its rotten foundation will only cause more suffering for Indigenous people.

The pillaging of Indigenous lands and resources is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian government, and its capitalist economy requires it. The Canadian ruling class cannot afford to have Indigenous people assert their right to self-determination: its economy is in crisis (even with the free ride it gets at the expense of Indigenous people) and any success of Indigenous people in ending this colonial relationship would strike the very foundations of Canadian exploitation.

For this reason, it is important for all poor, working, and oppressed people in Canada to support Indigenous people when they are struggling against attacks by Canadian colonialism. This includes the struggle of the Haida for the right to control their forests, the struggle of the Mi'kmaq people in Burnt Church to harvest their lobster resources, and the struggle of residential school survivors to seek a just solution and compensation for generations of abuse and destruction at the hands of the Canadian 'Education' system.

These struggles of Indigenous people for self-determination directly challenge the same governments that are currently attacking all poor, working, and oppressed people in Canada. They also awaken people to their need to defend their rights against the Canadian ruling class whenever it is seeking to reap even more profits through the suppression of our basic rights. Workers' rights, women's rights, immigrant and

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Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson, lawyer representing the Council of the Haida Nation in the Haida case, speaking at press conference about the case in Vancouver, November 18th 2004.

made up of two British colonies, British Columbia and Vancouver Island. James Douglas was the 1st governor of the BC colony and the 2nd governor of Vancouver Island. A high-ranking and wealthy businessman with the Hudson's Bay Company, Douglas lobbied the British government to establish these colonies, and then used his position as governor to establish a monopoly for the Hudson's Bay Company over the lands, resources, and trading market in these colonies. Essential to the success of Douglas' plan was expropriating this land from several Indigenous nations, while refusing to negotiate or recognize these nations.

This same approach continues with the way that the provincial and federal governments 'grant' access to Indigenous lands to companies like Weyerhaeuser, which rely on the government to keep Indigenous people, the poorest section of people living in Canada, from acting to stop billions of dollars in resources from being sucked out of their communities.

As with the Haida, this often means attacks through the courts and filibustering with 'negotiations,' but it also includes the use of more explicitly violent arms of the government such as the RCMP and military. In the last two decades alone, Indigenous people asserting their rights were violently suppressed by these arms of the government 3 times, in Oka, Gustafson Lake, and Burnt Church.

Indigenous people respond to the Haida Case

With all this in mind, the announcement of the Haida Case decision aroused a lot of interest among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Vancouver, in BC, and across Canada. A press conference called by the Council of the Haida Nation in Vancouver on November 18th drew out over 300 people, mostly Indigenous, who gathered to find out about the case and the analysis of it by representatives from the Haida Council, the First Nations Summit, and lawyers with EAGLE, an Indigenous legal society that brought the Haida Case to court on behalf of the Haida Nation.

This press conference was followed by a march and rally through downtown Vancouver on November 18th called 'Spirit of the Earth'. Hosted by the Council of the Haida Nation to draw attention to the Haida Case and what it means for Indigenous people in Canada. The rally drew out over 600 mostly Indigenous people. The Haida Case has also fueled discussion among Indigenous people in their communities about what the Haida Case means for them, and how it fits into the overall struggle of Indigenous people for self-determination.

Indigenous people have an interest in the Haida Case because it is only the latest example of the dishonest and treacherous ways that provincial and federal governments suppress Indigenous

refugee rights, and the right to decent healthcare and education, all of these must be fought for and defended, and we must recognize the necessity of a united program that can effectively defeat attacks

on any section of poor, oppressed, and working people in Canada. As part of this program, the demand of self-determination for Indigenous people is absolutely essential.

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EDITORIAL

In Defense of the Principles of Working Class Struggle: Against Violence in the Working Class Movement

By *Fire This Time*
Editorial Board

On December 2nd 2004 a mob of six people marched into the workplace of Fire This Time editorial board member and well-known political organizer Ivan Drury. Justin Goodman, Brad Taylor, two people we know as 'Altona' and 'Leon' and two people we could not identify rushed into the back of the grocery store, surrounded Ivan and threatened him with raised fists, asking if he was prepared to die. They circled him and yelled, "Rat! Authoritarian! Agent! Totalitarian! Leninist..." and said, "Fire This Time is an authoritarian paper that is the friend of agents like Kelly White."

When Ivan picked up a phone to call the police the mob left, horking gobs of spit on him and saying, "We'll get you later," and, "We'll see you again, Rat."

This police-like attack was led



Fire This Time Organizer Ivan Drury speaking at rally during Woodward's squat in Vancouver, September 23rd 2002.

up to with this same grouping of people stealing the stack of Fire This Time newspapers kept in the store. In groups of two they went into the store every day or two to take the stack of papers by the door and throw

them into the street. As they left they yelled at Fire This Time Editorial Board member Nasim

Sedaghat, who also works at the same store, and called her, "Rat! Police Agent! Informer! Scum! Authoritarian..."

Even in the months prior to these attacks on the Fire This Time newspaper and its Editorial Board, people associated with this mob had attacked Fire This Time political editor Ali Yerevani. On many occasions in 2003 and 2004 one of these people, Mike Seale, approached Ali, a refugee claimant at the time, and told him he wished he would be deported from Canada. Other people associated with Mike Seale have also called Ali an agent of CSIS and the CIA in person and over email lists and postings on websites.

One of these attackers, Justin Goodman, has recently been thrown in jail for his involvement in a protest at the beginning of

2003. Elsewhere in this issue of Fire This Time we have called for Justin's release from prison for these charges. However, no matter what he has done elsewhere, Justin's actions on December 2nd stand alone and must be opposed by all progressive minded people and organizations as police-like tactics that are a destructive force in the progressive movement.

While it is possible to understand from their few words that these people have political differences with Fire This Time, the form of their attacks on us are not political - at least they are not rooted in any politics of the struggles of working or oppressed people in this world.

Terms of Struggle in the Working Class Movement in 2005

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Free Justin Goodman! Defend the Rights of Immigrants and Refugees in Canada!

By *Ivan Drury*

On Friday January 17th 2003 Kobra and Hassan went in to what they thought was a routine interview at Immigration Canada. At this interview they were arrested and put in detention. For Kobra Nateghi and her 21-year-old son Hassan Esmat, who had both been refused refugee status and issued an overnight deportation order to Iran, this arrest meant a personal crisis and a fight for their lives.

On Tuesday January 21st around 30 people gathered at the Vancouver airport to protest the deportation. Hassan, having been denied medication for the past three days in jail, suffered an epileptic seizure when handcuffed to a seat on the plane. The police put him in a headlock, his mother yelled for him to be released and the pilot refused to fly with them on the plane, protesting to the police that their agitated presence put other passengers in jeopardy.

They were taken off the plane in plastic handcuffs and Kobra was led, alone with a single security guard, through the middle of the

airport lobby and into the middle of the crowd of protestors. Kobra and the guard were surrounded and Kobra broke free. She ran out of the airport and escaped the custody of the immigration officers.

Security guards and police officers scrambled to arrest and detain the activists who remained behind. Among these detained activists, who were fighting for the rights of refugees, was Justin Goodman, a 19-year-old man who had gone to the airport to oppose the deportation and was amongst the crowd that Kobra had run through.

Refugee rights on trial:

Justin Goodman's 12-member jury trial started on November 15th. Although video evidence showed Justin merely standing in the crowd and not directly involved in Kobra's escape, the prosecution's case rested entirely on the testimony of the security guard who had held Kobra Nateghi. He claimed that he was "95% to 97%" sure that Justin had been involved in Kobra's escape. On November 18th Justin

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Student Rights, Democratic Rights Under Attack: Fighting the Expulsion of Social Justice Activist Dan Freeman-Maloy by York University

By *Shannon Bundock*

In April 2004, Dan Freeman-Maloy was expelled from York University in relation to his participation and organizing of actions in solidarity with Palestine. Dan became well-known on campuses across Canada as he fought York's illegitimate proceedings and attack on his democratic rights. The expulsion of Dan was eventually repealed with the support of people across Canada and after a public fight against the York administration.

This fall, Fire This Time spoke with Dan Freeman-Maloy in Toronto, Ontario, where he lives. We discussed his case, the fight to build solidarity with Palestine and the need for students and all people in Canada to defend their rights to organize.

FTT: Can you give us some background on your expulsion case, why you were expelled from York University and with what reason?

Dan: I was expelled from York as part of a broad trend of Canadian university administrations seeking to assert increasing control over student political



Dan Freeman-Maloy debating with Zionist at York, March 16th 2003.

activities. How this is playing out at York specifically relates to a set of very sharp contradictions that exist on campus. On the one hand, progressive politics have historically been quite strong on campus, and dynamic antiwar and solidarity activism galvanized the campus around the 2003 invasion of Iraq. At York as elsewhere, this movement has integrated Palestine solidarity quite centrally into its politics and its focus. On the other hand, York's administration is eager to reshape the campus

in line with the interests of the school's increasingly influential corporate backers, including many with deep ties to the Israeli apartheid government. Further, a right-wing movement has emerged within the student body itself, with what its activists would call "Israel advocacy" as a principal focus, but with a much broader reactionary agenda. My expulsion is best understood in this context.

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Justice for Metropolitan Hotels Workers! Justice for Emily Tang!

How Racism & Discrimination Affect Immigrant Workers

An Interview with Emily Tang and John Clarke in Toronto

By Ivan Drury

Emily Tang and John Clarke are members of both the Metropolitan Hotel Workers Committee (MHWC) and organizers with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP). Emily, a long-time worker at the hotel, founded the MHWC in January of 2004 because of the mounting grievances from the workers at the hotel that the union - HERE UNITE! - was unable to address. OCAP got involved as supporters of the MHWC and the two groups have worked together for justice for workers at the hotel against the exploitation and discrimination of the owners and management ever since.

Since the majority of the workers are immigrants and women, particularly in the kitchen, where Emily works, the struggle for justice at the Metropolitan Hotel is really a struggle in defense of the most vulnerable workers in Canada. The MHWC faces great challenges because of this and because it is also a struggle for immigrant rights and women's rights. In October Fire This Time had a chance to sit down with Emily and John in Toronto and discuss this struggle.

FTT: What was the reason that you formed the Metropolitan Hotel Workers Committee?

Emily Tang: The Metropolitan Hotel Workers Committee formed at the beginning of January 2004, because there had been a lot of grievances from the workers against the Metropolitan Hotel, but I don't know what the union did with the grievances, they just disappeared.

FTT: What was the nature of the grievances themselves?

Emily Tang: Well the nature of the grievances were harassment, seniority, and the management.

I've been working there for eight years and nine out of ten times, when we ask for a lunch or dinner break we get the time deducted from our cheques, when we are not supposed to. It's basically like a full day worked for free on each cheque.

FTT: Can you tell us a story about one of the cases?

Emily Tang: Well, one of the cases was with one of my co-workers named Pedro, he was given a warning for speaking Spanish to another co-worker in the kitchen. He worked in the same department as me, the banquet department. There's a lot of unfair treatment. It's discrimination between people who speak Spanish and other workers. Pedro tried to file a grievance and the union wouldn't take it up.



Emily Tang speaking at a Metropolitan Hotel Workers Committee rally, October 2004.

His situation is really bad because he had been fighting with the management for years about unfair treatment, about scheduling and harassment, but at the end he just collapsed. He fell to the floor while he was working, during a reception. They called an ambulance and they wouldn't take him back because he collapsed.

He had to try to prove his case, the company was supposed to modify his duties but he didn't get it. They

didn't want to have him back at the hotel because he was the one who fought for the rights of the workers since he started to work there - he's been working there for eight years.

John Clarke: In the Ontario Labour Relations Act section 74 is the piece of legislation where you file for non-representation which is a pretty forlorn piece of legislation.

They made an agreement with Pedro that they would provide representation, but the next day they told him that there's nothing that can be done. That's why the committee has become necessary.

Also, after 9-11, the latest victims have been Muslim. One example was around a worker named Saheed. Because he was a devout Muslim he was praying during his breaks and the security had targeted him and were harassing

him. He went to the union and asked for assistance and got no help at all. He sent several letters to the president asking for help and nothing happened. Finally, he was very scared that they would set him up on criminal charges because he had access to the hotel rooms, so against the advice of Carlos who was still working there, he quit his job.

Even under capitalist legal codes, that's regarded as constructive dismissal. After that, the head of security sent an e-mail out to all the hotels saying, "You don't want to hire this guy, we put pressure on him and he quit."

The union reluctantly asked the company about it and the company said, "Well, it's true that the e-mail was sent" but the head of security, even though he signed it 'head of security' was not actually functioning as the head of security at the time. The union said, ok, well nothing can be done. So Saheed remains fired.

Emily Tang: This same security guard that harassed Saheed and another worker named Mohammed harassed Pedro too. They knew that Pedro was using a recorder to prove that the harassment was happening. This security guard pretended that she was concerned about his injury and approached him three or four times one night when he was working and walked him to the elevator. She held his arm and said, "Pedro, Pedro what do you have? Do you have a knife or something?" and she reached into his jacket and pulled out his recorder.

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Metropolitan Hotel Targets Oppressed Workers

From page 1

management. After being found praying during his break, he was accused of improper conduct. The harassment reached a level where, in a state of extreme emotional stress, he was forced to offer his resignation.

Pedro Vanegas also worked at the Metropolitan Hotel and suffered under management's abuse. Pedro was disciplined for speaking Spanish to another worker. Jeremy Roncoroni, the Metropolitan's general manager, commented saying he expects staff to speak the same language as hotel guests, in accordance with hotel policy. "It's extremely rude if I was talking to somebody in a different language other than

the language that we speak at the hotel."

The Metropolitan Hotel has targeted many Muslim workers and has also denied black workers food serving positions. Housekeeping workers have had to use dangerous chemicals without proper training or protection. It has been common practice for managers to deny legal meal and rest breaks to workers. One supervisor harassed employees to the point that he stood waiting for them outside the door when they went to use the washroom. Injured workers have been denied modified duties and have had their injuries intensify. Those who have spoken out have been victimized and driven from employment.

One worker at the Metropolitan, Emily Tang, remains suspended for being publicly critical of her employer.

Now, the Hotel has adopted a new policy, dated October 15, 2004, that places all Metropolitan workers under the same threat should they dare to speak out against employer abuses and oppressive working conditions.

"The Hotel will formally warn, discipline and terminate if necessary, an employee who participates directly or indirectly in activities or actions designed to harm the Hotel"

All of the workers who have had their democratic rights attacked by the Metropolitan Hotel have some things in common which increase their barriers to

employment and likelihood of being taken advantage of. First of all, most are immigrants and people of color, some living without full status in Canada and under constant threat of detention and deportation. Second of all, for many English is not their first language and therefore they have language barriers, as well as foreign accents. Thirdly, they are part of the lowest paid, most exploited layer of the working class in Canada.

Many workers in this sector do not know much about their democratic rights in Canada. An overwhelming majority of the Metropolitan workers have not only been exploited by the

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Vancouver Activists in Action to Defend Emily Tang

By Noah Fine

On Thursday October 18th a contingency of people erupted in downtown Vancouver in solidarity with hotel workers in Toronto. This protest took place in light of attacks by the Metropolitan Hotel in Toronto directed at the employees of that branch. Members of Fire This Time Movement For Social Justice, Youth 3rd World Alliance, No One is Illegal, and other independent people came together to protest the numerous cases of harassment by the management at the Metropolitan Hotel in Toronto and against the suspension of an employee there.

In Toronto, on September 23rd Emily Tang, a worker at the Metropolitan Hotel in Toronto and a central organizer with the Metropolitan Hotel Workers Committee (MHWC) and the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), spoke at the opening of a film presentation about immigrant workers' rights. In her talk she spoke about the attacks and harassment by the Metropolitan Hotel's management of Muslim workers at the hotel for praying

and of Latino workers for speaking Spanish. Her speech that night was in "violation" of a written warning issued by the Metropolitan that if she spoke out in public against the hotel she would be fired.

On October 9th Emily reported in for work. She was then called into the office at the hotel for a meeting with management and was issued an immediate suspension. Since Emily's suspension employees at the Toronto hotel still face attacks by the management in the form of letters being dropped in the workers mailboxes. The letters were aimed at organizers with the Metropolitan Hotel Workers Committee and Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP).

Based on the growing attacks on the Metropolitan workers in Toronto Fire This Time organized a protest around the entrance of the Metropolitan Hotel in Vancouver. At the beginning of protest Ivan Drury (organizer with Fire This Time) spoke about the injustice that had taken place. The group then marched into the hotel and proceeded to occupy the lobby. They were

greeted by hostile but nervous employees and management. A formal letter directed to Henry Wu (the owner of both branches of the Metropolitan) and Judy Ahola (manager of Public Relations at the Vancouver hotel) was handed out to the employees and management, as well as customers. One of the managers became visibly aggressive and insisted that the contingent exit the building; however Shannon Bundock coordinator of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice on behalf of the protesters demanded that they be allowed to give the letter directly to Judy Ahola. They were then told that Judy had already left for the day. It was then made it clear by the protesters to hotel management that they would be back until this protest is heard, justice at the Metropolitan Hotel is restored, and Emily Tang is fully reinstated. The protest then moved outside to protest and formed a picket in front of the hotel with chants led by Tamara Hansen organizer with Youth Third World Alliance, demanding "Justice for Emily Tang," and "Reinstate Emily Tang."

Defend Emily Tang!

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management of the Metropolitan, but also face oppression at the hands of the Canadian government. On top of the violations of their rights in the workplace, they are victims of systemic discrimination, racism, increased threat of deportation, threat of detention and attacks which have escalated after September 11, 2001 against Middle-Eastern people, Moslems and people of color.

Given the oppressed demographics attacks on the democratic rights of Metropolitan hotel workers must be recognized as part of the "war at home" being waged by imperialist nations, including Canada. These attacks are not isolated occurrences, they are the products of a carefully constructed climate of fear and repression. This climate is a far-reaching continuation of Canada's foreign policy which is typified in their occupations of Haiti and Afghanistan. This is a policy of full-out war and occupation, killing and suppressing people abroad.

When Emily Tang is speaking out as a representative of oppressed workers, she is a symbol of resistance to these unjust conditions. She is a figure of struggle against the repeated attacks on different immigrants and poor workers at the Metropolitan hotel in Canada, while at the same time a figure of struggle against all Canada's repressive measures which have put people of color and immigrants in such an oppressed position.

In this recent case working people must defend Emily because she is voicing immigrant workers' interest and defending their rights. Through defending herself, and the most exploited layer of the working class, Emily is on the front lines of a fight to improve the position of all poor and working people against their bosses. As people of color, as immigrants, as women and most of all, as workers, we must demand that Emily Tang be reinstated immediately and that all the laws which remove workers democratic rights from work places be eliminated.

For more information and support please visit www.metropolitanhotelsworkers.org.



Rally in Vancouver supporting workers under attack by the Metropolitan Hotel in Toronto, October 18th 2004.

Interview with Emily Tang and John Clarke Continued

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She said, "Oh, I'm going to keep this." When he finished his shift he asked for his recorder back and thought that she was nice, he didn't even tell me that it happened.

Two days later he was called in for a meeting and was given a warning for carrying a recorder. Then he realized that he had been set up.

FTT: What actions has the MHWC taken in pursuit of justice for workers at the Metropolitan Hotel?

Emily Tang: Actually, our first rally was in front of the hotel in February of 2004 with our demands. We also had about 50 supporters go up to the union office to demand they file the grievances and also accountability to the workers, that was in March, and we have had no response from the union.

HERE-UNITE, the union, has said nothing. We have tried, for the last 2 or 3 months, to have pickets every Friday. They have done nothing. The hotel even organized a picket line against us. They distributed this letter against us and against OCAP, and even printed it in Chinese because there are a big number of Chinese workers at the hotel.

FTT: What has Henry Wu and the Metropolitan Hotel's response to the committee been so far?

Emily Tang: I was given a letter saying that I couldn't speak out or I'd be fired.

John Clarke: We delivered a letter to the president of the union that in the event that Emily's free speech is stifled then the union has the responsibility to defend it. They've even defended pedophiles and Nazis, so certainly Emily qualifies. There has been no response from the union.

Also, Pedro was in a meeting the other day

with management and the union rep and said to them, "I'm about to lose my housing and be homeless." The union rep said, in front of management, "You should like that, you're in OCAP, they're all homeless."

FTT: What are the demands of the committee at this point?

Emily Tang: About the chemicals that the housekeeping workers have to use, about conditions, and the main thing is for Pedro to get his job back.

FTT: What are the next actions of the MHWC?

Emily Tang: We will be targeting the other businesses owned by Henry Wu, the owner of the Metropolitan Hotel.

FTT: What can people who are not workers in the hotel but are supporters of the MHWC do in order to support you?

Emily Tang: There are many people

attending the pickets and we have meetings every second Wednesday to see what we can do to help the workers. We have had a lot of support from these people. We are also going to go for support from the Toronto District Labour Council, we are going to bring one of the warning letters that Pedro got for speaking Spanish.

FTT: Is there anything people in Vancouver can do to help?

Emily Tang: There is a Metropolitan Hotel in Vancouver. The owner is Henry Wu as well and it is non-union. People could take our demands to the Hotel in Vancouver as well and can get more information from the MHWC website at www.metropolitanhotelsworkers.org.

FTT: Emily and John, thank-you for your time and for your commitment to the struggle for the rights of workers at the Metropolitan Hotel.

** In September Emily received a warning from her bosses that if she continued to speak out publicly against the conditions at the Metropolitan then she would be fired. This threat was followed through when Emily was suspended on October 9th. See the report in this issue of Fire This Time on the action that FTT organized to demand, "Reinstate Emily Tang!"*

Defend Students Democratic Rights!

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In late April 2004, I received a letter from York President Lorna Marsden notifying me that if I set foot on campus for the three years following May 1, 2004, I would be issued a trespass notice. The letter justified this punishment with reference to my use of a megaphone at two on-campus demonstrations, the first on October 16, 2003, and the second on March 16, 2004.

The first of these demonstrations was titled "Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) Appreciation Day," and featured the mayor of an illegal Israeli settlement in the West Bank speaking through a sound system to militarist activists who had congregated sporting IDF paraphernalia. A counter-demonstration, which was quite tame, given the circumstances, was organized in which anti-militarist and Palestine solidarity activists, including myself, distributed literature and spoke out against this sick and provocative event. It should be noted that this event was held on a campus where many students or their families have been directly affected by the IDF's policies of ethnic cleansing and repression. In this same month, October 2003, President Marsden introduced an acting Likud minister that was speaking on campus [Natan Sharansky] as a "champion of human rights".

The second demonstration was planned as a simple theatrical depiction of a checkpoint in a central space on campus, after which we paid a visit to a nearby office of Caterpillar (the company that produces the bulldozers with which Palestinian homes are routinely demolished). This demonstration was timed to mark the first anniversary of the death of International Solidarity Movement (ISM) activist Rachel Corrie, who was run over and killed by a Caterpillar bulldozer while trying to prevent the demolition of a Palestinian home in Rafah, in the Gaza Strip. This demonstration, in which some 30-40 activists participated, was met with an aggressive militarist response by some 150 right-wing activists who chanted down, spat on, and in some instances physically attacked our demonstration.

Other activities I have been involved in seeking to support, the Metropolitan Hotel Workers Committee, a rank and file organization struggling against management abuses at a downtown Toronto hotel owned by a York financial backer [Henry Wu], were also cited later in the summer by the administration to justify my expulsion. However, the administration's firm conviction to crack down on Palestine solidarity activism, even when doing so means appearing to side with quite actively militarist Zionists, is at the root of this issue.



Dan Freeman-Maloy.

FTT: With growing sympathy and solidarity for Palestine we see an increase in attacks against activists who are working to defend Palestine. Although this attack against you is a severe and significant case, it is also a part of a larger fight, specifically to shut down the antiwar movement, which is growing on campuses and among students and is allied with the Palestinian struggle for sovereignty. In BC, we are seeing the attacks increase against pro-Palestine activists, in particular with the case of the 'Langara 2', in which two antiwar activists Kira Daley and Nicole Burton were banned from the Langara Students' Union building by the students' union executive board, a case which you are also aware of. Can you give us an assessment of what this increased polarization means and why it is important for people in Canada, in particular students, to organize in defense of Palestine as well as our fundamental right to organize on campuses?

Dan: For people who want to build a social movement against the patterns of conquest, domination and exploitation that more and more people are beginning to describe as empire, the strength of Palestine solidarity movements is central. The Palestinian struggle has long been a reference point for movements against colonialism and imperialism across the world – this is most obviously the case in the Arab world, but can also be seen in the orientation of (for example) the South African anti-apartheid movement and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua to the Palestine Liberation Organization, as against the Israeli state's alliance with Apartheid South Africa, dictator Somoza and later the US backed reactionary military force of the Nicaraguan Contras. This pattern extends quite readily to the present and this is natural. In Palestine, we see colonialism in its crudest form and with the starkest contrasts, as a dispossessed, stateless nation sustains fierce resistance against one of the world's major military powers in the face of overwhelming odds.

More specifically, the capacity of the Israeli state to sustain its repression of the Palestinian uprising relies most crucially on U.S. support, but also on support from allies like Canada. Israel is the only country in the region to enjoy a free trade agreement with Canada, from which it has profited to the tune of billions of dollars. Canadian companies such as Nortel, the Canadian Infrastructure Corporation, CAE, and SNC Tech provide military and transportation infrastructure

to facilitate Israeli expansionism. Recently, Canadian officials have indicated that they are attempting to move towards lending greater diplomatic cover to Israeli policies by voting with them against resolutions in defense of Palestinian rights at the United Nations.

FTT: Since the repeal of the expulsion you have launched a second stage in this fight, can you explain what you are doing to take this to the next level?

Dan: On one hand, we're doing all we can to continue to press for our rights to dissent on campus, especially in the face of renewed administration attacks. The case of David Noble, for example, a York professor who was publicly attacked for handing out literature drawing attention to the links between York's administration and prominent Canadian "Israel advocates", highlights the problems that we continue to face.

Regarding my case specifically, though, we are suing the administration for misfeasance in public office, conspiracy to injure, defamation, abuse of power, and a variety of other things for which we may be able to hold them legally accountable. This is still in its early stages, but will hopefully be another means of eroding their authority and creating constraints upon the administration's political conduct so as to free up space to continue organizing and pressing our demands on campus.

FTT: Dan, thank you for the interview.

VDLC Resolutions Continued

From page 1

local affiliated public and private sector trade unions. On many occasion in the history of labour struggle the VDLC has stood on the side of working people in Canada, such as calling Canada's first general strike in 1918. Almost 90 years later, with more than 60,000 workers behind them, the VDLC's three resolutions on November 16th show that the council is an effective and important tool of the labour movement in Canada.

Yes to War Resisters

Showing leadership on a national level, the VDLC passed a motion in defense of US soldiers who have fled the US army and are seeking refuge in Canada. This resolution directly supports the cases of three former US-soldiers who have made refugee claims in Canada in order to avoid participating in the occupation of Iraq. These three War Resisters are just the visible crest of the wave of dissent that is building within the US army against the occupation of Iraq. This resolution in support of War Resisters demonstrates an internationalist sentiment that is essential to the labour movement. The resolution reads:

Whereas: The people of Iraq have never constituted a threat against the people of the US or Canada; and

Whereas: The US invasion and occupation of Iraq is immoral and illegal under international

law; and

Whereas: Any US soldier who has the courage and honor to refuse to participate in an illegal war deserves our full support; now

Therefore be it resolved: That the Vancouver and District Labour Council, through the CLC, demand that the Canadian government demonstrate its commitment to international law and the treaties to which it is a signatory, by making provision for War Resisters to have sanctuary in Canada; and

Be it further resolved: That the Vancouver and District Labour Council support War Resisters such as Jeremy Hinzman, Brandon Hughey, Dave Sanders and others seeking refuge in Canada.

No to the Safe Streets Act

The second resolution dealt with the rights of poor people in BC under the BC Liberal government. The "Safe Streets Act", passed in the fall of 2004, takes aim at some of the most vulnerable people in BC. It criminalizes panhandling, 'squeegeeing' and even 'trespassing' in parking lots in a desperate attempt to displace poor and homeless people within cities and towns throughout BC. With their resolution against this act, the VDLC recognizes that attacks on poor and homeless people by Gordon Campbell are attacks on all of the working class in BC. The resolution reads:

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Free Justin Goodman!

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Goodman was convicted of "assault on a peace officer" and "assisting escape from lawful custody." On December 7th he was sentenced to 90 days in jail.

In the flight of Kobra Nateghi Immigration Canada saw the faces of the ten thousand refugees that they deported in 2003 and in Justin Goodman they saw an example to be made. In the judge's pronouncement condemning Justin to 90-days in jail he cited "deterrence and denunciation" as the main justification for the sentence. Just what did he mean to deter and denounce by this decision? There has been no rash of dramatic escapes of refugees from airports since Kobra broke free in 2003. In fact, there has not been one single repetition of this means of avoiding deportation anywhere in Canada.

It is not the individual escape of any single refugee that the judge was seeking to deter and denounce, it is the dignity, resistance, confidence and organization of refugees and oppressed people that the judge sought to strike down. The night of her escape with the advice of her legal council Kobra turned

herself back in to immigration. In order to intimidate and scare refugees throughout Canada and to try to suppress their dignified resistance Immigration Canada deported her and her son the very next day.

With Justin Goodman in his jail cell and with refugees in detention centres across the country all working, poor and oppressed people must stand against these intimidation tactics. We must fight against the criminalization of protest and dissent and defend the right of immigrants, refugees and all working and oppressed people to organize for their rights against the reactionary attacks of the government of Canada. Today, in defense of these fundamental rights, we must demand: FREE JUSTIN GOODMAN!

Send a letter of protest to demand 'Free Justin Goodman' to: Attorney General Geoff Plante, PO Box 9044 STN PROV GOVT, Victoria BC; V8W 9E2

Send a letter of support to Justin Goodman at: Justin Raymond Goodman (CS# 05645338) c/o Fraser Regional Correctional Centre (Unit 1D); PO Box 1500 Maple Ridge BC V2X 7G3

Security Certificates:

The Government's Racist Witch-Hunt War in Canada

By Ivan Drury

"[Security Certificates are constitutional] in terms of striking the right balance between national security and human rights." - Anne McLellan, Minister of Public Safety, December 10th 2004

Right now Mohammad Mahjoub (June 2000 to present), Mohammad Jabbalah (August 2001 to present), Hassan Almrei (October 2001 to present), Mohammad Harkat (December 2002 to present) and Adil Charkaoui (May 2003 to present) are sitting in jails in Ontario without charges, evidence or the right of appeal. Why do we mention all these men together here? What do these five men have in common? They are all Muslim, all from Arab or

Middle Eastern countries, all refugees or permanent residents in Canada, all have been arrested on 'Security Certificates' and all are undergoing secret trials in the name of Canadian 'national security' based on the accusation that they are involved or associated with 'terrorism.' The arrest and continued detention of these five men is significant because of two very key points:

First, because of who they are - Arab and Muslim men.

Second, because of how they have been attacked - through the absolute loss of their rights *because* of who they are.

What is a Security Certificate?

"Past cases have revealed that the security pretext has been used to justify withholding newspaper clippings, shadowy

sources and double and triple hearsay -- sloppy evidence that would be flatly rejected under regular rules of law. Without a fair and vigorous chance to cross-examine, a fair trial is impossible." -Montreal Gazette, May 28th 2003

Security Certificate legislation, embedded in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, is a blank cheque for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to arrest and detain any non-citizen in Canada on the *suspicion* that they are involved in or associated with 'terrorism.' The certificates are unilaterally approved by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Anne McLellan and are not accountable to parliamentary oversight. CSIS is not required to provide evidence,



Human Rights Day demonstration in Toronto, December 10th 2004.

charges or complete allegations against the person who has been arrested and secret evidence is

presented to a CSIS-selected judge behind closed doors. The defendant's lawyer does not have the right to cross examine any witness or counter evidence presented. The judge only requires 'reasonable grounds' to believe that the 'facts' presented might exist. There is no right to appeal.

On December 10th - International Human Rights Day - one of the Secret Trial Five, Adil Charkaoui, brought his case before the Federal Court of Appeal to argue that his arrest made on a Security Certificate breaches the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The three-judge panel upheld the December 2003 decision of the Federal Court of Canada that Security Certificates are constitutional. The 87-page ruling stated; "the appellant has been unable to demonstrate that the procedures for reviewing the reasonableness of the security certificate issued against him... do not meet the requirements of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

This decision was made despite the absolute deprivation of Charkaoui's rights as guaranteed under the Charter because his status is *only* that of a permanent resident of Canada. The Federal Court of Appeal upheld this decision to deny these rights to Charkaoui and all non-citizens in order to strengthen the Canadian ruling class' establishment of a legal, political and economic apartheid in Canada. This is apartheid because there is one set of laws and rights for Canadian citizens and another lesser set for immigrants and refugees.

Where did Security Certificates come from?

Security Certificate legislation was originally introduced in 1991, into the Immigration Act of that time. The government's reasons for introducing security certificates then were very similar to their continued use today.

The end of the 1980's saw the crest of a rising recession in Canada. The government of Canada charted a "sharp jump in unemployment between 1989 and 1991" that they forecasted

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Toronto Muslims Say No To Racial Profiling!

Excerpts From a Press Conference Against Racial Profiling in Canada

By Ivan Drury

On October 3rd, a hundred Muslims from the Saleh Al-Deen Mosque gathered outside the CSIS headquarters in downtown Toronto and marched to the CN Tower to take pictures and film the world famous 'tallest tower in the world'.

This seemingly everyday act was a protest organized by the Saleh Al-Deen Mosque against the racial profiling and arrest of Kassim Mohamed. Kassim Mohamed is a Muslim man who was arrested as a suspected 'terrorist' by the RCMP and then released to the police in Egypt, where he was held in prison for 2 weeks while his home in Cairo was raided, all for taking pictures of the tower. Swarmed by a media circus, Kassim Mohamed and others from the Saleh Al-Deen Mosque explained why they were there and why the arrest of Kassim Mohamed is significant for Muslims and for all poor, working and oppressed people in Canada.

Fire This Time was there to stand with Kassim Mohamed and the Saleh Al-Deen Mosque in defiance of racial profiling, the racist arrest and the continuing harassment of Muslims by the imperialist government of Canada. The following comments were taken from different members of the Mosque in the media scrum in front of the CSIS headquarters and at the base of the CN Tower. These brief comments shed some light on the sort of harassment that Muslims in Canada suffer. It also shows that active solidarity with Muslims is needed from all poor, working and people in Canada.

News reporter: Mr. Mohammed, I know this is a sensitive issue for you but can you tell us why you



Human Rights Day demonstration in Toronto, December 10th 2004.

were taking pictures of the CN Tower?

Kassim Mohamed, arrestee: Like anybody else, my family wanted to see the CN Tower, the greatest tower in the world. They had not seen Toronto in a long time and wanted to see the improvements, like anybody else. They wanted to punish me, it was not right.

News reporter: What does it mean to you to have all these people out here today supporting you?

Kassim Mohamed: I don't feel like they are supporting me, I feel like they are supporting human rights. Someone has been abused, then someone should stand up and say that. What they are doing is not in support of me, it is in support of human rights.

News reporter: What message do you want our viewers to take away from the demonstration today?

Kassim Mohamed: They should

join them. This should not only be a rally for Toronto or for Canada, the whole world should join them. They say 'zero tolerance for terrorist attacks,' there should be zero tolerance for Muslim abuse. I think that should be a law in Canada and in the world. It is not fair what Muslims are going through, we are not terrorists, Muslims are not terrorists, Islam is a religion where we believe in one god, not in killing. Islam was brought for justice in the world.

News reporter: It wasn't actually the videotaping, the reason he was stopped? He doesn't know why, he said.

Dr. Ali Hindi, President of Saleh Al-Deen Mosque: Actually the RCMP said that it was the videotaping. When you say something is illegal, it is illegal because the law says it is illegal. There is a disparity for us as Muslims. We will end up with two kinds of citizenship, the Muslim citizenship will be like a second class

citizenship, because there are certain actions we can't do. We can't take certain courses, we can't get certain training, we can't walk on the beach in the morning, and we can't take pictures of the CN Tower or some landmark... now it's become like some legislation just for us.

Fire This Time: Can you please explain how this case of the CN Tower arrest is not isolated but is part of a bigger problem of racial profiling in Canada?

Mohammed Haleem, member of Saleh Al-Deen Mosque: We shouldn't deny that there is a problem now. Some people look with suspicious eyes on anyone who has a Muslim name or comes from the Middle East. We have to be frank enough to face the problem and see it in the open. You can't hide it.

Fire This Time: What can non-Muslims do to support Muslims against racial profiling?

Mohammed Haleem: I think we live in the same country. If they violate one community's rights now, they can violate yours next. If you're talking democracy, talk real democracy, not the customized democracy or a fabricated one. A person is innocent until he is proven guilty. Now a certain category of a certain people are guilty until proven innocent. Is our democracy that fragile to collapse just like that? Everybody, Muslim or non-Muslim, it is of no relevance here, should keep democracy and keep it working. Otherwise it is a dictatorship and we are no better than Saddam Hussein himself. Everybody is happy that he is in jail, everybody, including his people. But let's not do whatever he used to do before. Let's all take a stand; Muslims and non-Muslims, rights and correctness should be prevalent everywhere.

“Don’t Ask Don’t Tell”

Interview with Lena Olin, An organizer with the Toronto DADT Campaign

By Shannon Bundock

FTT: What is the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell Campaign in Toronto, what are the objectives?

Lena: In Toronto, the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell (DADT) Campaign is made up of a loose, and growing, collection of individuals, groups and organizations that would like to see the city institute a “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy for all city workers. This policy would prohibit city workers from inquiring about people’s immigration status, and would also prevent them from passing on any information regarding immigration status should they learn it. Federal immigration authorities currently rely heavily on city workers, such as police and people that work at shelters, medical centres and schools to report people without status to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). What this effectively does is prevent people from being able to access city services for fear of deportation and/or detention. Circumstances arise regularly such as women facing domestic violence being deported after going to the police for help, and families being reported to CIC upon attempting to



enroll their kids in school. A “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy would not stop the obscene and shameful practices of detention and deportation, however it is the hope of supporters of the campaign that such a policy will improve the lives of people living in Toronto without status through the ability to access city services that meet basic human needs as well as helping to diminish the number of people who are detained and deported.

FTT: How does denying Municipal services impact ‘non-status’ people? What

kind of services are we talking about?

Lena: By far the highest numbers of reports by city workers to CIC about people’s status come from the police. Whether it is due to a situation of attempting to get protection from a violent situation, or simply due to getting stopped while driving down the street, prohibiting the exchange of information about immigration status between the Toronto Police and Citizenship and Immigration will be key for the safety of people living without

status. Other services that often require individuals to disclose their immigration status include shelters, many health centres, schools, social housing and food banks. The ability to access these types of very basic services without fear is vital to non-status communities, and thus all communities city wide.

FTT: Since September 11th, there has been regressive legislation in Canada attacking ‘non-status’ people, refugees and immigrants, with Bill C-18, Bill C-11 and increased arrests, detainments and deportations. What role does the DADT campaign have for fighting against these attacks and building solidarity with ‘non-status’ communities?

Lena: Many people working towards a “Don’t Ask, Don’t

Tell” policy in Toronto support regularization of all non-status people living within Canada and work towards that end. However, what we’ve seen since September 11th is a drastic increase in the numbers of people filling detention centres and being deported into situations where their lives are at risk, sometimes as a direct result of being targeted by Canadian officials for deportation. People have more reason than ever to live in fear of their immigration status being found out. All concerned members of the community need to take action to ensure that all members of our communities can access services that meet their basic human needs.

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Violent Attacks on Organizers are Attacks on all Oppressed People

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The decisive factor in the survival strategy of all imperialist countries today is war and occupation, resulting in an international rampage of destruction and plunder. Therefore the decisive focus of progressive movements for social justice today must be *against the division of oppressed people* along the lines of country, race, religion, gender or anything else that gets in the way of our unity against these attacks on all of us.

It is not some idealized and abstract organizational “unity of the left” that is needed but an international political unity of oppressed people against the all-too-common destructive forces of imperialism. The chief responsibility of progressive people at this time is to fight against the racist and chauvinist divisions that are being driven between us by ruling classes in every imperialist country. To do this we must fight to open space for oppressed people to organize, gain experiences from this organizing, learn from successes and mistakes, and grow.

The use of violence against oppressed people within this development is alien to this process, is strictly against progress and, by silencing the voices of oppressed people, is a reactionary attack against all oppressed people.

The Destruction of Oppressed People’s Movements in North

American History

Throughout history in North America, whenever oppressed people have faced heavy attacks under imperialism, they have organized themselves in response, just as we must today. However, just as these people have gained experience and begun to learn how to *effectively* organize themselves based on their own mistakes, they have been cut down. In many cases activists, organizers and leaders of these movements have been cut down directly by the US and Canadian ruling classes - like the Canadian army in Oka against the Mohawk Warrior’s Society, the GOON Squads and the FBI in Wounded Knee against the American Indian Movement (AIM), the FBI and US police forces against the Black Panther Party (BPP) and many other instances.

However these cases have not had the same long-term destructive effect upon these movements as has violence directed against oppressed people in these movements by other oppressed people. Violence within the working class movement has a shameful and destructive history and has almost always served to destroy that movement. The ruling class also knows this to be true and have successfully used oppressed people against each other to manufacture our own destruction on many tragic occasions:

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The Daily Fight Against Police Brutality in the Downtown Eastside: Introducing Fire This Time’s Monthly Report on the PIVOT Legal society

The daily fight against police brutality in the Downtown Eastside:

Introducing Fire This Time’s monthly report on the PIVOT Legal society

The Pivot legal society formed in the fall of 2000 with the mandate “to advance the interests and improve the lives of marginalized people through the use of law reform, legal education and strategic legal action.”

Since then, this team of volunteer lawyers and law students has made a name for themselves with oppressed people in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside as a group that can be depended upon in the daily fight against police brutality and for justice. Their work has included an anti-police brutality affidavit campaign, collecting and publishing 50 affidavits chronicling cases of police brutality and harassment, advocating and winning the ‘Health Contact Centre’, and defending the Vancouver Area Network of

Drug Users’ (VANDU) needle exchange. They have launched a ‘rights card’ campaign to inform people victimized by police brutality on what their rights are, and have taken legal action against the police to strengthen and empower oppressed people and to uphold their rights when they are abused by the police.

Through this work Pivot has made enemies as well as friends. Cops as high up as Vancouver Police Chief Jamie Graham have attacked Pivot and its executive director, John Richardson with complaints to the police board, the media, the law society of BC and directly through harassment and arrest.

In December, John Richardson took the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) to court, charging them with wrongful arrest for his arrest at the Woodward’s Squat in 2002 and for ongoing slander, defamation of character and harassment. The decision of the court will be heard in February.

We believe that the work of Pivot in defense of poor people’s rights against police brutality and harassment is of interest to all poor, working and oppressed people and is an important part of the movement for social justice in Canada. Recognizing the importance of the day-to-day work of Pivot for poor, working and oppressed people in Vancouver, especially when faced with direct attack by the VPD themselves, Fire This Time will be running a “Pivot Report” in every issue to follow the ongoing work of the Pivot legal society. We encourage all progressive-minded people to support Pivot and continue the fight against police brutality and for justice for all people in Canada.

For more information on the Pivot legal society, visit: www.pivotlegal.org and see the interview with John Richardson in Fire This Time issue #2 (March 2003).

The Destruction of Oppressed People's Movements in North America

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The Black Panthers (1969)

"In order to fully capitalize on upon BPP and United Slaves Incorporated (USI) differences as well as to exploit all avenues of creating further dissention in the ranks of the BPP, recipient offices are instructed to submit imaginative and hard-hitting counterintelligence measures aimed at crippling the BPP." – Memo from FBI Director Hoover to 14 field officers as part of the famed 'Cointelpro' program, November 1968

The Black Panther Party for Self Defense (BPP) formed in Oakland in 1966 amidst the racist suppression of black people by the US ruling class. Through the following years the BPP rose into the immediate vacuum of leadership in the Black liberation movement following the murder of Malcolm X by members of the Nation of Islam in 1965 (another example of how destructive violence amongst oppressed people can be).

Within two years the BPP had expanded into a national party and was suffering from heavy persecution by the FBI in every part of the country they were established. However, it was not only the shooting and mass imprisonment of Panther leaders that led to the collapse of the party. The FBI's counter intelligence program (Cointelpro) that sought to turn Panthers against other Black liberation organizations



Members of the Black Panther Party, circa 1968.

and ultimately against each other, was more responsible for that.

Violent rivalries and deadly shootouts between the Panthers and the United Slaves Incorporated (USI) in San Diego and smoldering rivalries between the Panthers and the Blackstone Rangers in Chicago led to internal rivalries of a similar intensity. In 1969 two leaders of

the Southern California chapter of the BPP were killed in a shootout with USI and the chapter all but collapsed. This rivalry swiftly spread throughout the entire BPP like a cancer.

The inter-movement violence opened up space, not for Black people to gain experience and organize, but for the FBI to further infiltrate and intervene in

the Panthers. By the mid-1970's the party was so discredited within the Black community and the leadership was either dead, imprisoned or so wrenched apart by fear and paranoia that the party disappeared altogether and left only a legend in its wake.

The American Indian Movement and Anna Mae Pictou-Aquash (1975)

"Those who executed Anna Mae Aquash have no place within the American Indian Movement and neither do those who conspired with them. By their cowardly and disgusting actions they threaten to subvert all of the good work we, as grassroots members of the American Indian Movement, have toiled for, and we should not allow this handful of individuals to tarnish all that we have achieved and continue to struggle for." – Tim Lane Woman, leader of Montana AIM, September 25, 2003

The American Indian Movement (AIM) formed in response to the need for Indigenous people to organize for their self-determination against the racist-colonialist US ruling class in 1968. Because of the vacuum in leadership or organization for indigenous people, AIM chapters spread rapidly through the country.

Along with the success of AIM in its early years of fighting for dignity and justice for Indigenous people, came the severe repression of the US ruling class against the uprising

of oppressed people. Successes were visible in AIM's numerous actions, from The Trail of Broken Treaties march on Washington to the 19 month long occupation of Alcatraz Island. The attacks from the ruling class could be seen in the 'climate of fear' that almost all AIM members recount when talking or writing about those early days.

This climate of fear was inserted in AIM by the FBI's Cointelpro program. It was especially prevalent in South Dakota where the Wounded Knee standoff and the Pine Ridge shootout took place. The Attorney General of South Dakota, William Janklow said in 1975, "The only way to deal with the Indian problem in South Dakota is to put a gun to AIM leaders' heads and pull the trigger." Through direct targeting and attacks by the state, federal police and the FBI sponsored and armed "GOON" squads, AIM organizers in South Dakota faced the very real constant threat of death. This led to an intense climate of fear and a paranoia and distrust between organizers in AIM.

It was in this constant climate of fear that Anna Mae Aquash was 'bad jacketed' by Cointelpro (the FBI spread a rumour through AIM that she was an informer). At the end of 1975 she was shot through the back of the head, execution-style, and thrown from a cliff by members of AIM. Anna Mae had been a widely respected emerging grassroots leader of AIM and her cold-blooded murder shook the foundations of the Indigenous movement throughout North America.

It was not only Anna Mae who was thrown from a cliff in 1975. With the death of Anna Mae, democracy and openness in AIM completely gave way to a climate of fear and paranoia engineered by the US ruling class and carried out by AIM organizers. Today the murder of Anna Mae is still unsolved and unresolved and still weighs heavily on the capacity of the American Indian Movement and Indigenous people to organize against colonialism, racism and capitalism.

The Students for a Democratic Society Split (1969)

By the end of the 1960's, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) had been in the forefront of a growing student movement against the Vietnam war for half a decade. At their annual convention in 1960, the national organization with a membership of thousands split into two politically hostile factions.

The convention ended with the "Armed Struggle" faction rising up and walking out of the hall, declaring themselves the "real" SDS. The faction that stayed behind declared the same.

For almost the entire following year the two sides fought each other in the streets with baseball bats and chains and raided each other's meetings with the same weapons. In the course of the brutal factional fight, the Armed

Jumbo Glacier Resort, Democracy & Globalization

How BC Liberals are Destroying the Environment for Profit

By D'Arcy McRae

The Jumbo Glacier Resort (JGR) proposal for those who haven't heard about it is a controversial four season ski resort development project that has sparked heightened debate in the Kootenay Region of British Columbia.

The BC Liberals recently gave JGR environmental approval after 13 years of deliberation with different provincial governments, local stakeholders and environmental groups. If the East Kootenay Regional District approves the zoning in the last step of the process the BC Liberal's environmental thumbs up will have paved the way for tax dollars to be spent on building a highway to Jumbo. The highway will cross 33 avalanche paths and will cost more than the budget for avalanche control at Rogers Pass in Glacier National Park. All of this effort and impact will allow Pheidias Ltd. to develop and 'start from scratch' 55 kms from Invermere (closest town to Jumbo) in prime grizzly habitat where 45-60 bears, not to

mention countless other species, are threatened.

I live in Golden, BC and recently attended a regional tourism conference. Local MLA Wendy McMahon's opening address focused on partnerships between local communities and government. In her address McMahon mentioned that the Mt. Mackenzie Resort proposal was supported by the community of Revelstoke. Unfortunately, McMahon didn't talk much about the BC Liberal's decision to give the Jumbo Glacier Resort (JGR) project Environmental approval, only stating that, "It's far from over". All over the Kootenays there is opposition, in particular Invermere where 90% of residents oppose the resort. Has McMahon represented her constituents in conveying to Gordon Campbell our region's dissent regarding JGR?

Why did Gordon Campbell ignore huge public outcry in the form of thousands of letters, phone calls and e-mails? Why did he ignore scientists representing both sides of the debate? The answer is obvious. The BC Liberals support foreign investment for short

term economic gain. The BC Liberals fulfilled their end of the bargain and protected their relationship with the proponents while passing the buck on to the Regional District.

Globalization is the implementation of public policies and international agreements that provide greater safeguards for investors and private property. It does this while removing restraints to the free movement of goods, money, and corporations in search of economic opportunities on a worldwide scale. (1) Jumbo Glacier Resort is a microcosm of Economic Globalization.

JGR proponents did their best to convince residents that the communities of the region would benefit from 'trickle down' economic growth. They distributed glossy brochures in an attempt to legitimize their right to be in the Jumbo valley. Where the proponents of JGR envision a vibrant economy and mitigated environmental factors, citizen's movements like the Jumbo Conservation Society have seen the power to make decisions shifted away from the community to foreign

investors. They have also seen the government's dedication to the pursuit of short-term profit and disregard for human and environmental concerns.

In a democracy the role of government is to be accountable and listen to the public. In the case of Jumbo that hasn't happened. If the Regional District approves the zoning, JGR will make a few resort developers rich. This will come at the cost of local recreation values, existing resorts and RK Heli-skiing, a company that has been around for 30+ years and employs 60 people. In an interview with CBC, Tom Brinkerhoff owner of RK stated, "80% of our commercial use is concentrated in the Jumbo Valley where the proposed development will be. Close proximity to our base at Panorama makes it our only bad weather option, without this crucial part of our tenure we will be forced out of business".

Globalization hits hardest in debt-ridden developing nations. In Bolivia a mass movement of peasants and workers protested the privatization of

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Towards a Unified, Dignified and Effective Movement

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Struggle faction split into the "Revolutionary Youth Movement" and then the "Revolutionary Youth Movement II" and then into small underground cells calling themselves the "Weather Underground." What remained of the other half of SDS also quietly dwindled away into the early 1970's.

By the time the mass antiwar movement erupted in the mid-1970's SDS was gone. Unable or unwilling to work out or discuss their differences in democratic ways, SDS degenerated into small, hard cliques that would not tolerate the existence of any other groups. During the sharpest escalation of the war in Vietnam and the corresponding sharpest rise in antiwar sentiment amongst young people and all working people in the US, young people in the movement attacked other young people in the movement violently. This violence amongst oppressed people shut the doors of the movement to tens of thousands of young people (at the time almost a third of all college students in the US self-identified as 'revolutionary' in some way), and diminished and destroyed the movement. The experience and hard won lessons of a decade of antiwar organizing was lost, torn from the lives and struggles of thousands of young people who were demoralized or driven out of the movement.

Violent Attacks on Organizers are Attacks on all Oppressed People

The Black Panther Party, the American Indian Movement and Students for a Democratic Society were all organizations of oppressed people dedicated to fighting against the oppression these communities face under capitalism and specifically under the US ruling class. Historically these communities of oppressed people have been voiceless and held down under capitalism. The development of these oppressed people's organizations opened up new and critical space for oppressed people to organize themselves and gain experience to become leading participants in the overall class struggle in the US.

The destruction of these movements, while engineered by the ruling class by all means in all cases, did not come about just through direct attacks by the ruling class and their institutions. As we have seen in the examples listed above, violent attacks on organizers and oppressed people within the working class movement - by other oppressed people in the movement - were amongst the most damaging ingredients in the reactionary campaigns launched against these oppressed people's movements. By turning oppressed people against each other in such destructive ways, the ruling class was able to close the space necessary for debate and discussion within the movement and shut the doors of experience that had been previously open to oppressed people.

This is why we call these attacks 'police-like tactics' and 'methods that are alien to the working class movement.' It is not a matter of being against violence in



principle; we are not proposing to take up that discussion here. In fact, we believe that when oppressed people are attacked with violence, whether by the ruling class directly or by anyone, it is necessary to defend ourselves by *any means necessary* as Malcolm X said. But when violence is used against oppressed people and their organizations, historically it has the effect of limiting and ultimately destroying the movement by terrorizing the very people who must actively lead the

movement. It is the fundamental task of organizers at this time, as in all examples laid out above, to broaden the movement by opening space for oppressed people to get involved, gain experience and learn how to effectively organize ourselves to win the battle against the tyranny of global capitalism and imperialism.

In Defense of the Principles of Working Class Struggle (2005)

For the movement of oppressed, working and poor people in

Vancouver and all around the world, the dawn of 2005 has great significance. The beginning of the 21st century has not only brought a new era of imperialist war and occupation, this era has also brought opportunity for all oppressed people to experience a higher level of class struggle and to learn from it.

The great booming antiwar movement of 2003 and the near-general-strike position of the Hospital Employees Union strike in May of 2004 are both examples of flash points in movements that oppressed people must learn from. In both instances, a more experienced and battle hardened working class, with a stronger and more representative leadership, would have been able to carry those mass movements of working people much further against capitalism and against the imperialist and neo-liberal agenda of the Canadian ruling class. However, lacking these critical elements of experience and independent working class leadership, these movements were stopped short.

But these opportunities are not lost forever to the past. The era of international capitalist crisis is only deepening and attacks on oppressed people internationally (like in Iraq) and on oppressed people at home (like with the hospital workers) are bound to continue. With these attacks, further mass scale conflicts are equally bound to arise. The most important and decisive factor for oppressed people is to learn from the successes and failures of these movements that we have directly experienced and apply these lessons to politically prepare for the coming battles.

The December 2nd attacks on Ivan Drury, the Fire This Time newspaper and its editorial board are a terrible reminder of the mistakes that have led to the destruction of movements that have come before us. The fall of the Panthers, AIM and SDS must serve as beacons of warning for oppressed people today. With our eyes fixed on the stars, we must absorb these mistakes, learn from them and apply them to the work that must be done today to build a movement against the war on oppressed people at home and abroad. To build this movement effectively, the principles of working class struggle must be upheld and defended, firmly and uncompromisingly. We are fighting for the unity of all working, poor and oppressed people in the world and against all methods that divide and weaken oppressed people's expression and growth in this movement.

We must be free to publish and distribute our ideas and to argue and debate with each other politically when we have differences. We must fight for the right of all oppressed people to voice their ideas, thoughts, programs of action and dreams. The freedom to organize and publish these ideas is fundamental to the right to organize ourselves effectively as an entire community of progressive people that must stand united against reactionary attacks.

Towards a unified, dignified and effective movement and against the harassment, assault and degradation of all poor, working and oppressed people in the world... we will win!

DADT: Defending Refugee & Immigrants Rights

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FTT: According to the literature put out by Toronto DADT, there have been cities across the US that have implemented DADT policies on one level or another. What will the impact be on both 'non-status' people living in Toronto and the governments provincially and federally if this policy is implemented in Toronto?

Lena: Government reports cite that as many as 200,000 people across Canada may be living without status, and given the source I figure that the number is likely far higher than that. If Toronto can set a national precedent by instating this policy, then hopefully other cities will be able to follow suit. This policy has the potential to directly impact the lives of a substantial percentage of the Canadian population, and I can only see the greater impact as being beneficial both economically and in building stronger and healthier communities.

FTT: As far as I know the

Toronto DADT campaign is planning a public launch on January 14th, what have you done to bring the campaign to this point and how has your initial organizing been received?

Lena: Yes, there is a large "social event" planned for January 14th here in Toronto at which information about the policy will be presented and all of the various community members that have been supporting the campaign can come together and celebrate the official launch. The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" campaign arose out of a list of ten demands to the city of Toronto which was developed by the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty last spring. Since that time we have been working solidly to develop a strong community base for the campaign with the ultimate goal of bringing it to present to city council for approval during the course of the next year. Our focus has been on garnering support in various communities around the city, and having people that will be directly affected by such a policy

drive the campaign as much as possible. A large number of talks, smaller discussions and presentations have taken place in various areas of the city with a wide variety of different interested groups and organizations around Toronto signing on. A complete list of current organizations that are endorsing the campaign is on the campaign website at <http://www.dadttoronto.org>.

FTT: After January 14th, what is the strategy for Toronto DADT, how close are you to bringing the question to Toronto City Council?

Lena: We are looking at this campaign as a long term project. It is very important that it not be presented to city council prematurely, before there is enough community support behind it and before details and any complications can be worked out. As support for the campaign has been growing, various concerns have been addressed, and details of the final ways that a DADT policy can be implemented are becoming more and more refined. We are now at a place

where individual city councilors are supporting the proposed policy, and it is our hope that before the year is out the city council will have passed a motion to put the policy into practice.

FTT: Any final comments?

Lena: I have been very excited to hear about the possibility of a similar campaign in Vancouver! Regardless of which city does it first, the setting of a Canadian precedent for this policy will help in a huge way towards having such a policy standard practice in all cities in Canada. If anyone has any questions about the campaign or if you know people in Toronto that would be interested in taking part in organizing and/or endorsing the campaign, I would encourage people to go to the website at <http://www.dadttoronto.org> or send email to info@dadttoronto.org. We will have access to city services without fear!

Thank you Lena and we wish you a great campaign and success.

Mobilization Against War and Occupation: Year One

What We Have Accomplished and What Tasks Lie Ahead

By Kira Koshelanyk

In September 2003 a new force emerged in the antiwar movement: a powerful, consolidated and united resistance from the Iraqi people against the US/UK occupation of their country. With this rise in active and united opposition to the occupation came a renewed energy and inspiration for the antiwar movement around the world. The movement began to reorganize itself. Vancouver was no exception to this worldwide rejuvenation. Out of the momentum of the Lower Mainland-wide Student Week Against War 2003 came Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), an antiwar, anti-occupation coalition of over 50 endorsing groups including Indigenous groups, third world groups, women's organizations and Students' Unions. While the resistance to occupation in Iraq has continued to grow over the last year, MAWO and the antiwar movement in Vancouver have also developed to become a real force organizing in solidarity with the struggle of the people of Iraq and with people in struggle the world over. In thirteen months MAWO has organized 3 major conferences, 2 antiwar film festivals, 13 rallies and over 75 forums, film showings and campus events.

MAWO's Action Program and Strategic Demands

The backbone of MAWO's activity has been the development of a strategic action program. To effectively extend people's unity along with their opposition to war and occupation, MAWO's actions have all taken place under the banner and demand: "Self-Determination for All Oppressed Nations!"

The right to self-determination, or the right of oppressed nations to have complete control over their destiny, is an inalienable and basic human right. This demand also has a major strategic significance for all working and poor people. This is because the main thing that all oppressed people have in common under imperialist occupation is that they suffer from the lack of self-determination. In demanding self-determination for all oppressed nations we are showing oppressed people that since the forces which oppress us have the same root, then each fight for freedom is connected and each victory is a victory for all. This demand takes the solidarity that millions of people around the world feel with the Iraqi people and extends that to show that if we feel solidarity and sympathy with them than we can also connect with the struggle of Palestinians and Afghans and Indigenous people...and so on.

In demanding self-determination

for ALL oppressed nations, there is a two-fold gain. Firstly we are making a link between poor and working people, indigenous people, immigrants, refugees, non-status people, people living under war and occupation, and people from the third world. In doing this, we break down barriers and become closer to unity in our action against war and occupation. As 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." From Cheam, to Kabul, to Gaza, a victory for the Iraqi resistance is a gain for all of us against imperialism. In showing



Mobilization Against War and Occupation, March 20 2004.

the commonality between these war and oppression we achieve different situations of imperialist a level of internationalism.

This international solidarity in our demands and opposition to imperialism puts oppressed people worldwide in a stronger position to fight together against it.

Internationalism not International Occupation

During 2004, as the US/UK occupation slipped deeper and deeper into crisis, there were cries from some layers of the antiwar movement and imperialists alike for an "internationalization" and "legitimization" of the occupation of Iraq. That is to say a UN occupation. The advocates of this approach in the antiwar movement argued that a UN occupation would be

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Fighting Canadian Imperialism in the Financial Heart of Canada

An Interview with Mostafa Henaway and Liisa Schofield

By Shannon Bundock & Ivan Drury

Mostafa Henaway and Liisa Schofield are founding members of the **June 30th Organizing Committee** in Toronto. Like many of the new generation antiwar / anti-occupation organizers, they started organizing against war and occupation on a university campus during the US-war-drive leading up to the bombing of Iraq in 2003.

They were two of the main antiwar organizers on the York University campus and were behind the student walk-out against the war that shut that campus down.

In the spring of 2004, they were part of forming the **June 30th Organizing Committee (J30)** to organize a demonstration against the so-called 'handover of power' in Iraq. On September 28th, J30 held their second demonstration and *Fire This Time* attended, marching with hundreds of young people and people from the third world through the streets of downtown Toronto. While in Toronto this fall, we had the opportunity to sit down with them to talk about the antiwar movement in Toronto, the state of war and occupation in Iraq and Palestine and the work they are doing today with the **June 30th Organizing Committee**.

FTT: Why was it necessary for the June 30th Organizing



Mostafa Henaway speaking at Toronto June 30th Organizing Committee Rally.

Committee to form at this time?

Mostafa: I guess the initial reason for the formation of the June 30th Organizing Committee (J30) was frustration with the mainstream antiwar movement and the direction of the antiwar movement. This movement was collapsing due to reasons of not focusing on Canadian imperialism or Canada's role in the occupation of Iraq and Palestine. It's the assumption that Canada is not complicit in these

occupations.

The only way to move forward was to talk about Canada's role. And also to emphasize Canada's economic foreign policy which was the heart behind Canada's position in Iraq, not sending troops but sending the fourth largest amount of weapons of any country to Iraq, for the occupation forces. There was a real frustration and a need for a coalition or organizing committee to come together. Also, we saw June 30th itself as a

very significant day, in terms of the supposed handover of Iraq. We saw it as a day that should be demonstrated against, to continue to highlight that there is an occupation, not even a puppet government really, but a continuation of the occupation. That's why we called it "the day America hands Iraq over to America."

Liisa: I think mostly a lot of the mainstream antiwar coalitions

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MAWO in Action: Active Solidarity

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a softer occupation, a “nicer” occupation for the Iraqi people. So they were not even arguing for an end to the occupation but for a different occupation. This *approach* comes from the false impression that the UN is not a body of competing imperialists all waiting to get their hands in the well of Iraq’s resources. This line plays directly into the hands of imperialists because a UN or a “multinational” occupation is not sovereignty for the Iraqi people. A multinational occupation means that there are simply more imperialist countries sharing the spoils of war. It means that there would simply be more countries dividing up the wealth of Iraq and carrying it out the door.

Recognizing that occupation *is* occupation, by any name or by any soldier or any force, has been an important step for the Vancouver antiwar movement. Along with demands of “No US/UK Occupation!” came demand: “No UN Occupation!” In January of 2004, MAWO organized a demonstration with exactly this political focus and has integrated it into our work. This demand is based on internationalism and solidarity with the Iraqi people for whom there is no difference between occupation forces with different colour tanks or uniforms occupation *is* occupation.

Building a Healthy, Inclusive, Militant Organization

Building Mobilization Against War and Occupation has primarily involved carrying out an action program for the unity and full sovereignty for oppressed nations, through campaigns, mobilizations and cultural events. In order to forge this new movement, a new leadership and organization had to emerge.

MAWO has been built on the principles of inclusion, democratic process and affirmative action, especially in developing its political organizers which are

mainly youth, women, people of colour. What has really developed has been the leadership of those who are most marginalized by society and then again in status-quo political organizing. These are the voices of youth, students, people of colour, Indigenous people, women, immigrants and refugees. These are the voices of

backgrounds and beliefs to unite against war and occupation. And further, decision-making power is equally distributed in our hands. In MAWO, this takes place in the form of truly democratic decision-making, wherein each person who attends the meeting has the right to vote upon attending. In order to carry out the building of an

imperialist war and occupation is not confined to Iraq.

In advancing and developing the politics of the antiwar movement, we have seen the movement’s modest grow and radicalization. For MAWO this has been because of a method of organizing and educating that has been very successful in connecting with a

understanding of imperialism. Further, the campaign against Canadian imperialism has led to a more popular understanding of the Indigenous “question”. Indigenous people in Canada have fought for their right to sovereignty over their affairs, resources and land for over 500 years and so exposing the Canadian state’s colonial foundation is essential in demanding an end to occupations internationally.

MAWO’s method of movement building has been based on maintaining dynamic mobilizations and frequent educational and cultural events. In this period of lower momentum for the antiwar movement, MAWO is focused on political preparation. This preparation means spending this period to work on expanding education through forums, campaigns, and events on campuses while maintaining strong and consistent mobilizations. It is when we are in motion and when we are in the streets that people realize their power and so regular rallies and demonstrations are necessary to activate and extend this feeling of active unity.

While MAWO has worked on broadening the anti-imperialist character of the antiwar movement, there is still the understanding that imperialism is mainly focused on the occupation of Iraq and whether or not the US is able to stabilize it in the face of the Iraqi resistance. By maintaining our focus there, where anti-imperialist forces are the strongest, we put imperialists in a weaker position which in turn puts all oppressed people in a better position.

MAWO in Action: Active Solidarity

What MAWO has established in one year is a solid foundation from which to build an effective, militant movement against the most dangerous threat to the people of the world and the most destructive force in the world: imperialist war and occupation. By fighting against this and organizing directly against the US/UK occupation of Iraq, we are able to expand people’s understanding of imperialism and self-determination. Over the past year, MAWO has maintained a focus which attracts the broadest and most diverse sector of the population and can unite them in action: “US/UK Out of Iraq!” With this strategy for active opposition MAWO will continue building a broader and larger movement against war and occupation and for self-determination.

US/UK Out of Iraq! | All Power to the Iraqi People! | Self Determination Now! | Bring the Troops Home Now!

Self-Determination for Oppressed Nation!))

Kira Koshelanyk is a co-chair of MAWO and also the coordinator of Youth Third World Alliance (Y3WA). She is a worker and the second year student at the Langara College in Vancouver.



MAWO demonstration, January 24th 2004.

those who are strongly impeded by the war at home, such as cuts to social services, tuition increases, etc. This leadership challenges not only imperialist war and occupation, but all status-quo definitions and norms of political activists and organizers. Leadership must reflect the composition of a movement and also the composition of the movement that is to be built. In the mass antiwar movement in the Spring of 2003 and still today, with the conscious elements still working, the composition is mainly of oppressed people, willing to fight despite all odds.

The membership of AWO, remains open to those of all

effective, united front against war and occupation, the establishment of open and inclusive membership and making space for the most marginalized voices to lead, must continue.

Building an Effective Movement Against Imperialist War and Occupation

The role of the global antiwar movement today, with its foundations in the movement against the invasion of Afghanistan and then Iraq is central to the advancement of oppressed people worldwide against imperialist oppression and destruction. While the highest point of people’s understanding of imperialism is around the occupation of Iraq,

broad layer of people on issues that are most commonly supported. In adopting campaigns, such as *Operation: CANADA OUT!* and *Defending War Resisters*, we are approaching people with issues that they can relate to directly and see their connection to in relation to their opposition to the Iraq war. Today, more than 7,000 signatures have been collected against the government of Canada’s imperialist role in the occupations of Haiti and Afghanistan. This is an important development in recognizing that Canada is also an imperialist country, now jockeying for its position alongside the US and others. The result of these campaigns has been an expansion of people’s

Interview with Mostafa Henaway and Liisa Schofield

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were turning everybody’s energy towards the elections, and towards supporting the NDP as a peace loving party, but without talking about Afghanistan because clearly ‘we belong in there.’ Until then all of those energies, including the energy of young people, were just being funneled into the elections and there was no space left to organize on the street or so it seemed.

So we started thinking about organizing for June 30th. We wanted to make space for it and build upon people’s energy, and build people’s capacity.

FTT: What actions have you taken since forming?

Mostafa: On June 30th we organized two pickets in the afternoon against 2 particular corporations, Canada Commercial Corporation (CCC)

which has been involved in terms of being a middle man to the US military and does all of the contracting between Canadian military firms and the US over \$100 thousand. So through the CCC, Canada became the fourth largest arms supplier to the occupation of Iraq.

Then the most recent action we had was on September 28th, the fourth anniversary of the Intifada. It was a day of action in solidarity with the people of Iraq and Palestine. What made it significant was that there was a callout from Mumbai resistance and by Palestinian organizations to make it a day of action in solidarity with the people of Iraq. So, one occupied people were calling an international day of action in solidarity with another occupied people, and that made it very significant.

Also for us it was a very

significant day because it was a very boisterous, very angry, very energetic demonstration that also targeted Canada’s role in the occupation of Palestine, like the Canadian-Israeli Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA). This focus is something very new, something that hasn’t happened yet in terms of the anti-occupation movement here in Canada.

Liisa: It’s also important that we took the call from Palestine and from Iraq, as opposed to taking it from the Coalition to Stop the War, in London, England, or from International ANSWER in the US. We were actually taking the call from groups in Palestine as a day of action. This was a significant shift in terms of where we were coming from.

FTT: How have people in Toronto responded to the focus and organizing of the June 30th Committee?

Mostafa: I think that there has been a positive reception by people in Toronto especially in terms of youth, and people of color. I think that there’s still a lot of education that needs to happen, and I think that’s part of the work of June 30th and direct action is actually a form of education it’s a form of popular education.

So I think that’s also something that we are trying to achieve, and the reception is good. At first it’s a little shocking to people, “Oh Canada’s doing this? Canada’s doing that? Canada’s occupying Haiti?”

I think that all these occupations can be rallied around and I think people are beginning to rally around these occupations. So I think there is a great reception outside the NDP left, but at the same time I think that groups

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June 30th Organizing Committee Interview Cont.

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like Block the Empire [Montreal Quebec], Mobilization Against War and Occupation [Vancouver BC], and June 30th [Toronto] have been actually pushing the social democratic left and I think that slowly but surely people's lives are actually being forced to change around Canada's role in imperialism, and Canada's role in all of these occupations.

FTT: Why do you think it is primarily young people and people from the third world who are organizing with the June 30th Organizing Committee?

Mostafa: I see the mainstream movement gearing their politics towards the NDP and trying to vote the NDP into power. In the states we see the same with "Bush out, Kerry in" type of politics. I think the only way forward, in terms of being disillusioned with electoral politics, is actually being a movement on the streets. I think that youth are frustrated with that. Youth see the only real vehicle for change is on the streets.

In terms of people from the third world, we're talking about occupations that matter, making links between the situation of immigrants here, and relating that back to occupation. It's relating the real struggles that are happening on the ground, talking about the right of return for Palestinians, talking about occupations, it's not just talking about weapons in space... People in the third world can't get guns

and tanks out of their backyard, what are we talking about weapons in space for? I think that's why.

Liisa: I think people in general are hungry for that real analysis, for those real politics to come out when things for so long have been watered down and wishy-washy. The anti-American sentiment that doesn't really connect to our everyday lives here. When you actually come out and draw the links with immigration and poverty and with things that are happening in our faces every day, I think that's what brings the vibrancy, the diversity and the creativity of young people and people from the third world.

FTT: Why is it important for people in Canada, and people in Toronto in particular, to build solidarity with the resistance in Iraq, resistance in Afghanistan, resistance in Haiti, and the resistance of Indigenous Nations in Canada fighting for sovereignty?

Mostafa: If you look at it from the bigger picture, it's the same battle, just different fronts. It's the same government that's attacking poor people here, it's the same government that's attacking immigrants here, it's the same government that's occupying native land here, and Israel, South Africa, all of these are based on Canada's model of racist colonialism. It's based on this project that is North America.

So in terms of standing up in



June 30th Organizing Committee demonstration, September 8th 2004.

solidarity, they're the ones who are fighting our government, fighting the people that make so many people's lives shit, fighting that denial of justice and fighting those divisions between people. They are the ones who are on the front lines of that battle. Of *our* battle, so it's absolutely necessary to stand side by side with all those people who are fighting our government because *we* need to be fighting our government.

FTT: What do you see as the future of the June 30th Organizing Committee in Toronto?

Liisa: Well, we're looking, with

the rumors of Bush coming to town, at organizing solid resistance to that under the banner of "not welcome". Other than that, hopefully we'll be doing a really broad range of educational events across the city and really building a base of support throughout different neighborhoods and different areas of the city. Going into high schools and going into different colleges, and in the spring to be targeting some of those corporations again in a different way that we haven't done before.

Mostafa: I think in terms of what's coming up in the near

future, Iraq is not going to go away, Haiti is only getting worse, it's clear that the elections in Afghanistan were a complete sham, at the same time I'd just like to echo what Liisa said. It's a lot of educational, a lot of dirty day-to-day work to try to build people's capacity and break the silence of Bay street [the main street in Toronto's financial district] to actually put it out in the mainstream, so whether that be through action or whether through education.

FTT: Do you have anything you'd like to add, any final comments?

Mostafa: I guess in terms of the state of Iraq, I think that with Bush's re-election the people in positions of power within imperialism are getting bolder. I think now you're even going to see a bolder regime around immigration in Europe, as well as North America, with more integrated border control and the 'safe third country act'. This act is essentially going to keep immigrants from getting into Canada because they will no longer be able to get here from the US, or any other indirect path. This is one of the most racist pieces of legislation around immigration that has been proposed in along time. However, in the past it was proposed and it was defeated. Not by the left, but by the mainstream people thinking that is was crazy, and that it's completely outrageous and racist. So I think that the state of war and occupation is going to deepen and slowly get worse as the economic crisis gets worse.

Gold just went up three dollars two days ago. The fact that people are no longer willing to accept American dollars is a small insight into what's going to happen in the future. So I think that we need to continue, with that in mind, to build a movement against war and occupation. Now more than any other moment, I think it's critical that we are committed to that and we are serious about it because the challenges towards us are only going to get deeper in the near future.

FTT: Liisa and Mostafa, thank you for your time.

Troops Out Now!

From page 2

Similarly, in Mosul the police chief recently resigned after the vast majority of the city's 5000 police deserted following increased attacks during the assault on Fallujah. To date no more than 1000 of these police have returned to their posts. Clearly the US cannot rely on Iraqis to police themselves under occupation, and this 'Iraqification' so far provides no solution for the quagmire that the US-led occupation faces.

Military Solution?

"It's interesting...if you think about it, you can have all the armor in the world on a tank and a tank can be blown up. And you can have an up-armored humvee and it can be blown up." – Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, addressing US soldiers in Kuwait, December 8th 2004

On December 8th, Rumsfeld came under surprising scrutiny by US soldiers in Kuwait over the quality of their gear. This included their need to regularly rely on substandard spare parts off of already destroyed military vehicles, such as replacement doors for vehicles riddled with bullet holes. A week before this exchange, the Australian defense minister was stranded at the Baghdad airport because no helicopter was available at the time to safely transport the minister to the Australian embassy. This issue of inadequate military resources for sustaining the occupation in Iraq has brought Rumsfeld under heavy criticism, not only from US soldiers, but from high ranking military officials and key advisors to the Bush administration.

In addition to the US army being overstretched materially in Iraq, the morale of the people from the US who have been recruited to maintain the occupation is also being overstretched. At the same time that the US government is requiring more US soldiers to spend longer tours in Iraq, the number of soldiers deserting in Iraq is increasing, while consistently US military recruiters fail to meet their targets for finding fresh blood to serve in Iraq. A recent report that over 5000 US troops have deserted their posts in Iraq since the beginning of the occupation highlights the increasing severity of this problem for US imperialism.

This decrease in morale, combined with the overstretch of military resources and continued Iraqi resistance to the occupation, will either lead to one of two scenarios: the first is a qualitative jump in the rate of US casualties, which averaged at least two killed and fifteen injured per day during the first half of December. The second is that the US dramatically increases military funding and troop levels for the occupation. Either of these scenarios will come at an immense cost for the US government in terms of support for the occupation at home, and will feed the already growing opposition within the US to the continued occupation of Iraq, which was recently highlighted in a poll of people in the US where 56% stated that they believed the US-led war on Iraq was 'not worth it.'

What's the Solution? Troops Out Now!

Regardless of what solutions the US government tries in order to avoid suffering a setback in Iraq, and whether or not any of these 'solutions' for the quagmire in Iraq eventually work for US imperialism, what

is clear to the people of Iraq is that none of these solutions will serve their interests, in the short or long term. All paths of the US-led occupation mean death and destruction for Iraqis, alongside the pillaging of their land, resources, labour, and markets.

The only solution that will benefit the people in Iraq and give them the space to rebuild their country, their lives, and their dignity is an end to the occupation. For people all over the world under attack by the same handful of advanced capitalist countries, who will do whatever it takes to reverse the global economic crisis that they are facing, self-determination for the people of Iraq is the only solution.

The resistance in Iraq that is creating so many problems for a force as mighty as US imperialism is only in its infant stages. Solidarity around the world with this resistance must also grow. It is necessary for all poor, working, and oppressed people in Canada to recognize our own interest in fighting for the self-determination of Iraq. In an era where imperialist rivalry guarantees decades of war and occupation throughout the world, building an international movement for the self-determination of oppress people now will prepare us for the task of decisively challenging and defeating the forces that are currently destroying the lives of people all over the world. We can, and must, make this our solution.

End the Occupation of Iraq!

US/UK Out!

Bring the Troops Home Now!



Iraq, Quagmire for US/UK

MAWO Conference on War and Occupation, A Major Success

By Tamara Hansen
& Kasia Machelak

On November 27th 2004 Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) held its third conference at the Britannia Community Centre entitled, "Iraq, Quagmire for US/UK: Is there an Alternative to Imperialist War and Occupation?" Through out the day the conference was attended by more than 90 people. The conference looked at the global antiwar movement in the context of the current era of war and occupation, and building effective antiwar/anti-occupation actions

and politics in Vancouver.

In the morning session, conference MC, Kasia Machelak, an organizer with MAWO and the coordinator of the Kwantlen Students Against War and Occupation Club (KSAWO), opened the conference. Machelak spoke about how the conference presented an opportunity for people in Vancouver to discuss the issues of war and occupation and get involved in building and organizing.

The program opened with a locally produced film by Raya Sami called "Orphanage". The film documents the producer's recent travels to



Mobilization Against War & Occupation's 3rd conference, November 27th, 2004.

Iraq, where she met with orphans and learned about their situation under occupation.

The first speaker was Tim Louis, a Vancouver City Councilor. Louis' talk entitled, "Bush's Election & the Era of Endless Wars and Occupations" addressed the document, 'Project for a New

American Century'. "When the American army is defeated in Iraq it will be a great victory not just for Iraq, it will be a victory for all of us. It will be a defeat not just for America in Iraq, but much more importantly, it will be a defeat for America worldwide, and it will not just be a defeat for American imperialism, it will be a defeat for

imperialism period." Councilor Tim Louis' talk was followed by a one hour discussion. [You can read an excerpt from Tim Louis' talk in this issue of Fire This Time, on the next page.]

To open the second section, Raya Sami's second film 'Baghdad: City after One Year of Occupation' was shown. The film documents the living situation for Iraqis after one year of occupation and their hopes for their country and their people.

After the film Ali Yerevani, the political editor of Fire This Time newspaper, opened his talk speaking about the US' promise to bring democracy to Iraq. He said, "Occupation essentially and fundamentally enforces power by suppression by direct military operation. Everything under a military occupation is ultimately decided by the top military command and their bosses in the imperialist governments. Interim governments, civilian governments, all are pure nonsense. The simple counter

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Kwantlen Students Against War and Occupation says: **DEFEND WAR RESISTERS!**

By Tamara Hansen
& Kasia Machelak

Kwantlen Students Against War and Occupation (KSAWO) is a new club at Kwantlen College. With strong support from the student body KSAWO formed in October of 2004, in order to bring antiwar organizing opportunities to Kwantlen students. Since historically students have been central in organizing around social justice issues, Kwantlen College is an important place to encourage people's politicization.

Kwantlen students also represent a variety of different elements in the struggle of poor and oppressed people as many are from third world nations or are ESL students who are being exploited with the high costs of post-secondary education. Also, there are many students at Kwantlen who are presently in the Canadian Armed Forces. Because of the diversity of Kwantlen, and how it relates to the situation of war and occupation at home and abroad, KSAWO decided that the War Resisters Campaign would be a good way to begin the club's political organizing on campus.

War Resisters are American soldiers seeking refugee status in Canada. At present we are aware of three separate cases.

The outcome of these cases will set a precedent which will possibly give more war resisting US soldiers the option of coming to Canada without fear of deportation back to the US army or prison. The first of the refugee review hearings was set for December 6th 2004 for US War Resister Jeremy Hinzman. Because of this KSAWO set up an afternoon long petition drive at the end of October to raise awareness on the issue and open discussion around War Resisters on campus. During this petition drive we collected over 148 signatures in support of defending US soldiers' democratic rights and were able to engage in valuable discussions with students on the issues of war, occupation and the anti-war movement.

The first of the three forums was held on Tuesday November 2nd at the Kwantlen Surrey campus in the Fishbowl Café. Over the course of the forum, many people who had come to the café to study became engaged in the forum. Alexis Moore, a first year student and organizer with KSAWO, the next speaker was Kasia Machelak, Kwantlen student and coordinator of KSAWO, during her talk she outlined the cases of Brandon Hughey and Jeremy

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Mobilization Against War and Occupation Celebrates 1 Year Anniversary

By Nicole Burton

On October 31st 2004, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) celebrated its first year in existence as an antiwar coalition in the Lower Mainland and as a part of the global antiwar movement with a cultural night and fundraiser. To a packed house of antiwar activists, students, people of colour, immigrants and refugees; speakers and performers led the evening with song, dance, and the politics of war, occupation, and resistance. These are the politics that MAWO has been organizing around since the coalition's formation on October 29th 2003.

Midway through the night, the festivities calmed down for three speakers to talk about MAWO's formation, its successes and establishments, and its future in organizing against war and occupation. Shannon Bundock, co-chair of Mobilization Against War and Occupation, opened



Vancouver hip-hop crew P.O.S. performing at MAWO fundraiser, November 27th 2004

with her talk entitled, "What is MAWO?" Bundock gave a brief background and history of the coalition, and illustrated the need for effective antiwar movement building by youth, women,

indigenous organizations, student and labour unions. From this Kira Koshelanyk, also the co-chair of MAWO and a student at Langara

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MAWO Emergency Rally Against the Attacks on Fallujah

By Alison Bodine
& Noah Fine

On November 20th, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) held an emergency demonstration in response to the US occupation forces direct military attacks on Fallujah. With the demands: Stop Attacks on Fallujah Now! Bring The Troops Home Now! Self Determination for Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Haiti, and Indigenous Nations in Canada! This demonstration successfully brought the struggles of oppressed people into the streets of Vancouver.

Starting Monday, November 8th the US unleashed a brutal assault on the city and people of Fallujah. They bombed homes, hospitals and mosques with complete disregard for human life. The US is digging itself into a deeper and deeper hole in Iraq and increased the attacks on Fallujah as an attempt to control resistance. This attack is only the beginning of what we are going to see throughout cities all over Iraq. The intensity of the assault required the antiwar movement to respond quickly and effectively. The march and rally did just this, echoing the demands of not only the people of Fallujah and the rest of Iraq, but those of oppressed people around the world.

The composition of the rally was dynamic and representative of



MAWO rally in Vancouver against the US-led assault on Falluja, November 20th 2004.

those under attack at home and abroad. There was a large number of Muslims and students in attendance. Over 350 people came out in the freezing cold demanding an end to the occupation of Iraq. The demands and chants of the

rally went well beyond the sidewalk surrounding the Art Gallery, filling all of downtown Vancouver.

Kelly White opened, welcoming our demonstration to Coast Salish territory and setting the powerful tone of our entire rally. Khosro

Afshar from the United Muslim Alliance spoke as a Muslim living in Vancouver. Other members of the Muslim community also spoke, demanding an end to the occupation. Among other speakers, Alexis Moore, an activist at

Kwantlen College and a member of the Kwantlen Students Against War And Occupation (KSAWO), spoke about the importance of student organizing in the antiwar movement and the successes at Kwantlen and other campuses in the Lower Mainland. Marysol Torres an organizer with the Vancouver Internationalist Bolivarian Circle spoke about failed and erroneous US interventions in Venezuela. The Korean Students Network Against War (KSNAW) performed a number of powerful dances used to motivate the masses in Korea and showed Vancouver another form of protest.

Aaron Mercredi an organizer with Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) then led us into the march with an energizing and motivating speech about the devastation occurring in Fallujah and its connection to the Indigenous struggle in Canada.

All through downtown Vancouver chants demanding US/UK Out of Iraq! echoed off of buildings and buses. As the sun was setting, the protesters in the streets of Vancouver were connected with oppressed people around the world by this united march for self-determination and against occupation.

Bring The Troops Home Now! Self Determination for Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Haiti, and Indigenous Nations in Canada!

MAWO 1st Year Anniversary

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College, spoke about, "What has MAWO established?" Koshelanyk outlined the coalition's expansion onto college campuses and out of Vancouver proper into Surrey, New Westminster, Richmond, Victoria, and beyond. Lastly, Nicole Burton, a Langara student and MAWO organizer, spoke on, "Where is MAWO going?" Burton addressed the importance of continuing to organize educational events and mass mobilizations. MAWO expands and develops as a major antiwar coalition in Canada. In just one year since its inception on October 29, 2004 MAWO has organized over 100 events in the Lower Mainland.

The evening featured a variety of culture and festivities, and reflected the basis of Mobilization Against War and Occupation's ongoing and consistent work within the city of Vancouver and beyond. It also reflected our goal of building a movement of oppressed people who celebrate the resistance in Iraq as our common struggle with a common goal: to end the occupation and fight for self-determination. On October 31st antiwar activists and supporters celebrated MAWO's 1st anniversary, another important step in this ongoing struggle to defeat war, occupation and imperialism – for the right of self-determination for all oppressed nations.

Free the Cuban Five Committee - Courtenay Expands Solidarity with Successful Forum

By Sophie Ziner
& Thomas Davies

On Friday October 22nd, the first event organized by the Free the Cuban Five Committee - Courtenay took place with an interested and enthusiastic audience in the Stan Hagen Theatre at Comox Valley's North Island College. The Free the Cuban Five Committee - Vancouver participated in the event and wholeheartedly endorses this new initiative. This can be seen as indicative of the overall growth in Cuba solidarity organizing and awareness around the case of the five Cuban political prisoners held in U.S jails. Cuban 5 form a strong and public resistance against imperialist attacks, their defense is of particular importance to anyone working for social justice and imperialist aggression. The case is important for all people interested exposing the hypocrisy of the offensives against people who are defending their right to dignity and self-determination all

around the world. Cuba provides a positive example for communities everywhere of people uniting around common interests to build a more just future. The network of Cuban 5 solidarity committees also provides an important opportunity to be involved in an international movement for justice, and connect with people nationally and internationally with similar objectives.

The forum was opened by one of the organizers, Abby Rolston, who outlined the history of US intervention in Cuba since the 19th Century. This suppression led to the successful revolt and overthrow of the United States imposed dictator General Fulgencio Batista in 1959 by the mass uprising of people of Cuba. Since then, the United States has continued to attack the island, through the creation and financing of terrorist organizations, and a 43 year old blockade of Cuba- which intends to strangle the people into submission.

Retired high school teacher and long time community activist, Neil Crouch continued the event

with a slideshow of a trip he had organized with local students to Cuba. He detailed Cuba's unique and exceptional education system and society amidst the over 40 year old blockade.

The Committee then showed a film of Leonard Weinglass, an attorney for one of the Cuban Five, addressing the United States National Lawyers Guild Convention. His thorough exposé brings to light the history of the Cuban Five.

The information presented in the film was continued by Thomas Davies of the Free the Cuban 5 Committee - Vancouver. His presentation addressed new developments in the case of the Cuban Five- who have now been separated and incarcerated for the past six years. Their families are often outright denied visiting visas on grounds of "national security", and even René Gonzalez' 6 year old daughter, Ivette, has been continually prevented from seeing her father as the U.S. government continues to refuse a visa to her mother. Despite these attempts to isolate

and demoralize them, the Cuban Five have remained determined in their fight for justice, and were awarded an appeal at the Atlanta 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in March of 2003 - the verdict of which is still eagerly awaited.

The forum organized by the Free the Cuban Five Committee - Courtenay was another positive step in creating awareness and action everywhere around the injustices committed against the Cuban Five and Cuban people. This success indicates the good potential for further work in Courtney, as well everywhere else in Canada, in communities of all different sizes. Internationally Cuba and the Cuban Five represent for people the possibilities of struggle for humanity. This makes international and expanding campaigns all the more possible and necessary. People worldwide united in the common interest of self-determination, and led by the examples of Cuba and the Cuban 5, create a powerful front in the international endeavor for true freedom and dignity.

Breaking Down The Blockade

VCSC Campaigns Against US Blockade of Cuba

By Noah Fine

October 16th witnessed the unraveling of the blockade in Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba's (VCSC) forum entitled "Cuba Under the US Blockade for over 43 years: What's next?" The forum took place at the Collingwood Neighborhood House on Joyce St. and attracted over 45 people to attend.

The presentation began with the MC Noah Fine, an organizer with VCSC, introducing the organization "We came together around Cuba in May of this year due to an increase in hostility from the United States towards the government and people of Cuba." He also spoke about different events put on by VCSC in the past.

After the introduction one of the two movies that were planned for the evening was shown. It was called, "Tuning with the Enemy". It described how the US is not only trying to cut off medicine and food from the Cuban people, but how the blockade is also an attempt to silence their music and culture. The film documented the actions of a group in the US that puts together cargoes of used pianos to send to Cuba. It also showed how Cubans have no way of replacing old instruments and parts under the lockdown of the brutal blockade.

The forum then proceeded with the two speakers. The first speaker was Marcel Hatch, an organizer with Cuba Education Tours. Marcel gave an outline of the effects and reasons for the US blockade on Cuba. He also talked about the gains of socialism in

Cuba, stating that, "It promotes anti-racist views."

The next speaker was Tamara Hansen, the coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC). She gave the history of US intervention in Cuba starting with before the Revolution and brought us through to today with the increasing US attacks on Cuba, aimed at breaking down the revolutionary Cuban government.

The next film called Desafio. Desafio is a film created by art students in Cuba and illustrates the harsh reality of the blockade but also talks about the gains made through 43 years under the blockade. The film shows large demonstrations of people in Cuba, the unity of this country, and also depicts the support of the people towards their President Fidel Castro.

After the discussion the two speakers were asked if they would like to close discussion.

Marcel Hatch expanded on how important it is to confront imperialism with Cuba as a leading example. Tamara Hansen closed by talking about the importance of solidarity work with Cuba and encouraged everyone to get involved in organizing around Cuba.

This was another very successful forum built by VCSC and shows the consistency and substance of their work.

If you are interested in Cuba Solidarity work please contact Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba: cubacommunities@yahoo.ca;

778-882-5223



VCSC organizer Colleen addresses the crowd at Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba forum, October 16th 2004.

Join Fight Against US Yankee in Solidarity with in Cuba! Join VCSC

By Tamara Hansen

Around the world students and young people have traditionally been a major force in movements for social justice. This December in Cuba this proud history for young people is being pushed into the forefront once again with students and youth joining together to emphasize their excitement and dedication to making change.

On Dec. 2nd the Young Communist League (UJC) opened its eighth congress in Cuba. The Cuban group, which has over half a million members, met to discuss the role of young people in building the over 170 new social programs currently starting in Cuba. The congress was attended by 1,200 delegates and 300 guests. It was closed on Dec 5th with an address by Comandante Fidel Castro. Castro urged young people to learn and spread their knowledge. "In this ideological struggle, ideas are our fundamental weapons; our most important ammunition is also ideas. We have to arm our cadres with ideas so that they, in turn, can pass these on to the young and to all of the people."

Students and young people's work in Cuba has not only been focused on advancing the Cuban revolution within Cuba. On Dec. 20th 2004, 5,000 Cuban students gathered together at

the José Martí Anti-Imperialist Tribune, across from the US Interests Section in Havana to protest US intervention in their country. The rally was in celebration of the 82nd anniversary of the Federation of University Students (FEU) and was a direct condemnation of the US' hostility towards Cuban independence and in defense of Cuba's right to self-determination.

At this rally the president of the FEU Carlos Lage Codorniú, emphasized how US intervention in Cuba impacts resistance to US hegemony. "Every machination by the Northern power makes us prouder and stronger."

Later, Hassan Perez, the Second Secretary of the National Committee of the UJC stated, "Washington does not have the moral or legal authority to condemn Cuba. With our achievements in health, education, culture, and the social sector in general, we are the ones who have much to show to those who are today slandering and threatening us."

The fight of the Cuban people, in defense of Cuba's gains since the revolution and against US attacks and the blockade, are not going unnoticed here in Canada. Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC), an organization made up of women, people of the third world and predominantly

students and young people are working together to educate, organize and mobilize people across Greater Vancouver in support of Cuba.

With a current campaign to 'Lift the Blockade Against Cuba' VCSC has been organizing forums and petition days to open more discussion around the subject of Cuba throughout British-Columbia. Currently the group has collected 600 signatures for its petition to lift the blockade, and is planning to collect many more during this long-term campaign.

People of the world must listen when Fidel Castro said, "Neither aggression nor blockade, terrorist acts or the disintegration of the socialist block, or the extreme right's rise to power in the United States... have been able to break our heroic people's spirit of struggle."

Because of the heroic fight by the Cuban people, especially youth and students, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba is committed to standing in solidarity with them. Together we must fight for Cuba's right to self-determination and the advancements made since the Cuban revolution.

If you are interested in doing Cuban Solidarity work please contact: cubacommunities@yahoo.ca | 778-882-5223

Defend War Resisters!

From page 38

Hinzman, two War Resisters, and related their experience to the antiwar movement. Noah Fine who is an organizer with Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) spoke next about resistance in Iraq and the demoralization of US troops in Iraq. There was a lot of participation from the students who came out to this event and everyone was encouraged to get involved in the War Resisters campaign.

On Tuesday November 9th, the second of the series of forums was held in Langley. This event brought out many interested students. The first speaker at this event was Allison Bodine, president of the Coalition Against the War On the People of Iraq and Internationally (CAWOPII - a UBC club), who spoke about the resistance to the occupation in Iraq. The second speaker was Kay Kim, an organizer with

the Korean Students Network Against War (KSNAW) who spoke about the case of a Korean conscientious objector.

On Wednesday November 10th Richmond KSAWO held their third War Resisters forum. Throughout the discussion many topics were discussed from the war in Iraq, to the occupation of Afghanistan, to reasons that students should defend War Resisters and how these events relate to each other in the context of imperialism and US foreign policy.

Through KSAWO the War Resisters campaign has been brought to the attention of hundreds of people at Kwantlen College, whether through signing the petition or attending a forum the importance of opening the boarders to War Resisters. We must defend and protect their right to refuse to fight in imperialist illegal and criminal wars.

'We Stand Firmly With Cuban People Against US Criminal Blockade'

A Speech By
Tamara Hansen

On October 16th Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) held a film and forum night at Collingwood Neighbourhood House entitled, "Cuba under the US Blockade for 43 years: What's Next?". There were two speakers on the panel, one of which was Tamara Hansen, the coordinator of VCSC. Below is her talk outlining the US' blockade against Cuba and VCSC's new campaign to "Lift the Blockade Against Cuba".

Short history of US Intervention

First, I want to begin with a history of US intervention in Cuba. Before the revolution from the 1890's to 1959 the United States used Cuba as a military base, a playground for rich and famous Americans, and for plundering resources and labour to create products such as cheap sugar. During this time the Cuban people grew more aware of who was profiting off of their exploitation and how their deepening poverty and

exploitation was a result of US intervention in their country.

During this time Cuba was ruled by a series of US supported or US imposed dictators. In 1952 a new US imposed dictator, Batista, took power. Batista was however the last US sponsored puppet leader in Cuba and was overthrown by a popular revolution in 1959.

In 1959, when the Cuban people took back their country, US companies and pleasure seekers were forced off the island, along with much of the Cuban elite. This led to the US trying to reclaim its stakes in Cuba with the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. This invasion was heavily US backed, but despite being outnumbered against an expertly trained and funded army, the Cuban militia was able to beat back the imperialist invaders.

After the defeat of the Bay of Pigs invasion the United States moved to more diplomatic means to try and silence Cuba's new revolutionary government. For this they established an economic blockade on Cuba in 1962. At that time the blockade stopped Cuba's sugar exportation to the US, however Cuba was able to



VCSC Coordinator Tamara Hansen (middle) speaking at Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba forum, October 16th 2004. Marcel Hatch (right) spoke on behalf of the Cuba Education Committee, and Noah Fine (left) was the MC.

trade with the USSR. This was the case until the USSR fell in the 1980's at which point the already desperate situation- caused by the blockade, got worse.

Why the Blockade?

What are the motives behind the blockade? The blockade is an attempt by the US administration to create poor conditions for people in Cuba in hopes that they will lose faith in their government. This will then leave space for the US to implement its dominance over Cuba. The blockade has been modified and reinforced many times since its creation in 1962, and still exists today.

In 1992, it was reinforced with the Torrecelli Act or 'Cuban Democracy Act', under this act any ships from any nations that have docked or have transported Cuban goods cannot dock in US ports for 160 days afterwards. This act limits Cuba's access to food and medicine as well as attempts to prevent other countries from trading with Cuba.

In 1996, the blockade was strengthened again with the Helms-Burton Act which forbade any US company from trading with Cuba and attempted to punish other countries for trading with Cuba as well.

Then again on May 6th 2004, the United States announced that it was putting \$59 million towards new attacks on Cuba. This money will be spent towards radio and TV signals to be broadcast in Cuba against the Cuban government, mercenaries in Cuba and limiting Cuban-Americans travel to Cuba to once every three years and only for a two week period. This is a renewed attempt by the US administration to turn Cuba towards the world bank, privatization and is directly against the gains of the Cuban revolution.

Cuba's Gains and Response to these Renewed Attacks

Since the revolution Cuba has

been pushing forward, making major economic and social gains for its people and country. Today, Cuba is the best country in Latin America in terms of life expectancy, literacy, doctors and infant mortality rate. Cuba has been able to accomplish these gains through mass literacy campaigns, sending doctors free of charge to other Latin American nations, free healthcare and education (including post-secondary), agrarian reform and land redistribution. These advances are all major accomplishments, especially considering they are under the blockade and that before the revolution 70% of Cuba's land belonged to US companies. These gains have reinforced the Cuban people's determination to support their government and fight for their rights.

Many of these gains have been made through mobilizations, voluntary work and internationalism. There have been many marches and rallies against the blockade, especially after the May 6th announcement when over a million people marched through the streets of Cuba demanding an end to the blockade. Voluntary work has also helped to achieve much of the new construction in Cuba, from hospitals to schools to housing. The Cuban people's dedication to voluntarily building their country has led to major gains for Cubans' education and healthcare.

Internationalism is another gain not only for giving Cubans a strong world perspective, but also for third world solidarity. Cuba has sent doctors free of charge to other third world countries such as Haiti and Venezuela. Currently, there are 450 Cuban doctors working free of charge throughout Haiti.

Bush's Election & the Era of Endless Wars and Occupations

A Speech by Vancouver City Councilor Tim Louis in MAWO conference

Transcribed and
Edited by

By Tamara Hansen

On November 27th Mobilization Against War and Occupation held its third conference at the Britannia Community Centre in Vancouver. The conference's first section was opened by Vancouver City Councilor Tim Louis. Louis spoke on "Bush's Election & the Era of Endless Wars and Occupations". Below is the excerpt of his inspiring talk about US imperialism and the importance of the heroic Iraqi resistance.

Good morning what a beautiful day. I wanted to preface my talk today by sharing with you a few brief observations about Mobilization Against War and Occupation. I've been on City Council for five years now, but I've considered myself political since I was about 19. I've been observing City Hall for about 20-25 years now and I can tell you with absolute certainty that over time I've witnessed organizations

that bring about change or organizations with a clear well-thought out political analysis.

It doesn't really matter the size of the group, what does matter is the clear political analysis and the internal democracy of that organization. So far as the antiwar movement is concerned in Vancouver, the newspaper Fire This Time and your group have

always had a very clear and well-thought out political analysis. First I wanted to start by saying that I think it's great you are organizing events like this, it is important that you have a clear political analysis of world events that you view. Today we are talking about Iraq and we are talking about Bush.

Continued on page 42



Tim Louis speaking at MAWO antiwar, anti-occupation conference, November 27th, 2004

'It is Possible for any People, Anywhere, to Defeat any Imperialist Occupiers'

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In the late 1800's during the invasion of the Philippines, hundreds of thousands of Philippine's citizens were murdered by the American military and before that the occupation of what we now refer to as the United-States, and the slaughter of millions of First Nations people. So he [Bush] is perhaps not yet the most blood thirsty president, but he is most definitely surrounded by people who are the most rightwing. For those of you that have not heard of "Project for a New American Century", I would encourage you to go look up this document. It was written when Clinton was still in power and was authored by 30 or 40 of the most rightwing reactionary individuals to ever hold power. A handful of them went on to become cabinet ministers in Bush junior's cabinet. In that document they talk about their dream (their so-called dream, for them a dream for the rest of us a nightmare). It's a very lengthy document and its spells out in detail exactly what they've planned for the coming century, the century we are now in. One of the things that they said was that the American military needs to be powerful enough that it could simultaneously wage battles in at least two different theatres (that is how the military refer to wars).

This is something that the US military has never done before and that is why when they invaded Iraq why Rumsfeld did not accept the advice from the American military. The American military wanted to invade with American troop numbers far larger than the number they did invade with. Rumsfeld contends that with the high tech warfare that the American military now possesses, the high tech military machine they now have, that they could do it with a relatively small number and that would demonstrate to the world that it is possible for America to wage war in two theatres at the same time.

I thought it would be absolutely impossible for a nation that had endured some of the most severe economic sanctions ever imposed on a nation, I thought it would be very difficult for that nation that had already lost hundreds of thousands of children as a result of those economic sanctions, very difficult for a nations whose military was literally no longer in existence having been destroyed in the first Iraqi war, very difficult for a nation that didn't really have the support of other Arab nations which co-opted and were purchased by the West, very difficult for that nation to put up a meaningful fight. I was not very optimistic, but what I'd forgotten is what people like Che Guevara taught us decades ago, what Ho Chi Min taught us decades ago and what all of us should never forget, and what I'd forgotten and that is that people by the tens of thousands even poorly armed, will always defeat the military empire, there can never be any doubt about that.

What we've been witnessing in the last couple of months is an absolutely heroic battle, an absolutely courageous battle, by the citizens of Iraq against the occupiers and the worlds most powerful military machine, with a budget that is larger than the next



VCSC organizer Stan addressing the crowd at Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba forum, October 16th 2004.

five nations of the world combined, in terms of the military. It is now, in my mind, no longer whether or not, it's no longer 'if' the Americans are defeated, but 'when' the Americans are defeated. When the American army is defeated in Iraq it will be a great victory not just for Iraq, it will be a victory for all of us. It will be a defeat not just for America in Iraq, but much more importantly (and this is why the American

military establishment and the necons in the Bush administration are so concerned) it will be a defeat for America worldwide, and it will not just be a defeat for American imperialism, it will be a defeat for imperialism period. It will be a major major defeat for imperialism, in this day of highly sophisticated and incredibly well-funded American military machine, that it is possible for a nation with

little resources and little arms, like Iraq, to defeat America. And show that it is possible for any people, anywhere to defeat any imperialist occupiers.

What we need to do, and we need to do it urgently because every day there are more innocent Iraqi civilians killed in the most tragic of circumstances, we need to think creatively about ways to put pressure on the American war

machine. What that does mean, is branching out, it means building coalitions with other organizations, even if those organizations aren't quite as clear in their political analysis as we are. It means urging organized labour unions to strike. As an example the Iraqi railway workers recently refused, they put down their tools and went on a strike. They refused to transport any supplies, even food, to the American military. If the Iraqi railway workers can do that, would it not be possible for the Canadian working class to selectively strike supplies that support the American war machine?

I am very very ashamed of the fact that one of the contractors to re-supply the American military machine with bullets is a Canadian company. They are also, by the way, the company selected by Translink, the misadministrators of Greater Vancouver Transit – the people that want to shuttle 2 billion of our tax dollars out to a public-private partnership. If there was just one significant work stoppage here in Canada on the issue of the American war, I have no doubt that that would be a spark in a cinder box and that it would then give a moral booster and courage to other unions that are thinking of doing the same thing people that work in ports, people that work in the shipping industry. It is impossible at the end of the day for Rumsfeld to prosecute the war, Rumsfeld couldn't pick up a gun if his next retirement cheque depended on it. Wars are only ever fought because the working class are tricked and fooled into supporting the people in leadership positions, the ownership class. We acquiesce and cooperate and build and produce and ship, and if we, in all of our numbers, can get the working class here in Canada to stop supporting the war machine, the war will come to a much quicker end. That's only one idea, there may be many, many others.

There was a decision made, a tactical decision, of strategic importance, not to have Bush speak to parliament (when Mulroney was Prime Minister he had Regan speak to parliament) it wasn't just a scheduling nicety it was a tactical decision, because Martin and Bush knew that there would be tens of thousands of Canadians demonstrating against the war criminal. So let's today come up with as many ideas as we can let's today begin to develop the schedule for implementing those plans, let's today commit to working with as broad an array of other organizations as possible, no matter where they sit, so long as they are opposed to war and so long as they support the peace movement.

I'm off, and I apologize for that but I'm leaving in just a few minutes to go out to UBC to the preparatory conference for a Peace Conference that will be held in 2006. I believe that some Mobilization Against War and Occupation members will be there. Keep up the great work. Keep up your clear political analysis and your very democratic decision making process on Wednesday evenings. I wish you all the very best of success not just for us, because at the end of the day our struggles are nothing but for the Iraqi citizens, who are dying by the thousands as we speak. Thank-you very much.

'Cuba Needs Political Solidarity'

From page 41

Why is the US afraid of Cuba?

To the rest of Latin America Cuba represents an alternative to US intervention and US backed regimes. The US is determined to overthrow Cuba's revolutionary government in order to insure that other countries do not follow Cuba's example towards better social programs and away from the World Bank and privatization. Despite this, the blockade has been a failed attempt at a coup d'état in Cuba for the last 43 years and Cuba's influence has been spreading.

This can be seen right now in Venezuela where the Bolivarian Revolution is continuing to make social gains, similar to those of Cuba, and is becoming a larger threat to US hegemony and US interests in Latin America.

Cuba's internationalism and international work, both with Venezuela and other countries, is perhaps the most threatening and effective element of Cuba's strategy. This is because international work prevents isolation and is what the US is most afraid of: The creation of more Cubas.

Working in Vancouver: What is our international context?

Although the US blockade on

Cuba has existed since 1962, it has become more relevant in the last couple of years. The reason for this is only in part because of the US' new aggression towards Cuba. To better understand the importance of the US blockade today we must look at the international context in which Cuba and the United States find themselves.

The US' international context is one of economic and moral crisis. This can be seen most clearly in the failing occupation of Iraq and the recent 'democratic' elections in Afghanistan. Both of these situations represent a major moral failure for the United States with thousands dead, and two illegal occupations in sovereign nations. These situations also represent the major economic crisis the US is facing, which is forcing them to compete with other imperialist nations for control over resources and labour in third world countries.

Cuba represents a very important strategic and political block to US hegemony in Latin America. This is becoming more important as the US faces increasing attacks in the Middle East and continues to rely on Latin America for resources and labour power.

Cuba's international context can be seen within its growing ties with Venezuela. Together these

two countries are dedicating themselves to making social, economic and political advancements for their people. The international relationship between these two third world countries directly counters attempts by the United States to impose its hegemony and shows that when people are united they can beat back imperialism.

Organizing in Vancouver

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) is aiming to increase discussion around Cuba in Vancouver, across BC and around Canada. We are asking people to take a stance in favor of Cuba and its right to self-determination. Our petition to 'Lift the Blockade against Cuba' has already collected over 200 signatures in one week, and I encourage everyone to sign it after the forum.

In its fight against imperialism, Cuba needs political solidarity. This does not mean just sending aid, but also standing up with Cuba against the blockade and against US intervention. Using forums, discussion, the petition and other tools to educate and organize North Americans on Cuba, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba is ready to take this task on.

Thank-you.

MAWO Student Week Against War and Occupation

A Step Forward for Antiwar Movement in Lower Mainland

By Nicole Burton

During the antiwar movement's preparatory actions against the approaching invasion of Iraq in 2002/2003, students and youth across the world became a frontline force leading the movement into the streets. Through the coordination of student strikes, sit-ins, walk-outs and marches, young people developed as an essential part of a growing and long-term movement against imperialist war and aggression. Since this initial stage, with the transition of the antiwar movement to an anti-occupation movement, students have increased their organizing against war and occupation in their high schools, colleges and universities.

In the first month of the 2004 fall semester, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), co-organized the Student Week Against War and Occupation

(SWAWO) bringing the banner of "Educate, Organize, Mobilize!" to 9 different campuses in 10 days. MAWO along with Students' Unions and student antiwar organizations from Langley to the University of British Columbia co-organized 24 events from September 13th - 24th. Over 1,500 students participated in the discussions, debates, and plans for action during SWAWO, with the objective of building an effective antiwar anti-occupation movement.

With the development of major anti-occupation resistance in Iraq and the US/UK's resulting quagmire as an occupation force, campuses kick-started the week with in-depth forums and discussion on the ongoing occupation of Iraq. Next, students organized and held forums on Canada's role in war and occupation, demanding *CANADA OUT!* These forums were organized as part of an



Jin, an organizer with MAWO and the Korean Student Network Against War, speaking at Student Week Against War forum at Langara, September 13th 2004.

ongoing MAWO campaign 'Canadian troops out of Haiti'. Participants at the forums tackled important questions around

Canada's role as an imperialist and colonialist nation. At both Langara College and Simon Fraser University, rallies against war and occupation were held with guest speakers from the Langara Students' Union and the Simon Fraser Students' Society, along with other antiwar speakers, singers, and hip hop artists. Wrapping up the week, all-day mini film festivals were organized with films on the occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Indigenous Nations in Canada, and the struggle of people in Latin America in the era of war and occupation.

Since the Student Week has ended, dynamic antiwar organizing has continued on campuses with different on-campus antiwar clubs such as, Coalition Against the War on the People of Iraq and Internationally (COWAPI-UBC), Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO-SFU), and Kwantlen Students Against War and Occupation (KSAWO-Kwantlen). These groups are important for the student movement as a whole, as students and young people in the antiwar movement are developing as an organized and coordinated force. As a result, students in 2004 are emerging not only in the frontlines, but as an organized leadership of the antiwar and anti-occupation movement.

Colleges and universities are a battleground of ideas, in which the energy and vision of young people, first seen in the streets 2 years ago, has emerged again. As a presence that is growing and developing, students are a unique and ultimately vital component in today's global antiwar movement.

Students and youth on every campus and in every city have proven to be a powerful and militant element against the aggression of imperialist powers who are wrecking havoc on oppressed nations today. The significance of the Student Week Against War and Occupation (SWAWO) 2004 has been in the foundation created for the growing student movement against war and occupation that will continue from this establishment in the weeks, months, and years to come.

Students and Youth: EDUCATE, ORGANIZE, MOBILIZE Against War and Occupation!

MAWO Shares Antiwar Movement Lessons and Visions with Social Justice Activists in Toronto: Toronto forum on war and the antiwar movement a success

By Ivan Drury

On Thursday October 7th at the University of Toronto, thirty young people and people from the third world got together at a forum called, "Organizing Against Imperialism and Occupation: Lessons from the Past, Visions for the Future". The participants in the forum emerged from the tumultuous 2002-2003 antiwar movement, from histories of organizing on campuses and in the streets and attending demonstrations ranging from tens to tens of thousands of people. These activists, organizers and oppressed people came together to discuss what had gone right with the antiwar movement, what had gone wrong and where to go from here.

The most significant element of this forum was that it was the first time since millions of people took to the streets against the war in Iraq in February 2003, that young anti-imperialist organizers from Vancouver and Toronto shared a forum to discuss the state of the antiwar movement.

The forum was chaired by Mostafa Henaway of the June 30th Organizing Committee (J30) in Toronto. The first speaker was Ivan Drury, an organizer with Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice (FTT) and Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) in Vancouver.

Christina Fernandez, an organizer with the Coalition Against War and Racism continued this point, explaining the terrible impact imperialism has on people living in occupied countries. Ahmad Shokr, an organizer with the Arab Students' Collective at the University of Toronto and with the anti-racist, immigrant rights group, Project Threadbare, brought this point home. He outlined the need for the antiwar movement to tackle the racist attacks on Arabs and Muslims within Canada. He said that this has to be done by fighting against these reactionary attacks but also that the movement "needs to build community involvement in the movement so that people from Arab-Muslim communities can take steps to lead the movement."

The last two speakers were both from the June 30th Organizing Committee, a new antiwar coalition in Toronto organizing against the occupations of Iraq and Palestine and committed to fighting against Canadian imperialism. Mostafa Henaway, also an organizer with the Palestinian Right to Return Group, Al Awda, focused on the importance of the antiwar movement in Canada to focus on Canadian imperialism. "When people think about imperialism and empire, they think of the red, white and blue, not about Canada and Canada's imperialist agenda. This is one reason the June 30th Committee formed."

Liisa Schofield, also an organizer with NEWS in Iraq and Grass Roots Anti-Imperialist Network, both at York University, closed the panel presentation with a vision of what is needed to build an effective antiwar movement. "What our main goals should be in the movement are to build an anti-imperialist movement, to build people's capacity and people's actual consciousness. Just going out and having the numbers there at a demonstration

and walking in a circle and being a participant, but a very passive participant, is no longer what the movement is. We need to build people's capacity to organize themselves and actually learn how the world functions, if we want to seriously challenge the imperialist system and the capitalist system."

The discussion at the end of the forum was challenging and dynamic with all participants bringing their own perspectives on what the movement is and what it has to become. These people, bridging the East and West coasts of Canada, represented the many visions and hopes that lie in the new antiwar movement in Canada. What they all shared is what MAWO, J30 and a growing number of young, oppressed, poor and working people and their organizations all across Canada share. This is the desire and the will to build an effective movement to fight to end the occupations of Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Haiti and Indigenous Nations in Canada and for the self-determination of all oppressed nations in the world.

MAWO in Vancouver Mobilizes and Demands: End the Occupations! Self-Determination!

By Nicole Burton
& Shannon Bundock

September 2004:

On September 13th 2004, over 100 Iraqis were killed as US helicopter gunships showered bombs and bullets from the skies above Fallujah, Sadr City, Ramadi, Tal Afar and Samarra. All the while the US government told the world, "We aren't worried, these cities are isolated pockets of resistance that will be beaten in no time." What wasn't mentioned is that September 2004 brought an average of 84 attacks against occupation forces every day. By September 2004, the label 'isolated pocket of resistance' had long become an ironic and ridiculous term, as the US government was attempting to claim that the majority of Iraqi people substantiated an easily crushed and 'isolated pocket of resistance'.

As battles for freedom, dignity and sovereignty raged on in the streets of Iraq, people around the world, especially young people, were deepening their understanding of the fight against occupation and for self-determination. Throughout the fall of 2004, the Lower Mainland of BC was flooded with antiwar organizing. Forums, rallies, concerts and film showings were happening on campuses and in communities across the region. With the culmination of the Student Week Against War and Occupation (SWAWO – See Page XX) Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) held a demonstration calling for "Students & Youth, Organize, Educate, Mobilize! End the Occupation! Self-Determination for Iraq!"

September 25th was a dynamic and energetic mobilization and was also the anniversary of the second Palestinian Intifada. This was due mainly to the number of young people and students who had been involved in antiwar organizing over the previous two weeks and the growing awareness about what is taking place in occupied nations around the world.

Gisele DaSilva and David Fleming-Saracenco, with the Simon Fraser Student's Society, both stood up at the mic to condemn the US-led war and occupation of Iraq. Tamara Hansen, a student activist and organizer with MAWO, "We stand here today, on the fourth anniversary of the second Intifada, we stand as youth, while the youth of Palestine stand half-way across the world, defending their



MAWO rally against war and occupation, September 25th 2004.

lives, their homes, their nation and their dignity against the Zionist settler-state of Israel". Beside these young people, stood Khosro Afshar of United Muslim Alliance, David Dewert of the Christian community, and Kelly White a Coast Salish Elder and media activist. All of the speakers joined in the calls to end imperialist war and occupation.

Hip-hop artists Nidi Cascade and Deanna performed songs of resistance, women's strength and leadership and guitarist and singer, Ramon Flores brought songs of Latin American struggles.

The diversity presented from the stage reflected the unifying capacity that young people have when they organize. This demonstration, far from being exclusive, actually opened space for young people to engage with over 300 people from other oppressed communities that shared their

demands in a unified and powerful rally.

October 2004

Over 250 people participated in the rally and march on October 23rd, including a large number of young people, people from the Muslim community, immigrants, refugees and people of colour. Groups came from neighbouring cities, including the Sunshine Coast Peace Group, who raised their voices and marched with their banner.

The program began with a tone of unity and brotherhood and sisterhood, as Khosro Afshar opened up the rally. Following him, So-hee, a Korean activist and organizer with the National Campaign for Eradication of Crimes by US Troops in Korea, spoke about her experiences as an organizer within and outside of Vancouver, and on the role of youth and women's leadership. Mike Krebs, an Indigenous activist and member of Fire This

Time Movement for Social Justice Editorial Board, then rallied people for the march and denounced imperialist war and occupation from Iraq, to Palestine, to Afghanistan, to Haiti, to Indigenous territory in Canada.

Noah Fine, MAWO organizer, began the 2nd half of the rally by speaking about MAWO's *Canada Out!* Campaign. He condemned the moves of Canadian imperialism against the oppressed nations of Haiti and Afghanistan and exposed the colonial history of the Canadian imperialist state.

Ska7cis, a young Secwepemc organizer with the Skwek'wekwelt nation took the stage to further expose Canada's illegal occupation of Indigenous nations. He also related the government's encroachment and occupation of Indigenous land to the US/UK occupation of Iraq.

The final speaker, who tied the day together, was Kasia Machelak – MAWO founding member and coordinator of Kwantlen Students Against War and Occupation. Kasia closed by saying, "We've come together today as people in struggle. We come as youth, students, women, people of colour, people from the third world and Indigenous people, to show our solidarity with oppressed people that are struggling right now in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Palestine, in Haiti, and right here in the occupied Indigenous nations in Canada. We're here to show that this is one struggle, by one people against one enemy – Victory for Oppressed Nations Against War and Occupation! End the Occupations! Self-Determination!"

The demonstrations on September 25th and October 23rd are not only rallies to intervene in imperialist aggression and oppose war and occupation. They also act as political preparation for the months and years ahead, wherein the enemies of poor and working people will increase their attacks. Through educating, organizing and coming together with other poor and working communities we can take one more step forward in the long battle for human freedom and dignity. All poor and working people, all freedom-loving people, must be mobilized and organized if we are to put an end to the destruction, devastation and assaults that are torturing and slaughtering our brothers and sisters everywhere.

NO TO THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ALL
OPPRESSED NATIONS!

OPERATION: CANADA OUT!

JOIN US!

By Nicole Burton

Since January 2004, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) has organized for a long-term campaign against Canada's role as an imperialist occupier. This campaign is in response to the Canadian government's stated interest in "building Canada's presence on the world stage". The concrete result of this interest has been Canada's role as a leader of the NATO-occupation of Afghanistan, and the invasion, occupation, and plundering of Haiti as of March 2004. MAWO's campaign *Operation: CANADA OUT!* exposes this interest while demanding the immediate removal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan and Haiti. The campaign takes form in educational forums and discussions, with a major focus on a massive petition drive that has now collected nearly 8,000

signatures from the people of Greater Vancouver. In addition, the petition has gained national recognition as the first of its kind pinpointing Canada as an imperialist and colonialist nation, with concrete demands that the Canadian occupations of Afghanistan and Haiti end now.

The expansion of this campaign has led to petition drives on every major college and university campus in the Lower Mainland, as well as at the University of Victoria on Vancouver Island. In recent months, the petition has visited different corners of Greater Vancouver, from North Vancouver to Richmond and Surrey

Mobilization Against War and Occupation's *CANADA OUT!* campaign has become one of the most significant long-term campaigns for the antiwar, anti-occupation movement in Canada. The government of Canada is increasing

its involvement in the leadership and execution of large-scale occupations on oppressed nations, combined with the continued occupation and displacement of Indigenous people on their native land and territories. Meanwhile, the government is also making major preparations for larger roles in military aggressions for future years. As a campaign challenging this imperialist and colonialist legacy, *Operation: CANADA OUT!* seeks to further expand this fight for poor and working people in all corners of Canada. Please join us in this important campaign to continue building towards a mass movement of people opposed to imperialist Canada's suppression of oppressed nations – at home and abroad.

Canadian Troops of Afghanistan!
Canadian Troops Out of Haiti! Brings The
Troops Home Now!

Long Live International Solidarity!

From page 30

Whereas: The Gordon Campbell government has recently enacted a questionable piece of legislation called the "Safe Streets Act"; and

Whereas: This act further victimizes the poor and fails to address the root causes of crime such as poverty, homelessness, addiction and unemployment; and

Whereas: The provincial government itself has contributed to this problem through massive program cuts; now

Therefore be it resolved: That the VDLC go on record in opposition to the "Safe Streets Act" and extend our support to organizations opposing the "Safe Streets Act"; and

Be it finally resolved: That the VDLC reiterate our position that the best way to make streets safe is for the provincial government to rescind welfare cuts, provide proper levels of mental health care, addiction services, and to take other concrete steps to end poverty, create decent paying jobs, and provide safe affordable housing for the citizens of British Columbia.

No the Apartheid Wall

Finally, in a third motion passed on November 16th, the VDLC took a stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people against



An Israeli military checkpoint along the Apartheid Wall in West Bank, Palestine.

Zionism, against racism and against Canadian imperialism. This resolution is against the Israeli apartheid, "separation wall" that has cut through Palestinian land, separating farmers from their fields, families from their homes and workers from their jobs. It is through this example of international solidarity that oppressed people can stand

together around the world against our common enemies of imperialism and capitalism. The resolution reads:

Whereas: The trade union movement recognizes that peaceful resolution of international disputes requires respect for international law, and

Whereas: The International Court

of Justice in the Hague ruled July 2, 2004 that the separation wall Israel is constructing in occupied Palestinian territory is illegal and that the wall makes it impossible for Palestinians to exercise their right of self-determination, and

Whereas: The Court ruled that no state should recognize this illegal wall and that every state should

work to dismantle it, and

Whereas: July 21, 2004 the U.N. General Assembly voted 150-6, with 10 abstentions, including Canada's, to endorse the International Court of Justice decision,

Therefore be it resolved: That the Vancouver and District Labour Council through the BC Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress demand that the Canadian government uphold international law and enforce the International Court of Justice decision by taking every measure within its power to dismantle the Israeli separation wall in the West Bank.

Long Live International Solidarity!

With these resolutions the trade union movement in Vancouver and district has demonstrated solidarity with poor and homeless people in Canada, with refugees - and particularly with American War Resisters - and with the struggle of the Iraqi and Palestinian people against imperialist war and occupation. These motions are important as a declaration of unity between the rights of oppressed people internationally and the rights and struggle of working people and unions in Canada. The VDLC has declared that the rights and struggles of oppressed people around the world are the rights and struggles of trade unionists in Vancouver. Fire This Time recognizes and applauds the passing of these resolutions and proudly stands beside the VDLC and the labour movement in demanding:

REFUGEE STATUS FOR BRANDON HUGHEY, JEREMY HINZMAN AND ALL WAR RESISTERS!

NO "SAFE STREETS" THROUGH CAMPBELLS CUTS! CUT THE "SAFE STREETS ACT"!

THE WALL MUST FALL! END ISRAELI APARTHEID!

MAWO November 27th Conference Coverage Continued

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argument is that if they could have a civilian government, a democratic government, a government with diplomacy then why did they start this war and occupation to begin with. War and occupation is the next stage after ending and exhausting all civilian talks and processes. When you have suppression and military tyranny you cannot talk about voluntarily going to elections for democracy. So we can't have an imperialist occupation and democratic process that is a fact. Military occupation is fundamentally, structurally, institutionally, politically, functionally and practically in direct opposition with democratic institutions and civilian government. All this big noised around 'Liberation', 'Democracy', 'Civilian government', 'Elected government' and 'Democratic election' is about buying enough time for US/UK to keep people hopeful and wishful thinking. They do this in order to grab enough time to establish and consolidate their military rule by demoralizing people and suppressing the resistance movement."

Ali Yerevani added to this by identifying the fundamental reasons for this era of war and occupation. "Imperialists have deep rooted economic problems world wide. From market to capital to investment to the average rate of profit and production, every basic element of capitalism is in crisis. In order to tackle these problems imperialists have made our earth

a worse place to live. Poverty, homelessness, prostitution, human displacement, pollution, environmental degradation, AIDS, war and occupation. They have left no dignity for human kind. Because of the nature of capitalism and imperialism, imperialist countries are in fierce competition for new markets and new resources and competition is the root of these wars and occupations. For this they have to find new resources by plundering other countries and nations using old ways or new tricks.

He also made it clear that, "It's not neo-colonialism any more, it's direct colonialism. You don't install a puppet government to make sure that the flow of money, capital and profit is coming to you. If they could do that they would. But today they are re-enforcing the old colonial strategy. You go there directly because nobody else can do the job for you. This is what they are going to do in the next 20-30 years. This is very important for us, the antiwar movement, because if we do not understand this we lose our patience and perspective for our struggle to defeat them."

Ali discussed the importance of working towards change. "We are witnessing a very difficult time in the history of humanity. The question is: Are we just going to analyze, explain and comment the current imperialist trend and their actions or are we going to change it with resistance and struggle? The relationship of forces always dictates who rules and who obeys. What strategy can we

choose, so that in the long run, the relationship of forces is changed in our favor? Fundamentally the immediate confrontation is not on agenda. The most important issue is political preparation by organizing, educating and agitating. Political preparation is key, so that gradually we will make ourselves prepared not only for the small changes now, but also for the big decisive changes later."

One of the most essential issues that Yerevani argued was that, "Since the question is Occupation, the answer must be Liberation. And the only way today, in this time of imperialist war and occupation, for liberation to manifest itself is through to fight for the self-determination of oppressed people, oppressed nations and nations under imperialist domination and occupation." He then explained, "The strategy that we in Fire This Time introduced and have hammered down on now for more than two years - although this is not a new idea or strategy- which has also been picked up by some other politically active groups in Vancouver and in Canada is the clear, important and powerful strategy of UNITY OF PEOPLE AND NATIONS UNDER IMPERIALIST OCCUPATION AGAINST IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES. Whoever is suffering from imperialist occupation needs to unite and support other oppressed nations with active solidarity or by joining them directly. Our problem is one, therefore our cause is one, and

ultimately our destiny is one. We need to unite in order to win. This is what connects the Indigenous struggle in this country to the struggle of Palestinians, Afghans and especially Iraqi people today." Ali Yerevani ended his talk by emphasizing that, "The antiwar movement today in order to be able to expand and become powerful and effective has to have three fundamental political demands: End the Imperialist War, End the Imperialist Occupation, and Self-Determination for Oppressed Nations. Everything else stems from these demands."

Within the discussion after Yerevani's talk the importance of long-term movement building with concrete demands was strongly established.

MAWO co-chair, Shannon Bundock began the third section of the conference by outlining the global antiwar movement in the last two years. First speaking on the conversion of the antiwar movement into an anti-occupation movement, Bundock said, "Despite the downturn in momentum globally when Bush declared the war was 'over', the Iraqi resistance was slowly gaining strength. As a result, the fall of 2003 brought a rejuvenation of the antiwar movement in the form of increased consciousness. This increased consciousness brought with it a stronger movement from the perspective of awareness and politics."

Bundock then clearly outlined the importance of developing, "a worldwide anti-imperialist

movement." She added that through supporting "working and poor people within both imperialist and third world nations, the expansion of this movement into an anti-capitalist movement - a movement that targets the root of imperialist war and occupation - also has the potential to become a reality."

Bundock's talk concluded by identifying the fact that, "the interest of imperialism is directly opposed to the interest of the majority of the people in the world. It is through establishing demands that are independent from imperialist interests and that don't make concessions or bend to imperialist pressure, that we can solidify a movement that is EFFECTIVE, BROAD and LONG-TERM."

The conference concluded with a discussion around how we need to continue to build momentum by taking on all opportunities to organize, educate and mobilize around the issues of war and occupation.

End Secret Trials and Security Certificates!

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to continue as the “recession broadened and deepened between 1990 and 1992” (HRSDC - *Government of Canada, 'History of Unemployment'*). As always, this recession brought increased attacks on workers in Canada and a drive from the ruling class for increased racist division between workers. One of their main tactics in this strategy was to attack the new, growing and most vulnerable layer of the working class: immigrants and refugees.

After declining yearly between 1974 and 1985, immigration levels had hit a steady increase of between 12% and 53% a year between 1986 and 1991. This increase included a rise in refugee claims resulting from an international capitalist crisis marked by imperialist war (such as the first US-war on Iraq in 1991) and in 1989 led the government to bring in the Immigrant and Refugee Board (IRB). This tribunal system of refugee determination, justified through the racist attacks on Sikh and Tamil refugees that landed in Nova Scotia in the late 1980's, set the stage for continued reactionary restrictions on refugee and immigrant applicants.

It was based on these factors that Security Certificates were introduced with the purpose of terrifying the growing communities of new immigrants and refugees and to control them as a cheap, desperate and exploitable labour force. But that was not all. The reason the Canadian ruling class does not want a super-exploited community to grow without being terrorized by the police, CSIS or the immigration board is because of the very real danger that the oppressed people will organize themselves and fight back.

The war on oppressed people in Canada in the era of war and occupation

Many of the same factors that brought about the introduction of the Security Certificate by the Canadian ruling class keeps it in use today. Since 9-11 however, reactionary attacks on immigrants and refugees have taken on an even higher strategic importance for the ruling class in Canada, the US and other imperialist countries.

Alongside Canada's new imperialist adventures in Afghanistan and Haiti, the suppression of the democratic, legal, economic and political rights of immigrants and refugees is necessary for the survival and expansion of Canadian capital. Every time a government official speaks of the 2002 Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act, the Anti-Terrorism Act, the December 2003 Public Safety Act or Security Certificates directly, they speak of them in terms of “national security.” The question they never answer is, national security for who?

The phrase “national security” coming from the mouths of government officials is meant to confuse working people about where their security lies. However, this phrase refers only to the security of the Canadian ruling class, a security completely separate and hostile to the security of working, poor and oppressed people. In 1990, the RCMP referred to the Mohawk nation as a threat to national security, Quebecois sovereigntists have been a threat to national security, and so have working people when they have organized themselves for decent wages and conditions. How did the BC Liberal government refer to Hospital Employee Union workers during the strike of May 2004? When the strike threatened to spread



through the province in defense of the rights of workers and oppressed people, the ruling class said that the union was ‘holding the province hostage’ and called the strikers a threat to the security of BC.

Today, while the ministry of labour recognizes that the shrinking population in Canada spells out a greater dependence on immigrant labour, the ruling class' worst ‘threat to national security’ are immigrants themselves - specifically those immigrants who are most vulnerable and under attack by imperialism internationally, Arabs, Muslims and everyone from the Middle East or South Asia.

End Secret Trials and Security Certificates!

On CBC television, Anne McLellan, the Minister of Public Safety repeated the

sentiment of the RCMP following the Oka crisis of 1990. She said, “We live in a world of heightened vigilance, both here and in the US. Information sharing, collection and dissemination is key to fighting terrorism.”

With Security Certificates remaining entrenched in the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act and the Secret Trial Five remain in jails, waiting for working, poor and oppressed people in Canada to stand together and say, “Enough! Racist terror against Muslims and Middle Eastern immigrants and refugees has nothing to do with my security!”

NO SECURITY CERTIFICATES! NO SECRET TRIALS! FREE THE SECRET TRIAL FIVE!

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

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

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

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

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

-Translated by Eric Lamoureux

Movimiento Fire This Time Por Justicia Social - Bases de Unidad

Hoy en día la humanidad es amenazada por guerras, hambre, crisis económicas, crimen y pobreza: males creados por el capitalismo y su incesante búsqueda por maximizar sus beneficios a expensas de todos los pueblos del mundo. Para combatir estos crímenes contra la humanidad, debemos concentrar todos nuestros esfuerzos en construir los cimientos para avanzar en una amplia lucha contra el capital internacional, sus herramientas de división de la clase obrera y sus instituciones locales.

Los principios fundamentales del Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social son la unidad y la solidaridad activa de todos los pobres y la clase trabajadora, local e internacionalmente. Estos principios no tienen sentido sin una lucha activa y tenaz, pues en sí estos principios se oponen rotundamente a los intereses de la clase dominante, la cual utilizará todos los medios a su disposición para mantenernos divididos y hostiles entre nosotros mismos.

Fire This Time es una organización política basada en la acción y comprometida en construir el poder social y político de los trabajadores/as y los pobres de Colombia Británica. Creemos que la única manera de desafiar eficazmente y amenazar al gobierno y su agenda corporativa es con la organización de masas en lugares de trabajo y en las calles. Nos dedicamos a movilizar y a unificar a la clase obrera para combatir al Gobierno Liberal, y sus legislaciones y políticas en contra de los pobres y trabajadores/as.

Nos comprometemos a organizarnos junto con la gente pobre y los trabajadores/as de las comunidades más atacadas y explotadas de la región metropolitana de Vancouver y sus alrededores: con las comunidades de gente de color, inmigrantes, refugiados, “illegales”, trabajadores/as de bajos ingresos, lisiados/as, trans/bi/homosexuales, comunidades indígenas, y desempleados/as. Nos oponemos a todas las formas de opresión y de explotación: sexismo, racismo, homofobia, colonialismo y a todas las instituciones, pensamientos, creencias, acciones y

comportamientos que humillen y degraden creando hostilidad y división entre nosotros.

La meta del Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social es construir un amplio movimiento de base, fuerte y eficaz para derrotar al gobierno Liberal de C. B., y aunque nos enfoquemos principalmente en la lucha política local, nuestro movimiento se integra en el amplio contexto revolucionario de la lucha internacionalista contra el capitalismo e imperialismo. El apoyo a las luchas populares en otros países debilita la hegemonía y el poder de la clase capitalista en otras tierras, debilitando a la vez su poder local, y por consecuencia esto apoya las luchas populares en Canadá. Además, la práctica de la solidaridad internacional solidifica la cooperación esencial en la construcción de un movimiento mundial por justicia social. La agenda del Gobierno Liberal es parte de un programa de reestructuración global conocido como neo-liberalismo. La lucha contra el Partido Liberal de Colombia Británica es por lo tanto una lucha contra el neo-liberalismo y capitalismo global.

Debemos ampliarnos implícita y explícitamente y hacer las conexiones relevantes a nuestras luchas locales diarias, para poder superar las divisiones geográficas, y dejar claro que no estamos solos, que luchamos junto a millones de personas de la clase obrera y pobres del mundo entero. En la globalización capitalista - imperialista no hay lucha local que no tenga un carácter internacional.

El Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social apoyará y trabajará con otros movimientos y luchas progresistas ya sea por demandas inmediatas o a largo plazo a nivel local, nacional, e internacional. Nuestra meta principal es abolir la pobreza e injusticia por medio de la educación, la participación y la acción directa. Intentamos llegar a un nivel de conciencia colectivo que permita a las personas y pueblos oprimidos, pensar socialmente y actuar políticamente para así poder alcanzar la justicia social por los medios que sean necesarios.

-Translated by Claudio Ekdahl

Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice Basis of Unity

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

Fire This Time is a politically based action organization committed to building the social and political power of poor and working people in BC. We believe the only way to effectively challenge and threaten the government and their corporate agenda is through the organization of masses of people in motion in workplaces and in the streets. We are dedicated to mobilizing and unifying poor and working people against the Liberal Government and their anti-poor, anti-working people legislations and policies. We are committed to organizing with working and poor people from the most attacked and exploited communities in the lower mainland and beyond: communities of colour, immigrants, refugees, "illegals", low-wage workers, disabled people, queer people, indigenous communities, unemployed people and low-income families. We oppose all forms of oppression and exploitation: from sexism to racism, from homophobia to colonialism and all other institutions, thought, beliefs, actions and behaviours that humiliate and demean people to bring hostility and division amongst us.

The goal of the Fire This Time Movement

for Social Justice is to build a broad based movement to defeat the BC Liberal Government. Our work is to provide the tools necessary to unify and activate the working class in BC to build a strong and effective broad-based movement to oppose the BC Liberals and their attacks on poor and working people. This movement must be integrated in the wider revolutionary context of international struggle against capitalism and imperialism; although we are mainly engaged in local politics, in essence the scope of our work is internationalist. Supporting the struggles of oppressed people abroad weakens the hegemony and power of the capitalist class in other lands and consequently weakens their rule at home, therefore aiding the battles of oppressed people in Canada. In addition, the practice of international solidarity solidifies the co-operation essential in building a world movement for social justice. The Liberal Government's agenda is part of a global restructuring program known as "neoliberalism". To fight the BC Liberals is to fight neo-liberalism and global capitalism. We must expand on this both implicitly and explicitly to make the connections relevant to peoples daily domestic struggle, to overcome geographic division, and to make it clear that when we engage in struggle we do not struggle alone but alongside millions of working and poor people around the world. Within capitalist and imperialist globalisation there is no local struggle that does not have an international character. Every international is local and every local is international.

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

Jumbo Ski Resort

From page 33

its water supply. On the brink of revolution the Bolivian government finally cancelled its agreement with Bechtel (a Dutch corporation), only to be sued by them under the laws of a free trade agreement between Bolivia and the Netherlands, similar to NAFTA. Bolivia is an example of a government who ignored the common needs of its people and their opinions. It did this in the name of shortterm economic gain for stake holders and the government itself. Sound familiar?

Every part of the world has its own cultures and traditions essential to its sovereignty. Globalization erodes these unique ways of

life and attempts to homogenize cultures to serve corporate interests.

The big question now is... If the Liberals get away with Jumbo. What's next? If democracy hasn't been served in this case, what will happen when a resource like water – a common heritage basic to survival – is up for sale on the global market place?

Ask people in the Kootenays and Invermere what they want!

Sources: Alternatives of Economic Globalization (A Better World is Possible) A report of The International Forum on Globalization (1)



remember that these rights were fought for by our brothers and sisters over the last 100 years through mass movements, labour movements, and by progressive and revolutionary organizations. If we choose not to defend these gains we aren't going to be in a position to make gains in the future. In other words, to expand democratic rights or any rights is impossible if we don't defend and maintain the ones that we have right now.

It is also important to know how the dynamics of defending and consolidating democratic and human rights can be used as an avenue to expand them. Every victory for oppressed people puts them in a better position to drive for the next stage since every stage of struggle is a transitional period for the next one and political preparation is the key for each stage and the next stage and so on. We believe in mass movements, and in defending democratic rights and human rights. We do not believe in defending these rights just because they promote human values, the growth of human morale or the fundamental right of humans to enjoy a decent and joyful life. We believe in defending these rights because in this stage of human life which is mainly miserable and unfair under capitalism and imperialism, defending democratic rights and human rights is also a strategy and tactic to advance the struggle. The importance of this is for opening more space for working, poor and oppressed people to connect with each other in order to be able to organize themselves against the ruling class offensive. Defending these rights also allows people to get involved in determining their own destiny using collective decision-making and collective actions to defend their rights and make change.

FTT: What's next for the defense campaign and how can people help you fight this campaign?

Kira: The next step in the campaign

has already begun it some ways, and it is to expand the campaign off-campus and into the city of Vancouver where we will be able to reach students from other colleges and universities and the general public. Because this case is firstly, about democratic rights, students' rights and women's rights and secondly, about the importance of antiwar organizing today.

I think that a way that other people can get involved in the campaign or to support us is by helping make this case known as broadly as possible. This can be done by getting in touch with us about getting materials or one of our newsletters and sending it to other people. Also, getting other groups or individuals to send letters in support of us to the LSU demanding that the ban be lifted and that the harassment complaint be properly investigated.

Nicole: A major aspect of the campaign is the letter writing to the LSU. At the Langara campus especially we are hoping to expand of the campaign to reach almost all 8, 000 students. This expansion is to develop discussions about the campaign in the context of our larger struggle as students within a student movement for democratic rights and for students' rights. Whether the attacks we face are coming from the provincial government in the form of increasing tuition fees or if the attacks are on antiwar organizers from their own Students' Union, it is the duty of all students to be able to defend their collective rights by organizing in defense of those who are under attack.

FTT: Thank Kira, thank you Nicole To get involved with the campaign please contact the Langara 2 Defense Committee: Thelangara2@yahoo.ca | 778-881-6156

Tamara Hansen is a second year student at the Simon Fraser University, is a worker and also the copy editor of the Fire This Time.

Support the Langara 2!

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than the number of students who voted in the last election of the Langara Students' Union (LSU), which was a little bit more than 220 votes. So I think that this shows how effective organizing and mobilizing students can be. Also, if we want to strengthen the position of Students' Unions and other groups who advocate for students' rights it is exactly through this method of campaigning and mobilizing that more students can become involved.

Nicole: Our approach to this campaign and students on and off the Langara campus has been not only defense work for myself and Kira as individuals but defense work for students as a force. It's within that light that this campaign has gone forward and has been able to effectively mobilize students, it's because it is bringing the very issue of students' rights and students' advocacy to people's classrooms and onto people's campuses.

FTT: You have also received support from off-campus groups and individuals. Could you tell us about that?

Kira: We sent information and have spoken to several women's groups as well and different prominent individuals about the campaign. Contacting off-campus women's organizations for support has been very important. Especially with this being a women's rights issue, because there has been a complaint of harassment that was filed and then not properly dealt with by the Students' Union. Instead we have been characterized and slandered

because of it.

Nicole: I think the support we have gotten off-campus has shown the level of importance of the case, not only for the student movement but also for larger movements that exists across the country right now, especially the antiwar movement. That is where we have received a lot of our support across the country as two antiwar activists who were banned essentially for antiwar organizing.

Kira: I was going to mention that someone we have gotten support from is Dan Freeman-Maloy who is a student activist and was banned and expelled by the administration of York University. He was banned last year for protesting Israel's suppression of Palestinians. I think this too shows the broadness of our campaign and how it really is an issue for students from all corners of the country and also that it is politically motivated. Like our case the stated reasons for his banning were not openly saying 'this is political' but as within both cases the issues of Israel and Palestine and antiwar work were very much the motivating factor.

FTT: Why do you think it is important for people concerned about democratic rights to support this issue?

Kira: I think that freedom of speech and freedom to organize are both basic rights that exist in our society. However flawed we may see our society as it runs today we have a responsibility that when these rights that we have right now come under attack, we must adamantly defend them. We must

MAWO in Action

Action in Toronto

International Day of Action!

On the Day of Bush's Inauguration, Demand **SELF-DETERMINATION FOR IRAQ, PALESTINE, AFGHANISTAN, HAITI, and INDIGENOUS NATIONS IN CANADA!**

END THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ!

BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

March & Rally Thursday JANUARY 20 2:30pm

Vancouver Art Gallery
Georgia St. @ Howe

Speakers to include:
Hazem Jamjoum
Speaking from Al-Awda-Toronto
Al-Awda's an international
Palestinian Right of Return
coalition
Mostafa Henawi
Speaking from the June 30th
Organizing Committee-Toronto
and Al-Awda-Toronto
Liisa Schofield
Speaking from the June 30th
Organizing Committee-Toronto

Mobilization Against War & Occupation
www.mawovancouver.org | info@mawovancouver.org | 604-322-1764

A Day To Mark The First Anniversary Of The Invasion Of Haiti

The Governments of the **US/UK/ISRAEL** are the **AXIS OF EVIL!**

End the Occupations of Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Haiti, and Indigenous Nations In Canada!

SAT FEBRUARY 26th

Rally & March 2:00pm

Vancouver Art Gallery
Georgia St. @ Howe St.

Mobilization Against War & Occupation
www.mawovancouver.org | info@mawovancouver.org | 604-322-1764

Part of the International Days of Action on the Second Anniversary of the US Invasion of Iraq

YES TO SELF-DETERMINATION! NO TO OCCUPATION OF IRAQ!

BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

NO TO OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE! NO TO OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN! NO TO OCCUPATION OF HAITI! NO TO OCCUPATION OF INDIGENOUS NATIONS IN CANADA!

RALLY & MARCH

2:00 PM

SATURDAY MARCH 19th

Vancouver Art Gallery
(Georgia St @ Howe St - Vancouver)

Mobilization Against War & Occupation
www.mawovancouver.org | info@mawovancouver.org | 604-322-1764

2 PM SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 2005

MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR + OCCUPATION (MAWO)
Presents a FREE Forum on

IMPERIALISM

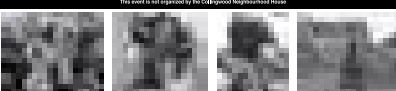
★ WAR ★

OCCUPATION

What we learn from the occupations of Indigenous Nations in Canada, Palestine, Iraq, Haiti and Afghanistan

Featuring Guest Speakers:
Liisa Schofield
(June 30th Organizing Committee, Toronto)
Hazem Jamjoum
(Al-Awda, Toronto)
Mostafa Henawi
(June 30th Organizing Committee + Al-Awda, Toronto)
Aaron Mercredi
(Mobilization Against War + Occupation, Vancouver)

Collingwood Neighbourhood House
5288 Joyce Street (2 Blocks south of Joyce Skytrain Station)
This event is not organized by the Collingwood Neighbourhood House



w: http://mawovancouver.org e: info@mawovancouver.org t: 604.322.1764

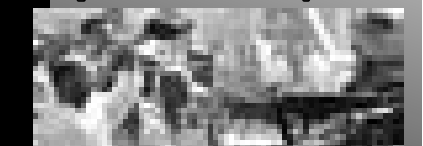
Part of the International Days of Action on the Second Anniversary of the US Invasion of Iraq

ALL DAY/ANTI-WAR/ANTI-OCCUPATION CONFERENCE

FREE EVENT

THE 21ST CENTURY: THE CENTURY OF WAR, OCCUPATION, AND RESISTANCE

Building the Anti-War Movement: Why There is No Other Option



SUNDAY MARCH 20th 12:30PM

BRITANNIA COMMUNITY CENTRE
(1661 NAPIER ST. & COMMERCIAL DR - VANCOUVER)
MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR & OCCUPATION
www.mawovancouver.org | info@mawovancouver.org | 604-322-1764

SATURDAY JAN. 29TH, 2005

Music of Resistance

MAWO Monthly Cultural Night and Fundraiser

Doors 8:30pm Show @ 9pm
El Cocal (1037 Commercial Drive)
Updates: www.mawovancouver.org

Imperialism, War, Occupation: What we learn from the occupations of Indigenous Nations in Canada, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Haiti
Monday January 24th, 2005
Free Forum & Discussion 12:30pm
SUB Lounge, Maple Building, Capilano College
Speaking: Mostafa Henawi, Al-Awda Toronto, June 30th Organizing Committee
Endorsed by Capilano Student's Union
Organized by: MAWO

Campaign

Monday January 24th, 2005
at Kwantlen College Surrey Campus "Welcome Week"
Organized by Kwantlen Students Against War and Occupation (KSAWO)

Democratic Rights, Women's Rights and Students Rights Why Students Should Support the Langara 2

Monday January 24th, 2005
Back to school teach-in @ Langara College
Speaking: Liisa Schofield, Anti War Activist with the June 30th Organizing Committee, Toronto
Organized by the Langara 2 Defense Committee

Israeli Occupation and Palestinian Self-determination Why Students Should Support Palestinian Sovereignty

Monday January 24th, 2005
Free Forum and Discussion 1:30pm
the Forum Chambers @ Simon Fraser University
Speaking: Hazem Jamjoum, Al-Awda Toronto
Organized by Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) Club-SFU

Anti War Tabling and Petitioning for Canada Out! Campaign and War Resisters

"Don't Ask Don't Tell" Campaign Launch

Friday January 14th
9 PM at The 360
326 Queen St. West

Marking the official launch of the don't ask don't tell campaign, and raising funds and awareness about the situation of immigrants and refugees that are forced into the margins of municipality. Featuring performers and speakers.

Organized by Don't Ask Don't Tell, Contact:
www.dadttoronto.org
info@dadttoronto.org

Stop SNC-Lavalin's participation in War Crimes in Iraq and

Afghanistan!

Monday, January 17, 2005
Rally, Street Theatre and Nonviolent Direct Action
SNC-Lavalin Corporate Headquarters, 2200 Lakeshore Blvd. West (at Park Lawn)

Vehicles leave downtown Toronto at 11 am sharp (location TBA)
Organized by Homes not Bombs,
www.homesnotbombs.ca

All Out on January 20th! Action Against Bush Inauguration

January 20th at 4pm
US Consulate
360 University Ave.

Organized by Coalition Against War and Racism

OCAP To Retake The City Owned 590 Jarvis Building

February 3rd at city hall
Organized by OCAP,
Contact: (416) 925-6939
ocap@tao.ca

Toronto's first Prisoners' Justice Film Festival

Thursday January 20th 6:30-9:30pm;
Saturday January 22nd 4:00-10:00pm;
Sunday January 23rd 4:00-10:00pm;
Innis Town Hall - University of Toronto

Organized by the Prisoners' Justice Action Committee

Action in Vancouver

PROTEST ISRAELI WAR CRIMES! PROTEST RACIST ISRAELI AMBASSADOR!

Wednesday, January 12th at 6:30pm
Jewish Community Centre
Wosk Auditorium
950 - 41st Avenue West, Vancouver

The New Israeli Ambassador to Canada, Alan Baker, will be holding a town hall meeting at the Jewish Community Centre in Vancouver on January 12, 2005. We call on you to join us in protesting his visit and demonstrating your dissent with the Martin government initiating changes in Canada's Israel policy.

www.palestinecommunitycentre.com

FARE STRIKE! Friday January 14th

In response to TransLink's January 1st fare hike, the Bus Riders Union is organizing a FARE STRIKE for January 14th, 2005. On this day, BRU organizers as well as allies and activists will be riding the buses throughout the region encouraging bus riders to not pay fares.

Organized by the Bus Riders Union, contact: 604 215 2775 or bru@resist.ca

A CANADIAN REFUGEE CAMP

Saturday February 5th, 2005
Starts at Noon, rally at 1 PM
Vancouver Art Gallery

Organized by No One Is Illegal Vancouver, Contact:
noii-van@resist.ca | 778-885-0040 | www.noii-van.resist.ca

RESIST 2010! BOYCOTT DELTA HOTELS!

Saturday February 12th
Gather at Victory Square at 1 pm

March to Oppenheimer Park
Organized by No One Is Illegal Vancouver, Contact:

noii-van@resist.ca | 778-552-2099 | www.noii-van.resist.ca

DEMO THE LEGISLATURE!



Tuesday Feb. 15th

9:30am at Victory Square Park
Tuesday, February 15th 2005 Victoria, BC
On Tuesday, February 15th 2005, the Liberals make their Speech from the Throne and APC will be there!
604-682-2726 apc@resist.ca <http://apc.resist.ca>

11th Annual Rock For Choice Festival

January 26th through February 5th at various venues.
Rock for Choice conference & Film Festival (featuring a special screening of Avi Lewis & Naomi Klein's "The Take")
Saturday January 29th at SFU Harbor Centre, by donation**

www.rockforchoicevancouver.com
Info Line: 604-682-3269 Box 8471