

# FIRE THIS TIME

The Newspaper of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice



Issue 6/7 - July/August 2003 Double Issue

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FREE

## No to Imperialist War and Occupation Bring the Troops Home Now!

By Ali Yerevani

*"As we pursue the global war on terrorism, we're going to have to go where the terrorists are. And we're seeing some evidence, at least preliminary, that more and more of these large uncontrolled, ungoverned areas are going to be potential havens for that kind of activity."*

- General James Jones, the head of the European Command, New York Times, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003

In other words, the US general is saying that there is no limitation, no border, no law and no moral obligation against them to land anywhere they wish to, as long as they can justify it under "the war on terrorism." A statement like this is decisively important to understand for working people generally and working class fighters specifically, since it is not just an expressed opinion. More importantly, it tells us what our tasks will be against the military expansion of imperial countries in general and the USA in particular. The above statement is extremely important because it clearly states what is on the agenda of imperialists. However, we must note that this is not just a US perspective but the collective agreement and understanding of all imperialist countries around the world: whether it is Japan or Australia, Canada or the US, Germany, France or the UK,

Spain or Italy, and finally, the master of all terrorists, imperialist Israel.

### Their Agenda, Our Agenda

We shouldn't forget that the "anti-terror" agenda is not limited to third world countries, the Middle East, or Northern Africa; it is truly a well-rounded agenda against all working and oppressed people of the world, including those of us in the imperialists' home countries. Again, it must be emphasized that these fascist measures are not aimed just at people with the name of Ali or Hussein, Kobra or Raj, but Jack and Paul, Laura and Marg are included.

The challenge that working, poor and oppressed people face is a big one, namely how to get united against our vicious enemy, regardless of ethnic origin or citizenship. We must understand that we are all under attack. We must understand that the "war on terror" is taking place at home and abroad.

We live in a world where the composition of working people is rapidly changing due to the migration and displacement of working people. In the majority of imperialist countries, war at home or abroad will lose its meaning, since, in 10 or 15 years, a significant percentage of the population

of imperialist countries will be third world, indigenous, Blacks, Asian and Latino.

Practically and strategically, this is an advantage that working class fighters must take and utilize. In a very meaningful way we are moving towards closing the gap between "abroad" and "home." In terms of readiness, the question of questions is the subjective factor: leadership. By that time, this leadership must have a tested program, a revolutionary program. In terms of the task for the coming showdown with imperialist countries, nothing is more central than political preparation.

Nevertheless, political preparation, rather than a mystic and sophisticated notion, practically and politically means building up through the masses. In other words, we must understand the class motions of ours and theirs, and respond to them accurately and patiently with one strategy in mind, to develop a revolutionary program. We can also get help from the successful and unsuccessful experience of struggles of working people all around world.

Within this path, a good start for all of us could be to learn from the latest successful experience of oppressed

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## The Vancouver Police Department: Abusing Users

By Ivan Drury

*"If certain people get sick, I'm sorry that happens. What was here before was totally unacceptable, we couldn't allow that to continue."*

- Police Chief Jamie Graham, in response to a question about police action leading to a rise in HIV / AIDS and Hep C transmission, just following the launch of Operation Torpedo

Human Rights Watch, the largest independent human rights organization in the US, visited Vancouver to investigate reported human rights violations at play in the Downtown Eastside (DTES). Human Rights Watch (HRW) researchers spent 4 days and nights in the streets of the DTES in April at the beginning of the then brand new police operation known as "Operation Torpedo".

They interviewed people on the streets, and people who accessed services in the DTES as well as monitoring

the activity of the people on the streets in relation with the police. They hoped to understand the impact the police initiative to "clean up" the open drug scene was having on the ongoing health initiatives in the neighbourhood, such as needle exchange and all night clinics. In June, they released a report with recommendations to the city, province and Canadian federal governments.

The report said that the police and the governments behind them, were guilty of human rights abuses, worst of all in being complicit with the levels of HIV, AIDS and Hep C transmissions in the area. The report was especially concerned with a new outburst of HIV / AIDS and Hep C being spurred by users' lowered access to services because of the heightened police presence and the accompanying harassment.

The report recommended that the VPD immediately cease all practices of arbitrary arrest and unnecessary use of force, and that there be a multi-governmental initiative to create an independent police complaints commission. It also recommended that the federal government "amend or clarify" laws concerning possession of illicit drug paraphernalia so as to not interfere with needle exchange programs and that all levels of government focus on harm reduction instead of enforcement.

The three-month trial time period of "Operation Torpedo" is coming to a close, and predictably, the VPD is appealing for more time to continue the experiment. On Tuesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, the VPD will appear before city council to ask for \$1.14 million for overtime pay for the 50 extra cops in the DTES until the end of 2003. They assert that by

that time, the worth of their program will be proven and they will approach council again for funds to create a new zone of policing concerned entirely with the DTES.

This approach is entirely consistent with all models of drug "treatment" that the VPD base their strategy on and are surrounded by. In 2001, the Auditor General of Canada reported that 90% of all federal monies dedicated to combating illicit drug use went into police budgets for enforcement. Further, in their defense of their "Torpedo", the VPD note the successes of the New York City 'war on drugs' displacement strategy. All of this is contrary to the scientific research that shows that enforcement does nothing for users but put them in jail and then back in the streets in death cycles of crime and spiraling poverty.

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## 'No to Imperialist War and Occupation'

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people: the Cuban revolution. Besides activism, which is necessary to test our developing program, we need education, education, and education in our organizing and in following this path. To produce thinker-activists rather than functionary-activists, in order to overcome the lack of skilled and revolutionary-minded activists, and for truly professional revolutionary-activists, the most important intellectual development is education. As Che said, education is not to produce an armchair revolutionary, but a self-conscious field revolutionary.

### Reactive or Pre-emptive?

*"What we don't want to see in Africa is another Afghanistan, a cancer growing in the middle of nowhere."*

- Major-General Jeffrey Kohler, the European Command's director of plans and policy, NYT, July 7 2003

We need to remind ourselves that since 9/11, and especially since the occupation of Afghanistan, we live in a totally different strategic era of imperialism: an era of pre-emptive strikes. In the next two decades, we will live qualitatively differently from the way we did during the Cold War or in the transitional period of 1985 to the present.

There should be no doubt that the world today is going through a new era of increased wars and destruction. These wars and occupations are not really reactive to where terrorism occurs or potentially exists, the way imperialist countries explain or claim. Those are lies and justifications that even bureaucrats of average intelligence in the New York Stock Market or the Pentagon understand.

The real reason is that rival colonial powers, within their fierce competition for new markets and the domination of existing world markets, will be engaging in direct military intervention and occupation in order to organize third world countries for their purposes. Pre-emptive really

# Social Housing Now!

By Ivan Drury

On July 2nd, the Anti-Poverty Committee and the Housing Action Committee called a demonstration and set up tents in Victory Square in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. "Tent City" has become home to dozens of homeless people and their supporters as the housing crisis in Vancouver continues under the BC Liberal and Federal Liberal governments.

Since the Woodwards squat in the fall of 2002, this demonstration is the second example of the creation of housing as protest within the last year in BC and one of many examples of such actions across Canada. This trend is a reflection of the housing crisis in all urban centres and even in rural areas across the country.

The development of social housing is a solution to this crisis. The housing market is only getting more exclusive as those in need of affordable housing become more common. According to the census taken in 1996, 47% of all renters pay over 30% of their income to rent, and one in four renters pay more than half of their income to rent. This latter category of renters is considered at "high risk" of homelessness. What these numbers cannot factor is that an undocumented amount of people who pay 30% of their income to rent live in sub-standard, overcrowded and dangerous conditions to maintain their "low" rent. A shortage

of social housing increases the market desperation for "cheap" accommodations and simultaneously drives rental prices up and the conditions of these properties down. Even where homelessness is not an immediate issue for a family, the condition and price of their housing is.

Housing has been an issue, a struggle and a crisis throughout all of the history of capitalism. The capitalist system depends on the manipulation of real estate markets alongside the desperation of workers' unemployment. Landlords create artificial housing shortages by allowing their buildings to stand empty and the government helps to drive up the rents of existing properties uniformly by cutting social housing. Through a simultaneous undermining of wages and welfare and this manufactured housing crisis, workers and poor people are put dropped into a desperate day-to-day struggle for their own shelter and survival while bosses and big landlords rake in profits.

In the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), the government's answer to this problem is the further development of emergency shelters. Shelters are not a solution and ultimately, only mask the problem and introduce poor people, and increasingly, working homeless people, into cycles of institutionalized poverty. This focus on the development of shelters continues the façade that housing is only an issue for

homeless people; and nothing could be further from the truth.

The BC Liberals froze and then cut all funding for the creation of social housing in BC immediately after coming into office in 2001. Currently, BC Housing, the main provider of social housing in BC, manages 8,000 households in its projects. There are over 11,000 households on their waitlist. Even if every single one of their projects emptied out overnight, their waitlist would not be exhausted. To make matters worse, there is no new social housing being built. In Greater Vancouver, and particularly in Surrey and Port Coquitlam, this situation is inflamed further by the flight of working and poor people from rural areas and dried-up resource towns into these metropolitan centres in search of employment.

Homelessness is a symptom of the housing crisis in Vancouver and all across Canada. This crisis is created and exacerbated by neo-liberalism and its current government vehicle, the BC Liberals. All levels of government are attempting to mask the severity of this crisis with shelters and the displacement of the homeless through police attacks. All renters and tenants in the province must recognize that the cuts to social housing affect us all directly. We must all demand that all three levels of government fund and build social housing now, for the benefit of us all.

means that there will be no accountability and no explanation or warning whatsoever. They will observe, they will judge, and they will preemptively attack.

The world deep market crisis, which is a capitalist and imperialist crisis caused by stagnation, falling average rates of profit and the dangerous phenomenon of

Contagion, means that those imperialist powers that can do more pre-emptive assaults will be increasing their chances to dominate the market. This is the true meaning of the US "anti-terrorist" campaign. The pre-emptive campaign has to fulfill two major goals as well: first, the suppression of revolutionary movements everywhere; second, to facilitate the

plundering of semi-colonial countries as efficiently and rapidly as possible. Afghanistan and Iraq were the first two probes for colonial powers, especially the US, for the coming epoch of wars and occupations.

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# The Criminalization of Refugees in Canada

By Leah Mckenzie-Brown

On Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the Toronto Police Department swept the homes of 26 immigrants. With 46 "dangerous and illegal immigrants" detained in two weeks, the squad has had the nerve to dub this project "RBG," or "Really Bad Guys."

Yet these attacks are not precedent-setting; similar raids took place in December of last year when 36 migrants were arrested and detained in a two-week period. These attacks, and the "anti-terrorist" legislation behind them, target vulnerable migrants and refugee claimants. The Canadian government is depriving the rights of these people in order to extend the racist foundation of Canadian immigration policy to all aspects of life for refugees, immigrants and non-status people in Canada.

For immigrants and refugees, this is nothing new. Refused and selective immigration admission, harassment, racist division of labour to the point of slavery, detention and deportation mark the entire history of Canada.

### 1914

In 1900, legislation was passed allowing Indian immigration only if the migrants had \$200 on their person upon entry. Immigration was restricted

to ships that followed a direct route to Canada, a long and almost impossible journey. But in 1914, a Japanese streamliner was chartered to travel a direct route to Canada in compliance with the legislation of the time. 340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims and 12 Hindus aboard the Komagata Maru docked in the Burrard inlet in Vancouver having traveled directly from Hong Kong. In spite of the journey and their compliance with Canadian immigration law, the passengers were made to stay aboard the ship for six weeks, were not given access to a lawyer, and were allowed no contact with anyone on shore before finally being turned back to Calcutta.

### 1923

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1923, the Canadian government passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. In the following 24 years that the law existed, only 50 Chinese immigrants were allowed to enter Canada through legal immigration process.

### 1999

On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1999, a boatload of Chinese men and women arrived on the shores of Vancouver. In the following six weeks, three more boats arrived, and a total of 599 asylum seekers docked on the shores of Canada's West Coast.

80 people managed to "escape" and become "illegals," while most of the remaining refugees were kept in detention centres and then deported back to uncertain futures in China.

### 2001 to Present Day

The legislation and agreements passed within months of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks targeted racially, ethnically, culturally and religiously specific communities of refugees and immigrants. Middle Eastern, South Asian, Latin American, African and Muslim communities felt the impact of these attacks immediately. These communities and the individuals within them are still reeling from this impact.

For years, the Canadian government held a moratorium on deportations to Algeria. An estimated 100,000 to 150,000 people have been killed in ongoing conflict in Algeria since 1992 and the Canadian government, obeying international law, forbade the forced return of asylum seekers there.

On April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade issued a release warning Canadian tourists to avoid Algeria. The next day Immigration

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

www.fire-this-time.org

July/August 2003

Issue 6/7

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

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*This newspaper could not have been possible without the generous contributions from our supporters. We would especially like to thank the Hospital Employees Union and the Kwantlen Student Association, which made this issue possible.*

# Iraq: The Early Failure of the US Strategy for World and Market Domination

By Ivan Drury

*"If the Americans want to know what we are concerned about, it is not the Baathists. It is a lack of electricity and a lack of basic services, such as garbage collection."*

- Akram Hussein, a worker in Baghdad

*"The Iraqi people did not fight the Americans during the war, only Saddam's people did. But if the people decide to fight them now, they are in big trouble. All of us will become suicide bombers."*

- Former Iraqi warrant officer who marched on Baghdad with 3,000 others

The occupation of Iraq is not going well for the US - UK coalition troops. The same US strategy that started the war is carrying on through the ongoing war and occupation. While the US strategy is being exposed from beginning to end by what is happening on the ground in Iraq now, the strategy is also exposing itself to high desert winds that threaten to tear it apart.

Chronic poverty, hunger, unemployment, closed schools and a complete lack of basic services along with daily violence and humiliation at the hands of the US troops is marking the lives of all of the people of Iraq. Far from getting better since the US-led sanctions were choking the people of Iraq, the US-led occupation has bombed whatever means of survival people had developed through the last decade and brought suffering and indignity to even previously disaffected parts of the population.



US troops stop car in Iraq, July 2003

The coalition troops have found themselves under increasing attack both in Baghdad and in rural areas where they had not previously met with resistance. This resistance is coupled with the falling morale of US soldiers.

Finally, it is becoming apparent that the US-UK militaries are looking down the barrel of a guerrilla war that neither their troops nor their families at home are willing to fight. The Iraqi people are uniting across all ethnic and religious bounds and mounting the armed and organized power they need to end the occupation of their country.

## War in the boardroom

When the US went to war against Iraq,

their real target was neither Saddam Hussein nor his Baath Party. The real US target was established before there was any talk of war on Iraq. While the sanctions on Iraq that were created by the US and imposed by the UN Security Council (UNSC) were crippling the people of Iraq and strengthening the power of Saddam Hussein, the US economy was in trouble. American business and American capital were facing a foe greater than any fabricated "evil dictator" threatening the "freedom and security" of the American people: the crisis of the global economic market. To combat this crisis, the real strategy of US imperialism is global hegemony. Their real target: rival imperialist countries.

The public may never know the exact cynical negotiations that the US engaged in with the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and others in the UNSC who were "opposed" to the war on Iraq, but we can be certain that Bush was not bargaining with both hands on the table. For the US to dominate the people of Iraq, their precious resources and their country's important strategic geo-military position, they could not afford to share the bounty of the then-promised war. Iraq owed \$127 billion to the G8 countries as a whole and the vast majority of that debt was to France, Germany and Russia. For these countries to support the US war drive against Iraq, they would have had to receive a guarantee of the return of their loans and a greater return for their investments in Iraq's military, resources and infrastructure. The US was not willing or able to give these guarantees and proceeded to war with only the UK, a former superpower that is isolated amongst the European Union with lofty imperialist dreams of its own, and a flimsy coalition of weak colonial and semi-colonial countries by their side.

Following the beginning of the occupation, the US sat down to the bargaining table with ministers from these countries again. These ministers from Germany and Russia found themselves in a much weaker bargaining position than before. The US had demonstrated its willingness to act unilaterally and these rival governments

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# Lessons of Building the Antiwar Movement in Vancouver

By Shannon Bundock

The overall success of the anti-war movement in Vancouver must be seen in the global context, as we are only relevant as part of an international movement. We were successful in effectively influencing the strategy and tactics of imperialists. Under the pressure of the mass movement, attempts at justifying this invasion went from "seeking out Al Qaeda", to "finding weapons of mass destruction", to finally, "liberating the Iraqi people." All of these excuses failed to convince the people of the world of any justification for war and failed to quell the resistance in Iraq or anywhere.

Many have said that it is not significant that we delayed or altered the imperialist invasion or strategy and tactics. They argue that the movement was a failure because we did not completely stop the war. What must be understood is that the delay is an example of the ability of people protesting to affect imperialism.

The primary objective of this global resistance movement is to raise the political consciousness of oppressed people and as a result, build the unity and confidence of all poor and working people internationally to fight back against imperialist aggression.

## Vancouver Mobilizes

When the bombing of Iraq began in March of 2003, StopWar.ca, the main anti-war coalition in Vancouver, began organizing daily marches and rallies. The energy and stamina at these events was unprecedented, with people staying long after organizers had officially ended the events and asked people to go home. The people coming to the streets were primarily unaffiliated with any unions or progressive left groups, and diverse in age and ethnicity. The marches were filled with many "first time" protesters, as was true for the movement across the globe.

Immediately after the bombing started, on March 19th through 22nd, StopWar.ca called four consecutive demonstrations. It is significant that, despite a lack of serious and consistent participation of the official labour movement in Vancouver, the mobilizations managed to grow and escalate in those four days. By March 22nd there were over 10,000 people surrounding the US consulate, opposing the war on Iraq. These 10,000 people came out with only three days notice and without any major contingents of organized labour in Vancouver.

## Learn from Experience

Many of the necessary

mobilizations, such as March 19-22, were only successful as a result of the momentum of the movement and could have been much more successful if the leadership had pushed the movement ahead. At that time this was the role that some young and third world organizers were taking on, as it was the role they *had* to take on. This is what happened with the April 5<sup>th</sup> mobilization that was called by the Youth-3rd World Alliance. People in the streets were demanding mobilization and StopWar.ca was refusing to organize that mobilization. Youth -3rd World Alliance had to take on the leadership and respond. The April 5<sup>th</sup> demonstration drew nearly 1,000 people and was a major success, especially for an organization of people new to political organizing and isolated from the main leadership of the anti-war movement.

It was clear that StopWar.ca in general and the leadership in particular was not adequately responding to the movement to advance the struggle. This was a result of the fact that the people in the streets - young



Antiwar rally in Vancouver, March 22nd 2003

people, people of colour, and largely, independent people - were not represented adequately in leadership. This is something that still must be addressed by the leadership of the anti-war movement if it is serious about building an effective movement.

## Education and Political Focus

The intention of political education against war is to raise the level of consciousness of people coming to the streets, to convince people to oppose war who are confused about the war or in support of it, and to neutralize and demoralize supporters of imperialism.

The vital and central issue of political development is the establishment of independent working class politics. Some initial successes were had with this development in the Vancouver anti-war movement. This was reflected in the notion that we opposed the war regardless of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) decisions and regardless of the government of Canada's position. Enforcing independent working class politics means enforcing a politic independent from both capitalists and reformists.

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# Same-Sex Marriage: A Victory for Working People

By Shannon Bundock

**2002:** The Ontario Superior Court ruled unanimously that restricting marriage to one man and one woman is unconstitutional. The court gave the Ontario and Federal governments 24 months to change their legislation to allow same-sex couples to marry. The Ontario government decided not to appeal the ruling. The federal government released a public opinion poll indicating that most Canadian adults favor allowing same-sex couples to marry. Three days later, the federal government appealed the ruling to the Ontario Court of Appeals.

**June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003:** The Ontario Court of Appeal legalized same-sex marriage in Ontario.

**June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003:** The Federal Government threw in the towel. They felt that they were forced to accept the decisions of three senior provincial courts. At a caucus meeting, the Liberal party decided to not appeal the decisions of the Ontario and British Columbia appeal courts to the Supreme Court of Canada. Rather, it will introduce legislation to Parliament which will legalize same-sex marriage across the country.

**July 8<sup>th</sup> 2003:** ...the British Columbia Court of Appeal had suspended implementation of same-sex marriages in the province until July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

Some homosexual rights groups in the province asked the court to reconsider the one-year delay, because of the Ontario Court of Appeal's June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003 decision to legalize same-sex marriages immediately. The court issued a supplementary ruling, ordering the government of British Columbia to start issuing marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples immediately. The government anticipated this decision and had all systems in place to issue licenses."

## Why Victory?

All working, poor and oppressed people must recognize this as a victory, although a partial one, for homosexuals. This is also an important victory for all working people. By making same-sex marriage possible and legal, we, as working people, can continue our struggle to overcome the division imposed on us by the capitalist ruling class.

Winning the fight for the legalization of same-sex marriage in Ontario and in British Columbia means that working class people have finally challenged and defeated one of the many barriers that work to keep us divided and hostile amongst ourselves. In the long term, this will have an impact on the growing consciousness of exploited people as it highlights the struggle against oppression based on sexual orientation.

There are obviously different

reactions to the Ontario and British Columbia rulings from the queer community. Some express that it is insignificant, as they reject the overall notion of marriage itself. What is important to recognize is that the implications of this ruling have an effect regardless of any critique of the validity of marriage as an institution, just as the effects of denying this right have an effect on all queer people, even those who would never want to marry. The issue is that queer people must be in a position where they make the choice about marriage for themselves, not in a position where they have the decision imposed on them. Essentially, forcing the Canadian government to begin to recognize queer people as equal through the same-sex marriage legislation weakens the Canadian capitalist state, and enforces the fact that there are no legally fundamental differences between people based on their sexual orientation, other than the fact that one group is marginalized by the Canadian ruling class.

## Same-Sex Marriage or Civil Union?

It is important to note that the legalization of same-sex marriage in Ontario and in BC is significant in the fact that it is defined as "marriage" and not a "civil union." By defining it as such this expands the legislation to encompass a redefinition of

the family and thus attacks the homophobic and misogynistic concept of family that exists in capitalist society. By attacking this reactionary concept of family, as one man-one woman, the subservient roles of women in these relationships are also attacked. When one can no longer define the female as the one to be burdened with unpaid labour and "women's work," there is a greater potential to challenge this exploitive division. This important step towards the eradication of discrimination against queer people undercuts the oppression of women and their role in the family as a basic institution of capitalist society. As a result, the challenge and redefinition of family that comes about with same-sex marriage is a gain for all women.

## Legal Victory is a Political Victory

The new same-sex marriage rulings by Ontario and BC courts must be seen as an important win in the struggle against the suppression of working and poor people by the Canadian ruling class. Winning a legal victory is the first step to fighting prejudice against the queer community in any society. The passing of this legislation means that same-sex couples are entitled to the same Workers Compensation Board benefits, child custody rights, family leave benefits, etc. that all other legal marriages are entitled

to. As well, the impact reaches beyond Canada itself. The policy opens the way for same-sex couples from the United States and around the world to travel to Canada to marry, since Canada has no marriage residency requirements. Of other countries that have passed same-sex marriage legislation, the Netherlands has a long residency requirement, and Belgium will only allow marriages of foreign couples from countries that already allow such unions.

## The Next Step

The fight however, is not over yet, we must now ensure that the promises of legal same-sex marriage are followed through with. We must demand that, without any use of stall tactics in an attempt to delay the passing of the legislation, that the Canadian government recognize legal same-sex marriage throughout Canada equally for all people. Until this happens, all working and poor people must support the struggle of queer people for achieving this right in every corner of Canada. And then, beyond this, we must fight for an end to gay bashing and demand that the Canadian government finally recognize it as a hate crime. We must demand an end to discrimination based on sexual identity (transphobia) and all discrimination against all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual people.

## Immigrants, Refugees, and the War at Home

From page 2

Minister Denis Coderre returned from a four-day "tour" of Algeria, declared it a "safe country" and ordered the return of 1,069 asylum seekers from Canada to Algeria.

On October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2002, an Algerian couple and their two-year old son took up residence in a church to avoid a deportation ordered for two days later. After 11 days of supportive publicity for this family in hiding, Coderre issued a 90-day moratorium on the removal of Algerians in the same position as this couple so they could apply for landed immigrant status. This was a back-handed victory. It means that the Canadian government still does not recognize Algerians as refugees, leaving "many hundred" Algerian asylum seekers still open for deportation.

Similar action is being taken against entire communities of Palestinian and Colombian refugees while Immigration Canada, driven by a neo-liberal agenda, ignores cries for moratoriums. Regardless of the very real danger of torture, imprisonment and execution, poverty, humiliation and super-exploitation that awaits all asylum seekers at the end

of deportation, the Canadian government is wasting no time in sending people "home."

## Security Certificates and the War at Home

*"The government of Canada has been a helpful and strong supporter of the United States in the fight against terrorism."*

- From the office of the Canadian Solicitor General, 2003  
Attacks on Muslim refugees and immigrants have been carried out with the help of "Security Certificates" that allow people who are suspected of having connections to "terrorism" to be detained indefinitely without charges. All case information is kept secret and trials are often closed to the public.

Mahmoud Jaballah, a refugee from Egypt, has been held without released evidence since August 2001. He was originally arrested on 1999, held for a year, then released. The "evidence" for which he was arrested the first time was used again as the basis for this second arrest. The courts say that he will be held "indefinitely".

Muhammad Mahjoub, also from Egypt, has been held on a Security Certificate since June of 2000.

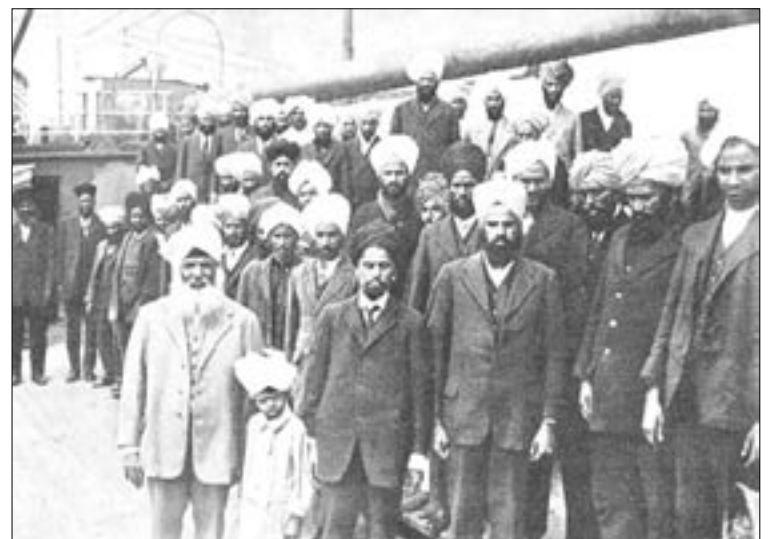
Hassan Almrei from Syria has been in custody since October 2001, and due to a special "secret trial", even his lawyer has not seen the documents used as evidence against him.

Mohamed Harkat, another refugee from Algeria, has been in detention since December 10, 2002. He has no charges laid against him.

Most recently, Adil Charkoui, a refugee from Morocco, was arrested on a Security Certificate in May of 2003. The evidence against him has not been released and the only reason that has been given for his arrest was that he taught martial arts in a Muslim Mosque.

Earlier this year, an Algerian man named Mourad Ikhlef met the very fate that threatens all these men and thousands more like them. Mourad Ikhlef was deported from Canada this past spring. Upon landing in Algeria he was disappeared. It is not known if he is still alive.

The Canadian government's focused attacks on people in Muslim communities in Canada are not acts of "national security." These attacks are acts of unsubstantiated systemic racism created to mask Canada's imperialist agenda.



Passengers of the Komagata Maru, 1914

## OPEN THE BORDERS!

All working, poor and oppressed people must demand the release of all people held on "Security Certificates" and an end to the deportation of Algerian, Palestinian and all refugees, non-status people and immigrants in Canada.

We must demand the regularization of all "non-status" people. The border with the United States, whose policies of apartheid and oppression are precedent-setting in the Western world, must be opened. We must fight for asylum for all people fleeing these racist wars and policies of fear and

hysteria. The War on Terror, the racist criminalization of Arabs, Muslims and people of colour must be stopped:

**NO ONE IS ILLEGAL!  
RELEASE ALL PRISONERS  
OF THE RACIST WAR ON  
TERROR!  
REGULARIZATION FOR ALL  
NON-STATUS PEOPLE IN  
CANADA!  
STOP ALL DEPORTATIONS!**

*See Fire This Time issues #3, #4, #5 for more information on refugee and immigrant rights. All issues available on our website: [www.fire-this-time.org](http://www.fire-this-time.org).*

# US, France Hands off the Congo and Liberia: Competition for Hegemony in Africa Intensifies

By Nasim Sedaghat  
and Ali Yerevani

*"Africa, as can be seen by recent events, is certainly a growing problem."*

- General James Jones of the Marine Corps, Head of the European Command.

Clearly General Jones is not simply repeating what everyone in Africa or outside of Africa knows about, since Africa is full of problems. What problem, then, is he referring to? In fact, he is saying that Africa is becoming a more unstable place because decades of imperialist colonial dominance have turned the continent into a slaughterhouse. As a result, thousands of men, women and children are dying of hunger and disease every month.

General Jones understands that a situation like this will eventually run into direct conflict with the western powers. He knows that the prospect of uprisings and revolutions is real, and they - the imperialists - must do something about it.

The US is a major player in Africa, and has three strategic objectives in the region. The first is to influence the ruling classes and military establishments of the African nations through military aid, training, and education. The second is to pacify the growing anger and frustration of African nations and their people. Finally, the US wants to execute their strategy of recolonizing Africa through direct military interventions and occupations.

## A Doomed Continent

Africa is the most miserable region in the world. The level of poverty in this continent is the highest in the world. The people of Africa face chronic wars, malnutrition, hunger, disease (especially AIDS), illiteracy, ethnic displacement, and homelessness. All of Africa is in turmoil because imperialist powers have completely denied the human dignity of the African people. The devastating social conditions are the outcome of decades of the implementation of extreme global capitalist measures, like those promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These are measures that, rather than meeting the needs of the African population, served the profit of capital.

Western domination and capitalist economic crises, both worldwide and in Africa, have forced even the most loyal client governments in Africa to start rejecting the IMF and World Bank recommendations. The dilemma these African governments face today is that if they continue to pursue these policies, they will face social unrest and revolution; if they don't, they will lose imperialist support and ultimately vanish. The former is the situation

Ghana is facing today, while the latter is the case with Zimbabwe. The social and political conditions are so unstable, and African governments are so corrupt and weak, that the only option left for the colonial powers to protect their imperial interests and continue plundering African wealth is direct military intervention. It is within this framework that the recent military presence of France in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and the US preparation for military intervention in Liberia, should be understood.

right decision, if he cares about his country." He also applied his famous phrase, previously used for Saddam Hussein, to the Liberian president: "Taylor should go." He was simply saying to Taylor "We are coming, make the decision I like, and don't resist."

## The US has Learned its Lessons

The US would have no problem occupying Liberia. The opposition forces to the Liberian government are inexperienced soldiers, some of whom are as young as six or seven years old. The occupation



## Liberia: A Cakewalk for the US

At the beginning of the second week of July, George Bush sent a military assessment team of 32 marines and specialists to Liberia to find out if the US should send its occupying forces for direct military intervention. According to Bush, the worsening "humanitarian" situation in Liberia, one of the poorest countries in Africa, might require military intervention. This is the main justification that imperialist powers have always used to justify colonial occupation. In mid-June, an American assault ship with 2,000 troops heading home from Iraq was ordered to head to Liberia.

There are different opinions in the news media about what US intentions are; whether the US, with its heavy involvement in Iraq with more than 200,000 troops, could afford another military intervention and occupation; or whether Bush and his advisors are locked in a dispute over an intervention in Liberia and its civil war. Regardless, it is clear that the main goal of the US is direct control of Liberia.

George Bush has no confusion about whether or not to intervene; his concern is finding the easiest and cheapest way to do so. In an interview with CNN at the beginning of June, in reference to Liberian president Charles Taylor, Bush arrogantly said, "I am convinced that he will listen, and make the decision, the

is even encouraged by Taylor himself. In a June 27<sup>th</sup> radio interview, he stated, "I will leave as soon as United States' troops land in Liberia, they are welcomed here... only the US can lift Liberia and Liberians out of this mess."

The hesitancy of the US to occupy Liberia is based on the lesson they learned from Afghanistan and Iraq. The relatively easy occupation of these two countries proved to the United States that military victory is the easiest goal to achieve in most semi-colonial countries, since they have corrupt governments and poor social, political, and military conditions. The main questions are: how do you run a country in which all modern state institutions have collapsed? How do you find a client regime that different people and political trends will accept? How do you deal with the chaos caused by occupation and terror? How do you convince the people of an occupied land of your "humanitarian mission", "liberation" and "freedom" when nobody believes you, and the level of outrage and hate is so high that they kill the "liberating" forces every day?

Since May 1<sup>st</sup>, when Bush declared that the major combat operations in Iraq were "over," more than 90 American soldiers have died in Iraq, and the US has experienced setback after setback in consolidating social, economic, and political order.

The situation in Afghanistan is even worse, with the government of Mr. Karzei only maintaining rule over the capital of Kabul and greater Kabul.

Again, the question for US colonialists is not whether or not to intervene in Liberia, but when and how. The question is what to do after occupation, and how to use Liberia as a base to intervene in other nations in Africa, especially west and central African nations.

## Liberia: A US State in Africa

The ruling class media has generated the popular belief that Liberia was founded by liberated black Americans. In fact, it was shaped by American colonial society in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, through an organization of southern US slave holders, as a precautionary move to defuse black slave rebellion.

Since its formal independence in 1847, the history of Liberia has been one of US domination. From the beginning, Liberia was a mirror of the US class structure, based on prejudice and dual citizenship between privileged American-Liberians, black people of US descent, and indigenous Liberians. Until World War II, Liberia was primarily producing rubber for American rubber and tire-making corporations. In the last three decades, Liberia has produced many important minerals and resources, especially oil and gold.

The US government's main strategic goal for the region is to secure the 30 billion barrel oil reserve fields in the Gulf of Guinea, a region which Liberia is a part of, for American oil corporations like Shell and Chevron-Texaco. If the US secures and controls all countries close to the Gulf of Guinea,

including Nigeria (the largest oil-producer in Africa), the US could increase oil imports by 25% until 2015. This would give the US an advantage over other imperialist countries in terms of control over the oil market.

Without a doubt, the US government is determined to end the 14-year civil war in Liberia in order to implement their strategic plan for dominating the West African region completely. The civil war in Liberia started in 1989, with armed fighting between rival factions following the overthrow of the US client regime of Samuel Doe. It has had a devastating result on the people of Liberia, with 70% unemployment and total economic collapse.

As we saw with Afghanistan and Iraq, "humanitarian relief", "peace keeping" and "fighting against terrorism" are nothing but excuses for military occupations. The aim of these occupations is to change the relationship of forces in favour of the US against European countries. This is especially the case with France, which has a long history of colonialism in Africa, and is considered the most important rival to US interests in west and central Africa.

## France sharpens their teeth for the Congo

Since the 1960s, when France lost all its colonies in Africa, not one French government has hesitated for even a minute trying to turn the clock back in favour of French imperialism in Africa. The US-France rivalry over expanding influence and control in Africa has gone on since the killing of Patrice Lumumba, the central leader of the Congo independence movement, in January 1961.

*Continued on page 6*

Our Stories,  
our voices,  
our History.

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# Iranian Students Demand Civil Liberties

By Nasim Sedaghat

On June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003, Iran saw the beginning of more than two weeks of student unrest and uprisings. The student protests were mainly a response to the government's privatization of Iran's higher-education institutions. Iran has more than one million students in colleges and universities.

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the Iranian Joint Committee (IJC) organized a press conference in North Vancouver. *Fire This Time* is publishing an excerpt from a talk by Ali Yerevani (Izadi-Kharrazi), one of four speakers in the press conference. He is a member of *Fire This Time*, the Iranian Committee Against War (ICAW), Vancouver's StopWar.ca Coalition, CUPE local 15, and the Vancouver District Labour Council (VDLC).

Since Tuesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, Iran has seen widespread demonstrations and uprisings. This has been the largest and most popular mass unrest in Iran since the last wave of students' protests in July 1999.

Student protests, which began on major city campuses against the privatization of higher-education institutions and rising tuition fees, have rapidly developed political slogans against the government of President Khatami and supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei, both of whom played a decisive role in the suppression of previous student demonstrations in July 1999 in Tehran and major cities throughout Iran.



Photo: Paul McGrath, NS News  
From left to right, Ali Yerevani and Ali Daliri

Overall, what we are witnessing today in Iran is a much higher stage of the Iranian people's struggle for their rights. There are many indications of this heightened struggle. What the Iranian people, including the students, are demanding is the restoration of their basic rights and liberties. They are chanting in the streets for the freedom of political prisoners, freedom of speech and freedom of association. We are also witnessing a process of disillusionment towards government and state institutions altogether. Unlike 1999, when they demanded that President Khatami intervene in the political process to stand up against conservatives, this time they are demanding his resignation and rejecting his so-called reform movement. So this time, the protesters politically targeted not only the supreme leader Khamenei, a conservative, but also President Khatami, who is a reformist.

This is a very dangerous sign for the Iranian ruling class and for imperialist countries, and especially the United States. For the US, the fear of revolutionary masses is a thousand times bigger than their fear of any form of

government, including the present corrupt one in Iran.

It was also clear that the levels of militancy and political awareness have grown since the previous demonstrations in July 1999. It's not surprising that only a very small part of the official reform movement supported the protesters this June. Since the government of Iran has closed all democratic avenues of political expression, there is no alternative for the Iranian people to continue these protests and grow stronger and united, since these demonstrations were for the most part spontaneous. That's why the next step for this movement is to establish its natural leadership and its independent political character. This task is even more important today than in any protest movement in the past, because the composition of the demonstrators is not just students or youth; instead, up to 90% of it is ordinary poor or working class people.

I must mention one last point: there is the myth, perpetuated by a propaganda war in the western hemisphere, that says that protesters in Iran are in favour of a monarchy and the US. Nothing could be further from the truth. Of all the demonstrators' slogans, there is not one in favour of a monarchy or the US; on the contrary, you will find many slogans against both monarchy and the US. Our people have experienced tremendous suffering under the nasty unity of these



Iranian student demonstrations, June 17th 2003

reactionary forces. The struggle in Iran is for the future, not for the past. The Iranian people do not trust the US government's intentions in Iran. For at least 50 years, the US has not been able to build a healthy and equal relationship with the people of Iran; therefore it is not trusted at all.

Iran is a country of big changes. Since 1891, Iran has gone through many anti-imperialist,

anti-colonial movements, perhaps more than any other country in the Middle East; it has three revolutions to its credit, not to mention dozens of gigantic mass movements in the last hundred years. We will not see sudden and immediate change in Iran, because the Iranian people are in the process of defining themselves politically. For the heroic Iranian people, this is a long and tedious road.



Iranian student demonstrations, June 20th 2003

## Canadian Companies and the Pillaging of Africa

From page 5

Today this rivalry has reached an unprecedented stage. France recently got a bonus from the UN when the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of the French-led "peacekeeping" force to the Congo. Nothing could be more ironic than this: it is like asking a wolf to be a shepherd for a flock of sheep. France, one of the oldest colonial powers in Africa, already has 9,000 troops stationed in different former colonial satellite countries as "peacekeepers."

The Congo is now another victim of imperialist plunder in Africa. Perhaps the richest land in Africa since June 1960, when it gained formal independence from Belgium, the Congo has never seen one day of peace. The Congo has been a target of most imperialist countries, including Canada. This is a country that is exceptionally rich in minerals, oil, agriculture, forestry... almost everything. Besides gold and diamonds, the Congo is rich in copper, uranium, cobalt, and palladium.

### The Perfect Canadian Imperialist Corporation

Aside from French and American corporations, Germany and Canada have also been active in the Congo. For the last ten years, the Canadian Heritage Oil Corporation (CHOC) has been active in Uganda, and the Congo. CHOC got a license from the Kabila government to drill for oil in a contested region of the

Congo where a brutal war has been going on for years.

According to the African Unification Front website (advocating unity and independence among African countries), "Heritage Oil Corporation has been exploring western Uganda since 1997. In June 2002, Heritage signed an agreement with President Joseph Kabila to gain initial rights to a staggering 3.1 million hectares of eastern Congo (DRC), including eastern Ituri.

"Heritage Oil Corporation is listed as a Canadian-based independent, international oil and gas exploration, development and production company. Heritage Oil has operations in Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, DRC, Oman, and Uganda. Executive Outcomes [another oil company] was involved in Sierra Leone, Angola, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Canada.

"In fact, Heritage Oil and Executive Outcomes have a long history together. Executive Outcomes fought against UNITA in 1993 to recover the oil storage area in Soya owned by Heritage Oil... At that time Executive Outcomes claimed that they were security guards of the Heritage Oil facilities, and that they were justified in their actions. It appears that Heritage Oil and Executive Outcomes are owned by the same network of mercenary corporations that includes Branch Energy (reputedly a Heritage Oil share holder), ex-South African troops, and Canadian

mineral extraction firms."

This is for those who believe in Canada's "proud peacekeeping legacy."

### A History of Bloodshed

Different sources estimate that three to four million have died or been killed as a result of the long wars in five different provinces of the DRC. The conflict between tribes is killing thousands of people every month.

Ultimately, the question of who should rule the Congo is at the root of this war and killing, with different colonial powers behind the conflict. Uganda and Rwanda, who back various rebel armies, are on the one side, and the Congolese central government's army, backed by Angola and Zimbabwe, is on the other. There is also the DRC-backed Hutu militia that is fighting the Rwandan Tutsi government.

The bloody war between these different rivals, which has been going on since 1994 and has intensified since 1998, has been supported and conducted by France from the beginning right to the present. Part of the objective of the recent French "peacekeeping" mission is to bring French influence back to the area – an influence which was almost lost with the fall of Mobutu in 1997. The other part is to cover its failure to stop the genocide of hundreds of thousands of people during the genocide of the Tutsi people by the Hutu.

For France, who has stationed thousands

of troops in the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone, this is a very important step towards further involvement.

### French and All Imperialists Out of the Congo

The French ruling class faces a tough and increasing challenge from their old rival the United States, in Africa generally and in west and central Africa particularly. France is desperately seeking to regain its former military, economic, and cultural influence in the region. This competition is fierce and ruthless, and the loser is Africa as a whole, with more hunger, more wars, more occupations and more deaths.

The United States and England agreed to the UNSC deployment of French "peacekeeping" troops in the Congo. They need France to do the dirty work, in hopes that the French will fail and further discredit themselves in Africa. If France fails, the US will finish the job.

Africa is the victim of world capitalist crisis, colonial policies and imperialist domination. Africa is divided by class lines, ethnic lines, and by corrupt leaders and governments. The first step to fight back against colonial rule, and to overcome division in favour of the unity of all oppressed people in Africa, is to demand French troops out of the Congo, the cancellation of the debt of all African countries, and all imperialist troops out of Africa.



## Cuba: Fifty Years is Young if you're a Revolution An interview with Vladimir Mirabal

By Ivan Drury

*The US government has recently escalated attacks against the Cuban revolution and against Cuba in general. These attacks have come straight from the mouth of George Bush, but have manifested as a long string of attempted hijackings of boats and planes en route from Cuba to the US and in the arrest and imprisonment of five Cubans operating against anti-Cuba terrorists in Florida. Recently, Cuba executed three people who were involved in the hijacking of a ferry. This was the first execution performed on the island in many years.*

*Cuba has found itself posted as one of many targets for US aggression for almost half a century and the situation surrounding it now, particularly around this execution, has confused many people in Canada. What is happening in Cuba? What is going to happen when Fidel Castro dies? Will Cuba be on the list of US wars and invasions? Fire This Time conducted an interview with a representative of the revolutionary government of Cuba in the embassy in Ottawa to answer some of these questions.*

*Vladimir Mirabal is the third secretary at the Cuban embassy in Ottawa. He deals with media, and with cultural affairs. Prior to his posting in Canada, he worked in the spokespersons office in the Department of Foreign Affairs in Cuba. Vladimir is part of the new generation of Cuban youth heavily involved in Cuban politics and carries the commitment to the Cuban revolution to his posting in Ottawa.*

*He will be speaking in Vancouver on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 7pm, at the Maritime Labour Centre (at Victoria Dr and Triumph) in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the pre-revolutionary attack on the Moncada barracks.*

**What is the significance of the attack on the Moncada barracks as we approach its fiftieth anniversary?**

The attack on the Moncada garrison is very important. For we Cubans it was a turning point in Cuba's history because it helped to consolidate the subjective conditions for the Cuban people to realize that the revolution was unavoidable. It showed us that people had to take armed action, against the Batista dictatorship that was thoroughly bloody and corrupt. In spite of the military defeat this group of men faced in that attack on the Moncada garrison in 1953, it was a huge strategic victory for the future of Cuba. All of the subjective

conditions were solidified. Armed struggle was needed and it was the only possible way to defeat the dictatorship. It was a defeat in the military field: a lot of them were killed, and some of them were sent to prison, like Fidel, but many were killed after the attack. But that group of young revolutionaries, men and women, created the foundation for the future armed struggle in Cuba. In fact, five years, five months and five days later, the revolution triumphed. From my point of view, that is the main significance of the attack itself. It was a massive failure in terms of military action, but in the spirit, in the way of thinking of Cubans at that time, it was a victory because Fidel and that group of men and women showed the Cuban people that the revolution was possible.

all, education and rights for everyone.

**Che Guevara has had his image stolen from the Cuban revolution in many ways, both by the liberal press and by profiteering t-shirt manufacturers. What do you think his most important lessons are for people in Cuba and for poor people, working people and oppressed people throughout the world today?**

Che Guevara is more than a t-shirt, more than an icon, much more than an image or a picture on a mug. He is an example of a human being. He is a citizen of the world. I remember when I was a pioneer, that's what we call children in primary school. We have a common slogan for all the pioneers in Cuba. When

considered himself a citizen of humankind. If other people need my help then I will be there. Solidarity is that, it is to help people who are in need without wanting nothing in return.

Anti-imperialism is also very important for Che. Che was in flesh and blood, anti-imperialism. In these days that we are living, the word anti-imperialism has a stronger meaning... Solidarity, anti-imperialism and humbleness. Humbleness is one key feature of Che. A lot of writers who have written about Che have agreed that Che was a warrior, a brave man, he was not afraid to die. He was also a very humble man, he kept nothing for himself, he always shared everything. He was a beloved leader in the Cuban revolution, in the mountains

**try to chase corruption from within the party and within the government itself has been one of the most impressive elements of the revolution and one of the reasons it has lasted as long as it has. How have Che's and Castro's lessons been reflected in the ups and downs of the Cuban revolution?**

The Cuban revolution now is 44 years old. We have a very young revolution. We have had different periods in the whole process. Some of those periods have been very difficult for the Cuban revolution. As you mentioned, we have had ups and downs. We have had periods where we have made mistakes, we have recognized those mistakes and we have corrected, or at least tried to correct those mistakes. We have fought the corruption inside the government, inside the party. As a consequence, at the end, right now, the revolution is stronger than ever.

We have been able to handle these things with humbleness, with a lot of courage and with a lot of hard work. The leadership is headed by Fidel, but it is not only Fidel. It is a whole government that is willing to give the Cuban people a better future. Those dreams of the groups of young people who attacked the Moncada garrison in '53, at that time those were dreams. Now, they are reality. They were fighting for a better Cuba and now we have a better Cuba. The Cuban revolution has a lot of Che's values in itself.

**What are the most important values of this revolution for people in Canada to look to and learn from?**

Education for the revolution is a priority and it's always been a priority. It was the very first thing after the triumph. The government willed to push forward first a campaign against illiteracy, that we could almost eradicate illiteracy within a year. That says a lot for the willingness of the revolution to teach people how to think, how to differentiate between right and wrong. As Jose Marti said, you have to be cultured to be free. You can't be free if you don't know what's right and what's wrong.

Education, in Cuba, it was a priority in the beginning and now, in Cuba, we have been carrying out what is called the revolution within the revolution. We are trying to improve, even more, the level of general consciousness in all the population. We are creating universities in every municipality in Cuba, at least a delegation or an affiliate of



Fidel Castro addresses May Day rally in Havana, May 2002

**What do you think the significance of this is for young people in Canada especially?**

Well, you have to look at the attack on the Moncada barrack as a specific historical moment, but it is an example for the Cuban young people and it is an example to the Canadian young people as it is an example to the whole world's youth. It was like a shout against the lack of justice, against corruption, against the poverty that we had at that time. We had over 24% global illiteracy in Cuba and 84% in kids between six and nine years old.

We had thousands of teachers without jobs. The Cuban social conditions were unstable. Cuba was a very poor country with an extremely poor people. The Moncada attack said, "Stop!" It has to end and we have to build a new society based on social justice, equality and, above

we sang the national anthem or did patriotic activities, we said, "I want to be like Che." That means a lot for Cubans. That means a lot for the young generation, and it's because Che gives an example. It's not about being perfect, but if you want to be a better person than you are now, then you have to be like Che. That's what we teach to our younger generation. I'm young too: I'm 31 years old, so I have those memories close to me.

I always speak of Che in present tense, because for me Che is not dead, Che is always present. He is life and is illuminating the way for life.

**When people say they want to be like Che, what is that model?**

That model is to have values like solidarity. Solidarity was a key human condition for Che. He loved Argentina, but he

and then after the triumph in the government and he always pushed for the respect that leaders have to have for the lower people.

He was the minister of industry and president of the Central Bank in Cuba in 1961 and he used to have lunch with the lady who cleaned the floor, the truck driver and the head of the department all together every day. That was very common.

**The humbleness that you speak of that was characteristic of Che, I think is characteristic of the Cuban revolution as a whole. This is what I can say as an outsider, as someone who can read about the Cuban revolution and think about it in relation to the work that we do in Canada. The ability of the Cuban revolutionary government and the ability of Castro and others to admit mistakes that have happened and to actively**

# Women's Liberation: 'The Revolution Within a Revolution'

## Excerpts from a speech by Fidel Castro, 1966

When we arrived here tonight I told a comrade that this phenomenon of women in the revolution (cheers) was a revolution within a revolution. (cheers) If we were asked that is the most revolutionary thing the revolution is doing, we would answer that the most revolutionary thing the revolution is doing is precisely this, that is to say, the revolution is taking place with the women of our country. (cheers, applause) If we are asked what are the things that have taught us most in the revolution, we would answer that one of the most interesting lessons which we revolutionaries are getting from the revolution is the lesson the women are giving us. (cheers, applause)

You know perfectly well that when we say this we are not just saying this just to delight the comrades who are present here but that we say this because we really believe this and feel this. But why, why is this one of the most interesting lessons? You may ask yourselves, why? And actually, the most honest reply we could give you, and I will tell you that this reply, the one who is making this reply is precisely a person who thought he had no prejudice, the reply really, is that I think that all of us had many prejudices about women. (light applause)

And if someone had asked me sometime whether I thought I was prejudiced I would have said absolutely no, because I have felt just the contrary, that there was really in this society a potential force and an extraordinary human resource among the women in a revolution.

But what is happening, what has happened to us, or rather that is happening to us? What is happening to us is that actually this potential force is superior to what the most optimistic of us would have ever suspected. (applause) That is why we were saying that unconsciously there was some prejudice, or there was some underestimation, because reality is showing, as we have barely begun to move on this path, all the possibilities and the role that women can play in a revolutionary process where society frees itself from exploitation, in the first place, from prejudices and from a number of circumstances where women were doubly exploited, doubly humiliated.

What has been discovered about women, for example, in work? I have been discussing this with some comrades and I told Comrade Milian after visiting the Banao project, for example. (applause) I told him: "Milian, I have the impression that the women who are working in this project are more responsible and more disciplined than the men (Cheers applause). I have the impression that they devote

themselves to work with more enthusiasm, that they devote themselves to work with more passion, with more dedication." Then Milian—I do not want to place Milian in a bad light here with the women of Las Villas or anything like that—argued with me that well, really the case of the boys that worked in the project of



Fidel Castro, 2002

Juragua, the young communists—and I told him that really if in any project where there is a select group of young communists, and there is discipline and enthusiasm for the work, it is not such an extraordinary case as it is to find the same spirit, discipline, and enthusiasm in a project where the women are working, women who were not chosen, who were not selected from an organization but rather are women who spontaneously volunteered to do that work. (applause)

Why is this being discovered? What is being discovered with all this program, with all this revolutionary program with respect to the Cuban women? Well, we are discovering a number of things such as those I enumerated previously. A great sense of responsibility, great seriousness, great discipline, great sense of responsibility, great seriousness, great discipline, great enthusiasm. But what are we discovering above all here in Las Villas Province? Well, in the Banao project, for example, the project grew, there was a lack of a cadre. Comrade Milian found a party cadre—I believe it was from the area of Santo Domingo—Comrade Santiago Acosta. He sent him as the administrator of the Banao project. However, one day it was necessary for Comrade Santiago Acosta and Comrade Rene Acosta, the latter is the technician, to make a trip abroad. They were the two comrades most responsible for the project. It was necessary to assign responsibility for the project during those days. Then the decision was made to assign Comrade Osoria who represented the women's federation in the project. (applause) Then for the first time a project of that nature, of that type, became the responsibility of a woman.

What were the results? The

comrades returned from abroad, the comrade who had been the administrator and the comrade who had been the technician, and then—at that time the party was having problems in the Sancti Espiritus area, that is to say it needed a cadre to bolster the work of the party in Sancti Espiritus—it was decided to

send Comrade Santiago Acosta to Sancti Espiritus and to leave Comrade Osoria as administrator of the Banao project (applause) We saw that this was truly an event and some day it will have historic significance because it was the first time that a woman was assigned a task of that type and it was assigned not because of political reasons, not for trying to create an impression, but because it was simply and objectively shown that she was fully capable of directing that project.

Since that time it appeared to us that it was a very reasonable thing, a very good thing to have, in a project where thousands of women were going to work, a women directing the project. (applause) At the same time, when it was necessary to create the brigades within the project, a number of comrades who had distinguished themselves for their spirit in work were selected to lead the brigades.



Young Cuban women celebrate May Day in Havana, 2002

This in turn gave us another idea when it was necessary to train a group of technicians for this type of crop and the first 10 comrades from the technical institute had been sent to specialize in these crops. We decided that another 20 students whom we had decided also to send to specialize as

technicians in these crops should be selected from among the women students in the technical institute.

Therefore, in this project the workers, the brigade chiefs, the technicians, that is the technical personnel, and the leadership personnel are practically all going to be women, women. (applause) And this is one of the great lessons about which we spoke earlier. One of the great teachings and perhaps one of the greatest victories against prejudices of, I am not going to say years or centuries, but prejudices of millenniums, the prejudice of thinking that women are only capable of washing dishes, doing laundry, ironing, cooking, cleaning the house, and bearing children. (cheers, applause)

The millennium of prejudice situated women within society in what was practically a lower stratum—one cannot even say within a productive system. These prejudices are a thousands years old and they have survived different social systems, because if we are going to talk about capitalism, women of a humble class were doubly exploited or were doubly humiliated.

A poor woman belonging to the working class or to a working family was exploited simply because of her humble status, because of her situation as a worker. But besides this, within the class itself and within her own situation as a working woman she was in turn scorned, underestimated. She was underestimated, exploited, and scorned by exploiting classes, but within her own class women were looked at through innumerable prejudices. This is why actual deeds are giving all of us a great lesson, giving all of us revolutionaries a great lesson. These prejudices of course still persist to a considerable extent.

If women believe that their

situation within society is an optimum situation, if women believe that their revolutionary function within society has been fulfilled, they would be making an error. It seems to us that women still have much to struggle for, that women still have to put forth a great effort to finally achieve the

place they really ought to occupy within society.

If women in our country were doubly exploited, were doubly humiliated, this simply means that in a social revolution women ought to be doubly revolutionary. (applause) This may perhaps explain or help to explain, and it can be said that it is the social base which allows one to explain, why Cuban women so resolutely support the revolution, so enthusiastically support the revolution, so staunchly support the revolution, so loyally support the revolution. (applause)

It is simply because it is a revolution which means two revolutions for women, which means double liberation for women, women as part of the humble sectors of the nation, of the exploited sectors of the nation, women who are discriminated against not only as workers but as women within the same exploiting society.

This is why the women's attitude in our revolution responds to this reality, responds to what the revolution has meant to women. And the working sectors, the sector of the people, support the revolution to the same degree that the revolution has meant liberation to them.

There are two sectors of the nation, two sectors of society which, independently, aside from economic reasons, have had other reasons to look favorably or with enthusiasm on the revolution. These two sectors are the Negro population of the country and the women of the nation. (applause)

I do not know if you recall the bourgeois constitution which Cuba used to have. An article of the constitution talked about declaring all discrimination illegal because of race or sex. But a constitution or an article of a constitution within a bourgeois society which makes such a declaration resolves nothing, because the discrimination because of color and sex really existed. The base of all this was a class society, a society of exploitation. Discrimination for reasons of age (presumably means "race"—ed.) or sex could not disappear by any means in a class society, within a society of exploiters and exploited. The problems of discrimination for reasons of age and sex have disappeared in our country because the basis for the two discriminations has disappeared and that is simply the exploitation of man by man.

From the United States, for example, there comes news of the struggles of the Negro population for equal rights. However, in the United States racial discrimination cannot disappear until the capitalist society disappears. This means that discrimination

*Continued on page 9*



# 'Discrimination cannot disappear until the capitalist society disappears'

'Women's Liberation' from page 8

for reasons of color, for reasons of sex can never disappear within the capitalist society. Discrimination for reasons of color and sex can only disappear with a socialist revolution that will make the exploitation of man by man disappear. (applause)

Well and good. Does the disappearance of exploitation of man by man mean that all conditions have been created immediately so that women can occupy a higher place within society? No, because conditions for the liberation of women, the conditions for the full development of women within a society, conditions for true equality of rights, or for a real equality of men and women in a society needs a material base. It needs to have economic development as a base and the social base of the country.

I told you previously about the opinion that many men had of the functions of women and I said that among those functions the one that they consider almost the chief function was that of bearing children. Of course, the function of procreation is one of the most important functions that women can have in any human society. That is to say it is one of the principal and most essential functions of women in any society. It is precisely that function nature assigned to women that forces her extraordinarily, enslaves her extraordinarily to a number of tasks in the home. Here, for example, we have a sign that says "a million women working in production in 1970." Unfortunately in 1970 we will not be able to have one million women working in production. We believe that this was a goal that will be reached not in five or four years, but one which we can set for ourselves in 10 years. That is, 1975.

Why? Because in order to have a million women working in production we need thousands of children's nurseries. We need thousands of primary boarding schools. We need thousands of student diners. We need thousands of workers diners. We need thousands of social service centers. If we do not have them who will cook at home for the child who is in the second or third grade, for example, when lunchtime comes? Who will take care of nursing children, a child of two, three, or four years? Who will cook at home for the man when he comes home from work? Who will wash the clothing? Who will clean house? Who will do all these things?

This means, that to accomplish the social aspect of liberating women for all those activities that enslave her, that prevent her from fully joining in work, in all the activities that she can do within the society, it is necessary to create that material base. It is necessary to acquire that social

development and of course it is impossible to obtain thousands of children's nurseries in four years, student diners, laundries, workers diners, boarding schools. Even in order to carry out present plans it is necessary to make a great effort in all areas. In the various projects where there has been massive incorporation of women it has been necessary to make a special effort to establish nurseries, arrange buildings, boarding schools, all in all a number of institutions to allow the women to go to work.

In many places in the nation we have to resolve these problems as we go, because when we say a million women are to be employed we cannot employ a million women overnight. In another words, we have to develop a number of plans, economic plans, agricultural plans.

It would be interesting to know the statistics on the number of women who have started working, whether in the production of material goods or in services, since the revolution's triumph. How many women working as teachers, how many as nurses, how many as nurses' aides, how many as technicians, how many in industry. In agriculture, because if a statistical study is made, the number of women who have started to work since the revolution's victory should be approximately no less than 150,000 women. (applause) This is a figure without an exact base, without exact statistical data, but I



Women mobilize during the Cuban Literacy Campaign, 1961

think we ought to make a study to find out how many women have started to work in new jobs, jobs that the revolution has created.

Next year the incorporation of women in work will increase considerably. Why? Because of a whole series of plans, particularly

agricultural in nature. Several thousand women will join the Banao plan. When the Banao plan is in full swing it is calculated that 6,000 or 7,000 women will work in this plan. In Pinares de Mayari next year it is estimated that some 8,000 women will be working, that is next spring. In the coffee

plant (?nurseries) and the coffee planting plans for 1967-68 no less than 30,000 women will get into this work.

In the forest farms thousands of women will also be working. Thousands of women are getting into the produce production plans in almost all the cities of the nation. Next year there will be over 50,000 women who will get into production work. This will require at the same time an enormous effort to resolve the questions of dining halls, schools, and nurseries.

Now I am going to tell you something: without the incorporation of women into productive work, the Banao plan could not have been carried out. The vegetable (? "micro-climate") plans in Oriente could not have been carried without the incorporation of women into productive work. The coffee production plans could not even have been conceived. Many of the projects that the revolution is planning today and is beginning to carry out could not have been conceived until it was really discovered what potential human resources our society had in women. Those plans, which will contribute extraordinarily to the economic development of our country, to the improvement of the welfare of our people, could not have been conceived without the massive incorporation of women into work.



## FREE THE CUBAN FIVE!

By Shahdin Farsai

After the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the Cuban elites along with the mafia and dictator Fulgencio Batista escaped the island. Most of the wealthy class that left Cuba concentrated themselves in Miami. Since the revolution, almost all attacks on Cuba have been planned, funded and carried out by the Miami mafia with the help of the FBI.

For the past 44 years, the Cuban people have had to endure the harsh US trade embargo designed to weaken the country. The island has had to withstand countless terrorist attacks from Miami, including bacteriological warfare to ruin livestock and agriculture, a planted bomb on a

Cubana Air flight, bombs on the island and countless attempts on Fidel's life and not to mention the Bay of Pigs invasion. The US government has not only been aware of these terrorist activities, but also funded them through the CIA

The Cuban Five were five Cubans living in Miami trying to infiltrate and monitor the activities of the Miami terrorist groups in order to thwart future attacks on Cuba. Instead of arresting members of the Miami Mafia, like the notorious Orlando Bosch, the FBI arrested the Cuban Five in September 1998. They were convicted on June 8 2001 and sentenced in December 2001 on false charges of conspiracy to commit murder and espionage. The seven-

month trial that took place in Miami was tainted and partial to the Cuban exile community. It was a complete mockery of justice.

Antonio Guerrero was unfairly sentenced to life plus 10 years, Fernando Gonzalez Llort to 19 years, Rene Gonzalez Sechwert was sentenced to 15 years, Gerardo Hernandez Nordelo to two life terms plus 15 years and Ramon Labninio Salazar to life plus 18 years. They have all been scattered purposely in various US prisons in order to make communication among them and lawyers difficult.

The only way to return freedom to these Cuban patriots is to struggle with them through

outreach, education and organizing. In order for people to join the movement for their release, the facts must be made public. Relatives of the Five will be making a cross-Canada tour in late September and Vancouver is on the list of cities to be visited.

For more information on how you can help spread the word and organize for future events visit [www.freethecubanfive.ca](http://www.freethecubanfive.ca) and sign and circulate the petition on the US site: [www.freethefive.org/pdf/petition.pdf](http://www.freethefive.org/pdf/petition.pdf). Call or fax George Bush demanding their freedom ph: 202-456-1414, fax 202-456-2461, or email [sfarsai@sfu.ca](mailto:sfarsai@sfu.ca) for ways to get involved in Vancouver Cuban Five organizing.

# Cuba and the US 'War on Terrorism'

## Interview with Vladimir From page 7

the main university in the area. Everybody can study whatever they want to for free. If you were a doctor, for example, and you want to study architecture to become a better educated person, you will have the opportunity to do that in the near future.

Education is one, and health care is another one. Health care is a priority for Cuba. We have one of the highest rates of doctors per inhabitant in the whole world. We have one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the whole world, close to 6.5.

determines, at the end, what you are.

**Capitalist propaganda and some regrettable, unfortunate tendencies of the North American intellectual left have condemned the execution of three terrorists in Cuba who were propped up, supported and operated by the US government. How do you explain the escalation of US hostility towards Cuba in the context of these executions, as well as in the context of the imprisonment of the Cuban 5 and the overall imperialist plans and strategies of the US?**

We from the South see the world

water, chemical and biological warfare so Cuba has more than one thing to worry about.

You mentioned that we executed three terrorists. That is true. Behind these three men, there are more than 20 other attempts to hijack planes and any other means of transportation to get to the US. This is part of a whole strategy that is orchestrated by the US to try to encourage illegal migration from Cuba to the United States.

I am going to mention only one quick thing: The US and Cuba signed a migratory agreement in 1994 which said that the US has to give no less than 20,000 visas to Cubans who want to immigrate to the US every year, no less. For the first 5 years, there were no problems with that, 20,000, 19,000... that's good. But when the Bush administration came in, that number of visas was reduced to an alarming figure. In the first five months of 2003, only 500 visas were given. In the whole 2002 there were 7,000 visas given. If in the first five months of this year there are only 500, how can you comply with the agreement

for 20,000? That is part of the strategy. At the same time, there is over 1,200 hours of radio programming from the US to Cuba to encourage people to hijack boats, to hijack planes, to throw into the waters of the Florida strait to try to reach the US. That creates a very difficult situation for the Cuban authorities.

In 1996, when the Heath-Burton Act was signed by Clinton, there was a chapter, 109, that said that the next migratory wave that comes from Cuba to the US will be regarded as an act of war. In 1981 and again in 1994 there were waves of Cubans to the US by the thousands. Since 1996, by law, the next wave would be considered an act of war and would be responded with military action. If you add to all that that this current administration is surrounded, inside and outside the administration, by very powerful lobbying and financial people like Jeb Bush, the governor of Florida, who is anti-Cuba 100 percent. These people are advocating that this is the right moment to get rid of Castro.

After Afghanistan, after Iraq, after all these wars and that this administration is determined to pass over any security council decision, there is no other nation in the world that can stop the US from doing what it wants to do. Cuba has the right to protect itself. So we executed three hijackers. We executed the three most dangerous of the 11. We executed

them because it was the strongest measure that we had. They had a trial, they were sentenced, all according to the law, and they were executed. We had to stop what's going on. We have the right to defend 11 million people. We had to take radical measures. The sovereignty, the national security of Cuba was at risk. We had to do it. It was a question of national security. Just like it was a question of national security for the US to protect itself, against al-Qaeda or whatever after September 11th, they felt that the American people were threatened and they took action, a different one. That's the same, but from a Cuban perspective. Our national security is threatened, our independence is at risk, our achievements are at risk and we had to do something.

The US has declared a war against terrorism worldwide, with flag in hand, but it is incapable of fighting terrorism on its own soil. In Florida, in Miami, there are several groups, armed terrorist groups. They have been carrying out actions of shootings, infiltration and bombings, like the bombing of hotels in Havana, and all these actions are planned, orchestrated and carried out from the United States. So, there were five Cubans working and living in Miami, infiltrating these groups and trying to figure out what their next step to attack Cuba is and to pass that information on to the Cuban authorities to prepare to repel and be prepared for that attack or whatever could happen. During the work of these five men, we stopped more than 500 attempts of infiltration, dropping off weapons inside Cuba to arm an army or whatever, among other things.

In 1998, the Cuban authorities met with the FBI authorities in Havana. The second man of the FBI went to Havana and met with the Cuban authorities. The Cubans handed them a five volume document about all the activities that were happening in Miami around these terrorist groups, what they were doing, how they get their financing, how they are organized, their names, addresses, phone numbers and everything. The FBI took all the information and promised a response within 90 days. We are

still waiting for that response. But in a one-month period, they detained these five Cubans. These five Cubans were imprisoned a month after this meeting, why? They were getting too close to the financial links between Miami and Washington, between Miami and New Jersey, between Miami and very important political personalities in the American administration. After that they had a trial, a very unfair trial. Miami is the only city in the whole US where you cannot have a fair trial if your trial has anything to do with Cuba. They had a trial there and they were sentenced to two life sentences. One of them was sentenced to two life sentences plus 15 years. The second one got one life sentence plus ten years and the other three: 25 years, 20 years and 15 years. It was a very politically motivated trial.

**Do you have any closing thoughts?**

This young generation in Cuba, that I feel part of, they are very determined to preserve all the achievements of these 44 years even at the risk of our lives. If the United States invades Cuba anytime, it is not going to find the same scenario as in Iraq; they would have to fight against millions of people who are willing to give their lives for the revolution.

We are pretty confident that there will be a Cuban revolution for a lot of years to come, with Fidel or without Fidel, because Fidel is a human being and unfortunately he is going to die someday.

There is a new wave of young people who are working in politics in Cuba right now. In the national assembly in Cuba, which is the most important power in Cuba, the average age is 44.5 years. That's the parliament... 44.5 years old on average. You see the new generation taking the reins, advancing with new ideas, but always close to our principles, to our values as Che summed it all up, very close to what Che means to all of us. We are very grateful to Fidel and to all the generation that attacked the Moncada garrison and made possible that we have a revolution today.

**Thank you very much for the interview and the opportunity to speak with you.**



May Day in Havana, 2003

**In Canada, and in left circles in Vancouver, when people talk about education, they talk about telling people facts. There is little understanding of developing consciousness and to develop the sense of solidarity that you talked about earlier on. What kind of means are taken in Cuba to follow through with this kind of education... to become revolutionaries rather than just intellectuals?**

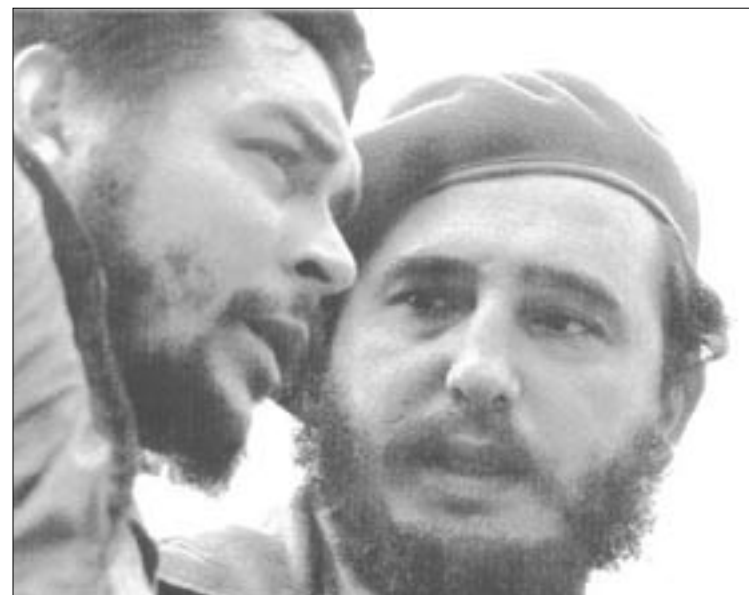
This has a lot to do with the system itself. If you teach someone, for example... if you do not know the history of your country or of the world, then you are not able to love your country or the world. You are not aware of what has been going on and you are not aware of what you should stand for. History is the most important, it is more important than mathematics for sure. The Cuban history says a lot about the point that we are in right now. We pay special attention to history, we pay special attention to social work and to everything to do with equality.

Here in Canada, or in any other developed country, you have a constant bombardment of information through the television, encouraging the consumerist, encouraging the values of the society itself that are very different from our values. It is, for us, much easier to form revolutionaries than in any other country. It's the environment, it is the collective consciousness that you are surrounded with that

from a different perspective. I am talking about Cuba but I am sure that I am talking about all countries from the south, and I am talking about underdeveloped countries, all of them. We divide the world into North and South. When there is a war going on in the world, "it's" always targeting the countries in the south. We tend to see the world from a different corner and it's a very dangerous one.

I don't know if you remember the speech from W. Bush in Westpoint after the September 11th terrorist attacks. He said the United States was determined to look for the terrorists and the terrorist supporters in 60 dark corners in the world or more, chase them down. "60 dark corners of the world": that sounds to me like all of them are countries of the South. Cuba is one of them for sure. Since September 11th, the world itself is at war. It is declared, unstoppable and unavoidable and it is being carried out by the most powerful nation in the world with more nuclear weapons, more chemical, biological weapons than any other country in history. They have the economic and political powers that nobody, no nation, no international corp has, in the world. Sixty dark corners of the world are being threatened by this power.

Cuba has been a target of US aggression to the extent of assassinations of leaders, economic blockades, terrorist attacks, bombings, poisoning of



Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, circa 1964.

# Fire This Time Hosts Forum on the First Nations Governance Act

By Mike Krebs

On Monday June 30th, Fire This Time held a public forum on the First Nations Governance Act (FNGA). Over ninety people came out to learn about and discuss the Act, which is also known as Bill C-7. This bill is one of three that the Canadian Parliament is currently discussing that will be a severe attack on Indigenous rights if passed.

The panel at the forum consisted of four speakers: Joan Phillip, a longtime Indigenous activist, Lana Lowe of the Indigenous Peoples Grassroots Movement, Chief Stewart Phillip from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and Mike Krebs of Fire This Time. Rachel Taylor from Redwire

Magazine and the Youth 3<sup>rd</sup> World Alliance was the chair.

The audience was very diverse, mostly people from Indigenous community and other communities of colour. There was very lively and informative discussion about the history of colonization, the implications of the FNGA, and how to effectively fight this legislation. People emphasized the importance of solidarity and the need for Indigenous people to stand united against the FNGA and other attacks on Indigenous peoples' inherent rights to self-determination. Comments were made regarding the impact of the FNGA on the many problems Indigenous communities face, including poverty, child apprehension, and the sexist definitions of Indian 'Status' that

the government still uses to deny recognition of some Indigenous women and their children. As well, people emphasized that the struggle against the FNGA is important for both Native and non-Native communities.

The forum was very successful. Not only did it provide a space for education about the FNGA and other aspects of Canadian colonialism, but it was also a great opportunity to discuss strategies for organizing and mobilizing against the FNGA.

We have included the presentation of Mike Krebs from the June 30<sup>th</sup> forum. For further information and analysis of the First Nations Governance Act see the interview with Lana Lowe in Issue # 5 of Fire This Time.



Day of action against the First Nations Governance Act in Vancouver, July 11th 2003

## The First Nations Governance Act: Canada's Roadmap for Deceit

By Mike Krebs

Hello, I would like to thank all the other people who have spoken so far, thank them for coming out. I think it's really important that we are having this forum, and this discussion on the First Nations Governance Act.

### Accountability?

I think the first thing that is important to understand is what the First Nations Governance Act is not about. The Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs has made repeated claims that the FNGA is about accountability. This has nothing to do with accountability. It is a racist notion that Indigenous people are not able to manage their own resources or their own money.

Aside from that, for the Canadian government to come to Indigenous people and tell them about accountability exposes the hypocrisy of the Canadian Government and its history. The Canadian government has broken every single treaty that it has made with Indigenous nations from

coast to coast. What does that have to do with accountability?

The land we're standing on now was stolen outright, 97% of British Columbia was outright stolen without any treaties whatsoever. What does that have to do with accountability? Currently there are over 500 land claims filed by different Indigenous nations against the Canadian government. What does that have to do with accountability? The very same Canadian government was responsible for the forcing of Indigenous people through the residential school system, which was a form of cultural genocide, and which resulted in a loss of our cultures and languages, and still has not done any meaningful retribution or made any meaningful apologies for its role in the residential school system. What does that have to do with accountability?

With the FNGA, and other pieces of legislation, this government repeatedly violates its own laws, such as Section 35, which is supposed to recognize our rights to self-determination.

What does that have to do with accountability?

As with all these other things that the Canadian government has done to Indigenous people, the FNGA has nothing to do with accountability.

### 'Self Government' vs. Self Determination

This is a continuation of the policies that the Canadian government has always pursued against Indigenous people. It is about the continued attacks on the right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination. Through the framework that the FNGA is setting out in terms of the relationships that it will pursue with Indigenous people, it is moving even further away from discussing the issue of self-determination. Just a couple of months ago there was a press release issued by Robert Nault, the Minister of Indian Affairs, where he said, "The objectives of the new legislation are to put in place provisions that would serve as an interim step towards self-government." Now,

it is important to understand that 'self-government' and self-determination are not the same thing. He is trying to trick us with plays on words. 'Self-government' is not a thing that we have been pushing for; it is a colonial model that the Canadian government has been trying to impose on Indigenous people. It involves reducing Indigenous nations to the level of municipalities.

So they have been offering us 'self-government' for the last little while, which is poison pill A. Now, with the FNGA they're saying "here's poison pill B. You can take poison pill B, then maybe if you're lucky, we can talk about poison pill A." In the meantime, this completely ignores the core issue, which is the self-determination of Indigenous people.

### An Attack on All Fronts

There are two important aspects of the FNGA that I would like to take on. First, the FNGA is an attack on political self-determination. The Canadian government is forcing administrative leadership codes on Indigenous people. It is giving more power to the Minister over the terms of this governance. These are attacks on the rights of Indigenous nations to choose our own form of government, to decide how we want to govern ourselves, to determine what kind of structures we are going to put in place. This also undermines any forms of traditional governance that are already in place.

Second, the FNGA, in combination with the First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act (Bill C-19), is an attack on the economic self-determination of Indigenous people. This gives the government the power to impose third-party management on the financial affairs of Bands; it puts more power in the hands of the Department of Indian Affairs to intervene in the allocation of these funds. It also imposes what is called 'own source revenue.' Basically, if a Band has any sort of economic development and is

able to raise its own funds, the government wants to reduce the funding that they provide for specific projects or programs in relation to how much profit the Native Band makes off their independent ventures.

### 'Economic Development'

When the Canadian government is talking about wanting to bring 'economic development' to Indigenous communities, this is the kind of thing they are talking about, so it is important to understand what they mean. I don't think economic development is necessarily a good thing or a bad thing, it depends on the type of economic development. What they're pushing with 'own source revenues,' making it easier for Bands to borrow from banks off of their land, this isn't development, this is the same type of economic exploitation that has been happening from the beginning of colonialism. This is not economic development for the benefit of Indigenous people.

Now, when Indigenous people engage in forms of economic development that serves the interests of their communities, we see the government's response. When attempts to establish these fisheries or Indigenous-run logging are made, like what is going on in Cheam, and what we saw in Burnt Church a few years ago, we see what their response is. The Canadian government in no way supports that kind of economic development, they call these acts illegal, call us criminals and terrorists. They bring in the police, the army, and armed DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) officers to prevent any sort of economic development that is by and for Indigenous people themselves.

### Colonization

Of course, what is coming through with the FNGA is not new. This is part of a long history of the colonization of Indigenous people. Through things like the Indian Act, through treaties,

## Pockets of Resistance: Three Major Indigenous Struggles Against Canadian Colonialism

### Skwelkwew'welt (Sun Peaks)

The Sun Peaks Ski Resort has been occupying and developing on an area of unceded Secwepemc (Shushwap) territory, known as Skwelkwew'welt, since the mid-1990s. The Secwepemc have answered this intrusion with resistance, building the Skwelkwew'welt Protection Centre to 'occupy' their own territory, and halt this illegal development.

More than 54 people have been arrested for defending Skwelkwew'welt and more than eight Secwepemc homes and traditional sweat lodges have been destroyed by bulldozers.

The Canadian government is set on destroying Secwepemc resistance through the RCMP and the Sun Peaks project. On June 20<sup>th</sup> 2003, one month after a Secwepemc youth and a mother were released from 2 ½ months in prison for defending Skwelkwew'welt, four Secwepemc women (including a 75-year-old elder) were found guilty of 'intimidation' for blocking a road.

In September, seven Native youth and a traditional land user face 90 days in prison for blocking a road.

### Cheam

The Cheam 'First Nation' is part of the Stó:lō Nation, and consists of two reserves between Chilliwack and Hope. The struggle of the Cheam to assert their fishing rights along the Fraser River goes back at least fifty years.

In the last few years, Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) officers have used assault, unlawful arrests, and a variety of other tactics to suppress Cheam fishers and their supporters.

One of the most recent assaults occurred on May 15<sup>th</sup> 2003 when Sidney Douglas, head band councilor of Cheam, was assaulted and pepper sprayed by DFO officers while fishing on the Fraser. In response, Cheam fishers and their supporters mobilized, blockading a fisheries truck and the Canadian National Railway that goes through their territory.

On June 24<sup>th</sup> 2003, after the threat of a 'major national confrontation' over the issue, a deal was reached between DFO officers and the Cheam fishers which declared that the Cheam Band, not fisheries officers, will announce where and when it will fish.

### Grassy Narrows

Since December 3, 2002, the Anishnaabe community of Grassy Narrows has been blockading a logging road at Slant Lake, 80 km north of Kenora, to prevent logging trucks from entering cut blocks on their traditional lands. The blockade was set up after the Grassy Narrows community were unable to stop the illegal logging through the 'official' channels, and were ignored by the Canadian government.

The clear-cutting of their traditional lands is being carried out by Abitibi Consolidated, who are also ignoring the wishes of the Grassy Narrows community.

The blockade has been successful at averting logging trucks away from the area, though the logging still continues through the use of other logging routes in the area.

On June 4<sup>th</sup> of 2003, a group of women, men, youth, and one elder from the Grassy Narrows community blockaded a second logging road.

# Fighting for Prisoners' Justice:

An interview with Phyllis Iverson of Joint Effort

By Mike Krebs

August 10<sup>th</sup> is Prisoners' Justice Day, a day set aside to remember all the men and women who have died unnatural deaths inside Canadian prisons. Prisoners' Justice Day was declared in 1976 to draw attention to the death of Edward Nolan, who bled to death on August 10<sup>th</sup> 1974 in the segregation unit of Milhaven Maximum Security Prison, located in Bath, Ontario.

Joint Effort is the primary group involved in the Vancouver Prisoners Justice Day Committee. Joint Effort is an all-women group involved in solidarity work with women prisoners at the Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women. They are also one of the many groups supporting the human rights complaint that the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies submitted to the Canadian Human Rights Commission in March of 2001. Their complaint alleges that the government of Canada and Correctional Services Canada is discriminating against federally sentenced women on the basis of sex, race, and disability.

To commemorate Prisoners Justice Day, Fire This Time interviewed Phyllis Iverson, an organizer with the Prisoners Justice Day Committee and Joint Effort. Phyllis has been doing prisoner support work for over 20 years.

a couple of walkaway escapes, and then there was one death at the prison. Correctional Services Canada (CSC) immediately took all women who were classified as maximum security and transferred them to isolated units in men's prisons, where the women have been doing basically solitary confinement, segregation, whatever you want to call it in these men's prisons. They haven't had access to any programs that would help lessen their classification from maximum security. People have been trying for the last nine years to get these women back into women's prisons.

The response from the Government of Canada and CSC was to build new maximum security prisons at all of the regional women's prisons. When you look at the models that they've used for the building of the two that are open, they're super-maximum security.

So, once you're in the new women's 'max,' you have to go through four levels of security. And for the first level, for the first 6 months, the woman is locked totally in her cell. She eats all her meals in her cell, she's not allowed contact with any other prisoners, even in the maximum security unit where she is. If she's going to come out of her cell, and she would only be coming out for therapy, to see the doctor, or for visits, then she's going to



Inside the Kingston Penitentiary, 1999.

for non-violent offences. The majority of women in prison are there for crimes of poverty. Also, the racist classification system means that over 50% of women classified as maximum security are Aboriginal.

**What types of changes to the prison system has the BC Liberal government made that will affect imprisoned women in BC?**

Overall, they totally closed all of the minimum and medium security prisons for men in the province and put them all into maximum security. They plan to close the

men's lockups, like at Surrey Pretrial, Prince George, and the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre, where they've already poured the cement for a separate women's unit. But, at Surrey Pretrial, they're not building a separate unit, they're just going to take women and lock them into an isolated section of the men's lockup, where there's going to basically be no programs, there's going to be nothing for them, and the women are going to be triple-bunked there. This is all coming at a time when the Canadian Human Rights Commission is doing an investigation into systemic discrimination against women in prison based on sex, race, and disability. This is all coming at a time where this original complaint came on behalf of women who are being held in men's prisons. So while the federal government is saying that they are going to stop doing this, the provincial government is going to start doing it.

**As a longtime prisoners justice activist, what are the main things you have learned in this work, and what do you see in the future for the struggle of imprisoned women?**

I think the most important thing that I've learned is that prison doesn't work. I'm a prison abolitionist, I don't believe that any woman belongs in prison, and I don't believe that men belong in prison either. I don't think we need prisons in this society, I think that prisons are used as a means of social control. They're used as a way to deal with problems in the community that can and should be dealt with within the community.

With all of the cutbacks that we've been seeing in BC, I believe that you're going to definitely see an increase in the number of prisoners. Whenever there's cuts to mental health resources in the community, you see a rise of people with mental health issues ending up inside

prison. When there's cuts to social programs and women's programs, you see an increase in the rise of women in prison. With the cuts to programs for youth-at-risk, you see an increase in youth detention.

**What does Joint effort have planned in the near future?**

Joint Effort participated in the Canadian Human Rights Commission reports. We did that through the group Strength in Sisterhood, which is a group of predominantly ex-federal women prisoners who do advocacy, both for women inside and outside of prison. Our plan is to continue to focus on the conditions for women in prison, and do what we can to help shut them down.

**How can people concerned with the issues facing women in prison get involved? How can they support the work of Joint Effort and Prisoners Justice Day?**

Joint Effort is involved in the Prisoners Justice Day events that are coming up, and this year Prisoners Justice Day is going to be focusing on the situation for women in prison. There's a national campaign going to close down the new 'max' units for women. I think everybody has to, if nothing else, sign one of our postcards and send it off to the government saying that this has got to stop.

*Check out the back page for more information about this year's Prisoners' Justice Day events in Vancouver.*

*To find out more about Joint Effort, check out their website at [www.vcn.bc.ca/august10/jointeffort.html](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/august10/jointeffort.html).*



A member of the audience speaking at the Fire This Time forum on the First Nations Governance Act, June 30th 2003. See coverage of this forum on page 11.

**What are the major issues you see with the federal government in regards to the imprisonment of women?**

I think that one of the most critical situations for women in prison at this point is the opening of the new maximum security prisons. After the closing of the Prison for Women in Kingston, five regional prisons were built for women, and originally there was supposed to be input from the women's community into the needs of the women in prison and programs. After that, there had been a couple of what they call 'incidents' at Edmonton Institution for Women,

be handcuffed, shackled, and escorted by three guards. At the same time, all the other women are locked in their cells when she's out of hers. She can work her way down to where, through 'good behavior,' she can come out of her cell with only the handcuffs and two guards. If she breaks any rules, even raising her voice or being disrespectful to the guards, she has to begin the process all over again.

This new model of security for women is more harsh than maximum security for men, and completely out of line for women, who for the most part are in prison

Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women (BCCW), which is a provincial prison. Aside from provincial prisoners, the BCCW holds federally-sentenced women through an exchange agreement with the federal government. So when they announced that they would be closing BCCW, the federal government said that they would retake jurisdiction over the federal prisoners and they're going to build a new federal prison in Abbotsford.

With the provincial women, they've just said that any woman who needs a secure environment is going to be held in one of the

# War, Occupation, Resistance:

## Fire This Time Holds Conference on the Antiwar Movement

By Leah McKenzie-Brown

*"They are able to get away with it by labeling it so called 'humanitarian', an act of 'humanitarianism'. Or, 'in the name of freedom'. All kinds of high-sounding slogans. But it is cold-blooded murder. Mass murder. And it's done so skillfully that you or I, in the twentieth century, are able to watch it, and put the stamp of approval upon it."*

- Malcolm X, about the US invasion of Vietnam (Quoted by Nasim Sedaghat in the introduction to the conference)

On Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, Fire This Time held its first conference, entitled 'War, Occupation, Resistance: What we have learned.' The conference, attended by around fifty people representing many different communities in the Lower Mainland, was held at the Collingwood Community Centre. The day was organized into two parts: 'War and Occupation', and 'The future of the anti-war movement in Vancouver'.

The challenging, uncompromising and vital tone of the conference was set from the beginning with an opening by Fire This Time member, Nasim Sedaghat. Nasim, a refugee and former political prisoner

from the Iranian revolution brought her experience and the experience of Che Guevara and Malcolm X to the forefront of the conference with bold words that opened the program. "We are not only part of an important international movement, we are the result of a historical international struggle." She then set up the rest of the day with her conclusion, "The anti-war movement in Vancouver has an incredible responsibility, not only to the occupied people of Iraq, but to all oppressed people in Vancouver, and all oppressed people in the world."

"This attack was never against Saddam Hussein", said panelist Ivan Drury, member of Fire This Time. "This is an attack to strengthen the US position on a global scale by furthering their interests in the Middle East. Their strategy is to win ground on rival imperialists, to maintain and develop their global hegemony by strategically targeting Iraq...a job that seemed easy under ten years of sanctions". These sentiments were echoed by another panelist, Claudio Videll, a sociology professor at Kwantlen College in Surrey. Claudio Videll also discussed US hegemony and the current, stagnant US economy, a condition which, he said, has led the States

to enter into a "permanent state of war". The latest phase of this war began with Afghanistan and has continued with the bombing and occupation of Iraq.

The second half of the conference was a discussion of the antiwar movement in Vancouver. It featured three speakers from the StopWar.ca coalition: coordinating committee member Haseena Majeed; coordinating committee member and Palestine Solidarity Group organizer Derrick O'Keefe, and Shannon Bundock, member of Fire This Time.

The panelists discussed the composition and dynamics of the anti-war movement in Vancouver, specifically the large mobilizations and the necessity for education and outreach. Haseena Majeed and Derrick O'Keefe discussed the broad unity that is gained from opposition to the war on Iraq, and the necessity for mobilizations to be a 'high point', coinciding with education and consciousness building.

Shannon Bundock brought the attention of those present to the success of frequent and dynamic actions that took place around the time of the bombing, and the failure of the leadership to continue the escalation

of this resistance. "People wanted to do something", she said, "they still want to do something. To get involved. But it was a failure on our part to provide those outlets. We have to build this movement, not contain it". Calling for diversity in the leadership of the anti-war movement, with oppressed people as the vanguard of the struggle, Shannon gave a critical look at the successes and mistakes of mobilizations and organizing around Iraq in Vancouver.

"Who are we to decide who governs the Iraqi people?" said one woman in attendance, referring to the need for self-determination in Iraq. Discussion continued after each panel with interesting, provoking and sometimes heated participation from both the floor and the panel.

Fire This Time will continue holding conferences, along with our forums, to reach out to communities of working, poor, and oppressed people in the Lower Mainland. With the help of this work, we will be able to build a strong movement that includes all communities in the Lower Mainland in a strong resistance against war, occupation, and imperialism and for the self-determination of all oppressed people.

## The FNGA and Colonization

Continued from page 11

through the residential school system, through the White Paper, this is all part of the same colonial process.

We had the displacement of Indigenous people from our land, while at the same time crushing our economies, our fishing, hunting, farming, taking away all of these from us. At the same time we saw the quarantining of Indigenous peoples on tiny reserves in what was (and continues to be) an early form of apartheid, where Indigenous people were segregated off onto these tiny pieces of land, and the Canadian government imposes a set of laws on us defining who is and who isn't Indian. Following that, there were attempts to then completely wipe out Indigenous people, through murder, through disease, through disconnecting Indigenous people from our culture and language.

The FNGA is not about correcting these wrongs, it is a continuation of the same process to eventually wipe out Native people, to wipe out Indigenous people completely. This leaves the Canadian government with nobody to compensate for hundreds of years of theft and destruction.

### The FNGA: a Capitalist Trap

Aside from historical context, I think we have to look at the FNGA and what it means in the current context, in terms of the international situation and the current international context of capitalism and neo-liberalism. I'm not an economist, so for this I will define neo-liberalism simply as the current ways in which capitalism is being restructured to deal with the problems of profitability that it is having.

Originally, the establishment of Canada and other nation states was done to secure the property,

to secure the land and resources, and to secure the potential labour power of the people within those countries for the purposes of business, for the purposes of capitalists. Now, in different ways, capitalists are finding that these states and governments are not only presenting barriers to further economic exploitation, but there are also certain ways in which they are trying to restructure governments so that they can make more profits through government structures. We're seeing this in Canada in the form of global restructuring, the privatization of public resources, and cuts to social programs.

### Neo-Liberalism

I think that in some ways, especially with the First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act, we see the same policies brought down on Indigenous nations living under Canadian colonial rule. We see the offloading of administrative responsibilities from the federal level down to Bands, and giving more power to Bands to borrow money from banks. But what's a little bit different with this is that, with Canada, we see the privatization and contracting out of government services and assets to corporations. With this legislation, rather than necessarily encouraging Bands to contract out to corporations, we're seeing the Band councils themselves being redefined legally as corporations, meaning they have to act like corporations. Through 'own source revenue,' they have to raise their own funds in order to stay afloat, or worse, take out loans from private banks, which may result in the further loss of reserve lands if these loans are defaulted on. Of course, the other thing that makes this form of neo-liberalism different is that this is not about the Canadian ruling class changing its own government, it is the

Canadian government imposing this restructuring on another government.

All of this comes back to the question of self-determination of Indigenous people. All the problems we see with poverty, with violence, high suicide rates, HIV, diabetes, all of these problems stem from the fact that our rights to self-determination are taken away from us, and our poverty is directly related to the theft of our land and resources. This is why self-determination is so important to us; this is why we have to oppose the FNGA completely. We can't negotiate around it or make amendments, it has to be wiped out completely.

### Building Alliances

The last thing I want to talk about is that self-determination of Indigenous people is not something that is just important for Indigenous people. It's important for Canadian working people, poor people, and other oppressed people living within the border of Canada to realize that they must never side with the Canadian government and big business when Indigenous people are under attack. This is the same Canadian government, and the same businesses, that are attacking these people as well: attacking workers rights, gutting social programs, and attacking the rights of immigrants and refugees.

In terms of alliance building, there is especially room right now within Canada for strong alliances between the Indigenous population and immigrants, refugees, and other oppressed minorities. Through Bill C-18 and other legislation, the Canadian government is launching racist attacks against immigrants and refugees, most of whom are people of colour, and are taking away their rights. So I think there is a lot of room to form alliances,



Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs addresses the audience at the Fire This Time forum on the FNGA, June 30th 2003.

and work together against the same enemy, to work against the different policies launched against different people by the same racist Canadian government.

Self-determination for Indigenous people is also important in the international context. What we've seen in recent years, with Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine, is a return to the old forms of direct colonial rule. We're seeing the same countries that colonized North America recolonizing the rest of the globe. Britain, the US, Canada: their current occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan are extensions of colonial rule here. It should be clear that the US isn't any more interested in bringing good governance to the Iraqi people than the Canadian government is concerned with bringing good governance to Indigenous people.

### Resistance

We are also seeing resistance worldwide to these colonial occupations. We see the Afghan people and the Iraqi people resisting these colonial occupations. We're seeing the same resistance here to Canadian colonialism. There are the actions that have been happening from coast to coast against the FNGA, the opposition at Skwelkwel'welt to the development of Sun Peaks,

the blockades at Grassy Narrows, and conflicts in Cheam. This resistance is happening all over the world against the same governments. What we need to do is realize that this is a common struggle, we need to unite in this resistance to colonialism and imperialism. It is in our common interest to do so.

When we have this racist Canadian government sending its troops to Afghanistan, and the Afghan people resist and fight for their self-determination, that weakens the Canadian state as a whole, which puts us in a better position. When Indigenous people here assert their rights to self-determination, this weakens the Canadian state (and, just to the south, it weakens the US state), and that makes it more difficult for them to carry out their colonial occupations elsewhere in the world. By looking at things this way, by seeing this as a common struggle, against colonialism, against imperialism, against racism... this is the only way that there will be any hope for self-determination, and eventually, for liberation, of any group of oppressed people worldwide. And this is whether they're Iraqi or Iroquois; whether they're Palestinian or Pacheedaht. Thank you very much.

# Iraqi resistance to the US-UK occupation continues

'Iraq' from page 3

knew that this would extend to the pirating of the spoils of war as well. However, while they had lost any ground to argue from, they still rejected the US's first contract for UNSC-legitimized control of Iraq. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, Yuri Fedotov, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia said, "In its current form, the draft resolution presents serious problems for our country." By May 19<sup>th</sup>, his language had softened to, "We still hope to find a mutually acceptable solution." Three days later, on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the UNSC, without any votes against the motion, granted the US-led coalition absolute control of Iraq's government and resources, including oil. The only concession that the Russian and German governments won was the "right" to compete for contracts in the siphoning off of resources and profits from the people of Iraq.

The US then appealed to the G8 to write off Iraq's \$127 billion debt altogether in an arrogant overestimation of their victory over their imperialist rivals. German finance minister Hans Eichel responded in clear terms, "There is simply no margin to write off Iraq's debt." It was clear at this point that the US's rivals recognized the competition for global hegemony, and were preparing their response. Within the month, France, which was noticeably absent from occupation negotiations and condemnations, sent troops to the D.R. Congo, which is torn by civil war, to open another imperialist front in Africa. As of July 5<sup>th</sup>, there are reports of the US considering an answer to

conflict that Washington had promised.

On the US Independence Day, the Fourth of July, a US soldier was shot and killed and 16 others wounded in separate shooting attacks in Iraq. On this day, Bush announced that the country is "still at war." The next day, he was proved right when an "improvised explosive device" exploded 45 miles west of Baghdad and killed seven US-controlled Iraqi police officers in training and wounded at least 13 others. Rather than ending, the tension and the resistance is building.

## The mismanagement of Iraq

In the middle of May, Jay Garner was replaced as the "civilian administrator" in Iraq by a counter-terrorism and civilian control expert named Paul Bremer. Bremer immediately fired 400,000 people from positions they had held in Saddam's government and army, leaving them all without jobs or means of survival. He then cancelled the national conference that was meant to select an interim Iraqi administration to write the country's new constitution. He announced that the US would appoint this administration unilaterally, thereby destroying any remaining illusions of the occupying army's interest in the self-determination of the Iraqi people. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, Bremer stated that this council will be constructed of mostly Baath opposition Shiite Muslims and will come together "within the next two weeks."

The top British Civilian in Baghdad stated in mid-May

their other "unfinished business" in the Middle East, namely: Palestine and Afghanistan. Everywhere, the imperialist forces are met with resistance and their programs to instill "American style democracy" and order are failing terribly. The Road Map in Palestine, the US puppet "democratic government" in Afghanistan and the law and order expert in Iraq are all exposed as failing attempts at old style colonialism by the resistance in all these areas.

In Iraq, the US is attempting to blame "the few remaining supporters of Saddam" for the attacks that have been rocking the occupying armies, but this resistance presents a much deeper problem for the US strategy. The US is confronted with a people who will never accept the occupation and who are, as a whole, uniting to drive the US out of Iraq.

The US-UK occupying forces do not present a solution for the well over 4.6 million people living in what the UN refers to as "chronic poverty" nor does it address the millions of unemployed workers throughout Iraq. It is difficult to ascertain the exact numbers of Iraqis living in chronic poverty under the US occupation; the statistic from the UN of 4.6 million is from 2002, before the occupation began, from before the bombing even began. The US created the massive poverty in Iraq through 13 years of sanctions that hit the working and poor people of Iraq tremendously hard, killing a million children by starvation. This suffering has continued its US legacy through the bombing of Iraq that leveled housing, schools and infrastructure while killing thousands more. Now, having occupied Iraq and erased all previous government mechanisms for people's survival, the US has taken on a tremendous responsibility to care for the people of Iraq, an obligation they are failing miserably to carry out.

Ali Jaseem, a Shiite Iraqi who lives in a slum south of Baghdad said, on June 20<sup>th</sup>, "The Americans are using the Baath as an excuse to stay in the country... they don't want an Iraqi government so they just talk about the Baath. We will rise up and fight the Americans. We have just moved from one dictatorship to another."

## The Iraqi people strike back

In response to coalition attempts to destroy organized Iraqi resistance all across the country through Operation Peninsula Strike and Operation Desert Sidewinder, there has been a rise in resistance. Tens of thousands of people have taken the streets in demonstrations and there has been a remarkable escalation of suicide bombings, rocket propelled grenade attacks, shootings and acts of sabotage. On June 24<sup>th</sup>, there were 25 attacks on coalition troops in one day, resulting in the deaths



Iraqi Shiites protesting against the US-appointed Governing Council of Iraq, July 19th 2003

of six British troops. Shootings of US troops in marketplaces and bombings of transports and bases have become an everyday occurrence. Confidence and morale have fallen so low amongst the US troops and the American people in general that on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, George W. Bush was forced to brag with arrogant self-confidence: "Anybody who wants to harm American troops will be found and brought to justice. There are some that feel like if they attack us that we may decide to leave prematurely. They don't understand what they are talking about if that is the case. There are some who feel like the conditions are such that they can attack us there. My answer is, bring them on. We're not leaving until we accomplish the task."

For now, the US is attempting to crush dissent in Iraq. House-to-house searches, massive witch hunts for the elusive remnants of the Baath party supporters, further bombings, check points, arrests, detentions, torture and executions are the US response to unemployment and unrest in Iraq.

## END THE OCCUPATION! SELF-DETERMINATION!

There is nobody in the world that can end the occupation of Iraq except for the Iraqi people. The people of the world must stand with them in solidarity. The US is growing more and more concerned that the opening stages of its new military strategy are going to fall flat and that they will, in fact, be driven from Iraq by this resistance. There are trends within the anti-war movement and even within Democrat circles of the US administration calling for UN intervention. This trend is terrified of the precedent that would be set by the successful repulsion of the US from Iraq. There really are only two sides to this struggle. There is the side of a man in a town north of Baghdad that was seized by Operation Peninsula Strike who said, "The people have to resist. They have to fight for their honour, for dignity." And there is the side of UN Governance Reform Expert Elissar Sarrouh, who said, "What happened in Iraq should serve as a wake-up call [to 'democratize'] to other Arab states."

The US is pursuing one strategy, one war in many locations, on many fronts. Iraq, Afghanistan

and Palestine are all part of the same war and that war is being carried out in all parts of the world. That war is being fought in the US and in Canada, against refugees and immigrants and Indigenous nations and it is being resisted by people in all parts of the world, united across geographic, religious, cultural, national and ethnic boundaries. In all places, the US is attempting to create false fronts to break that solidarity. In Iraq, they have the Baath Party, in Afghanistan there is the Taliban, in Palestine there is Hamas and in all other places, from Latin America to South East Asia, and even in Canada and the US itself, there is the ever-present "terrorist."

As long as the US-UK is occupying Iraq and until they are forced to leave, they are accountable to the Iraqi people. Their total mismanagement of Iraq and their escalation of the poverty, unemployment and suffering that now completely dominate the people of Iraq must be ended. As long as they are occupying Iraq, they must provide jobs, services, welfare, and education and they must end the violence, harassment, and humiliation leveled at the Iraqi people daily.

As US imperialism attempts to consolidate all of its occupied territory in order to move on to seize new ground, it is more important than ever to choose a side and stand in solidarity with the people of Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan and everywhere. As the fight against the US-UK occupation of Iraq builds, people in Canada must realize the historical importance of this resistance and support it here in the streets. The self-determination of Iraq will set vital ground for the self-determination of Palestine, of Afghanistan and, ultimately, of the Indigenous nations in the Americas. We must demand jobs, welfare, services and education for the people of Iraq. We must demand an end to house-to-house searches, to check points, to detentions, torture, and execution. We must demand the US-UK out of Iraq, the US-UK-Canada out of Afghanistan, Israel out of Palestine and an end to this imperialist war against all poor, working and oppressed people in the world.



Iraqi Sunnis protesting against the US-appointed Governing Council of Iraq, July 19th 2003

this maneuver through sending troops to Liberia, another civil war disaster-stricken country, and a former US colony, in Africa.

## The unconquerable enemy: the people of Iraq

Whatever successes the war on Iraq granted the US government in its dealings with its rivals, there has been no success in the mastery of Iraq itself. Since George W. Bush declared major combat over on May 1<sup>st</sup>, over 26 US soldiers have been killed in attacks by the Iraqi resistance (as of July 2<sup>nd</sup>). This has brought the total US casualties to well over 200, hardly the quick and simple

that the coalition would not release power until elections could be held and said that this is expected to take one to two years. Meanwhile, much of Iraq, including Baghdad, functions without steady electricity, water, sewage or garbage collection. The already chronically impoverished population is struck with endemic unemployment, a shortage of food, water, clothing, shelter, and basic education, and a chaos of riots, looting, rape, and violence.

The failure of the American occupation to control the lives, hearts and minds of the Iraqi people is directly connected to

# The Fire This Time Movement For Social Justice Basis of Unity

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

Fire This Time is a politically based action organization committed to building the social and political power of poor and working people in BC. We believe the only way to effectively challenge and threaten the government and their corporate agenda is through the organization of masses of people in motion in workplaces and in the streets. We are dedicated to mobilizing and unifying poor and working people against the Liberal Government and their anti-poor, anti-working people legislations and policies. We are committed to organizing with working and poor people from the most attacked and exploited communities in the lower mainland and beyond: communities of colour, immigrants, refugees, "illegals", low-wage workers, disabled people, queer people, indigenous communities, unemployed people and low-income families. We oppose all forms of oppression and exploitation: from sexism to racism, from homophobia to colonialism and all other institutions, thought, beliefs, actions and behaviours that humiliate and demean people to bring hostility and division amongst us.

The goal of the Fire This Time Movement

for Social Justice is to build a broad based movement to defeat the BC Liberal Government. Our work is to provide the tools necessary to unify and activate the working class in BC to build a strong and effective broad-based movement to oppose the BC Liberals and their attacks on poor and working people. This movement must be integrated in the wider revolutionary context of international struggle against capitalism and imperialism; although we are mainly engaged in local politics, in essence the scope of our work is internationalist. Supporting the struggles of oppressed people abroad weakens the hegemony and power of the capitalist class in other lands and consequently weakens their rule at home, therefore aiding the battles of oppressed people in Canada. In addition, the practice of international solidarity solidifies the co-operation essential in building a world movement for social justice. The Liberal Government's agenda is part of a global restructuring program known as "neo-liberalism". To fight the BC Liberals is to fight neo-liberalism and global capitalism. We must expand on this both implicitly and explicitly to make the connections relevant to peoples daily domestic struggle, to overcome geographic division, and to make it clear that when we engage in struggle we do not struggle alone but alongside millions of working and poor people around the world. Within capitalist and imperialist globalisation there is no local struggle that does not have an international character. Every international is local and every local is international.

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

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

L'humanité est incessamment menacée de guerre, famine, crises économiques, pauvreté et crime, suscitées par les capitalistes et leur recherche du profit au détriment de tous les peuples du monde. Afin de combattre ces crimes contre l'humanité, nous devons concentrer nos efforts sur la création et l'avance d'une lutte contre le capitalisme et les autorités locales capitalistes, dans le but de détruire les instruments qui divisent le prolétariat. Les principes fondamentaux du Mouvement Fire This Time pour l'Équité Sociale sont la solidarité et l'unification des pauvres et des ouvrier(ère)s aux niveaux local et international. Il faut bien comprendre que ces principes sont dénués de sens sans une lutte active concomitante, car les capitalistes ne nous 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 démun(e)s des communautés les plus exploitées de la région métropolitaine de Vancouver et au-delà. Tous et toutes contre le gouvernement Libéral et ses politiques anti-pauvres et anti-ouvrières!: les personnes de couleur, immigrant(e)s, réfugié(e)s, "illégaux(ales)", les économiquement faibles, handicapé(e)s, trans/bi/homosexuel(le)s, peuples autochtones et chômeur(euse)s. Nous nous opposons à tout genre d'oppression et d'exploitation: sexisme, racisme, colonialisme, homophobie et tous les institutions, crédos, actes et comportements qui nous avilissent et nous divisent.

Notre objectif est de bâtir une base politique

diverse et de mettre le Parti Libéral de la Colombie-Britannique en déroute. Nous forgeons les outils qui démanteleront l'abominable monstre Libéral! De plus, ce Mouvement s'intégrera dans une lutte révolutionnaire internationale contre le capitalisme et l'impérialisme – quoique l'essentiel de nos engagements politiques est au niveau local, l'envergure de notre entreprise est internationaliste. Par force de soutenir la lutte internationale contre la classe dirigeante, nous 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 démun(e)s dans le monde entier. Dans l'enceinte de la mondialisation capitaliste et impérialiste, les luttes régionales et locales font inmanquablement partie de la lutte internationale.

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

- Translated by Eric Lamoureux

## Self-Determination Key to an Effective Anti-Imperialist Movement

From page 2

### Self-determination: A Central Campaign

In today's dynamics of imperialism, fighting for the self-determination of oppressed nations is about building an anti-imperialist movement. Today, the train of building of an anti-imperialist movement is running on the railroad of the self-determination of semi-colonial countries and oppressed nations. Anti-globalization and anti-imperialist pacts are all fine and deserve to be supported, but they are not decisive for building an effective anti-war, anti-imperialist movement.

Regardless of understanding the facts of capitalist market crises, over-production, poverty and other crises of the capitalist-imperialist economy, the axis of building an anti-imperialist movement is still war, occupation and self-determination. Because war and occupation happen everyday and affect us immediately, they enforce the crisis and, without a choice, this strategy is imposed on us.

It is suicidal to turn to campaigns that are not immediate and dynamic. It is even more dangerous if, for the sake of a small number of middle class humanists or an insignificant number of liberal bourgeois

human rights activists, and for the sake of keeping them busy and happy, we betray the majority of working class and oppressed people of the world. This is done through adopting defensive, meaningless, and demoralizing boycott campaigns, or fictitious issues like a campaign against the StarWars II missile defense system, which could be understood only if we could turn the clock back to the Cold War period.

Today, there is not a single imperialist power that does not exercise its "right" of imperialist assault. Though there is no physical world war between imperialist rivals, we are living in an era in which we observe the most dynamic imperialist movement since World War II. Without exception, all colonial powers are using their military power somewhere in the world. Canada already has 1,500 troops in Afghanistan, around and inside Kabul. The dynamics of the competition between these rivals is amazing.

An important unfolding dynamic of this competition is the move of shifting the war and occupation to Africa. All imperialist rivals are working hard in Africa to get ahead of others. France has already deployed 9,000 of its troops in the Congo, Sierra Leone, and the Ivory Coast. Germany,

Italy, and the UK are trying to send their troops under the guise of UN or European "peacekeeping" forces. All of them are doing all kinds of negotiation for military, economic, financial or cultural deals. The United States already has military agreements in terms of selling military machinery to, or training the armies and officers for 44 out of a total of 53 countries in the continent. According to the Pentagon, the total deployment of US troops in Liberia will increase from its present 2,000 to 15,000 should they proceed with intervention and occupation.

The course of events is unfolding so rapidly in Africa that most anti-war movements in the world have completely overlooked them. Although time is running against us, we still have plenty of time to organize an effective anti-war movement with the potential of becoming an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist movement. We cannot be distracted. We must focus on imperialist wars, occupations and the self-determination of oppressed nations. We must demand: bring the troops home now; Canada out of Afghanistan; US, UK and Canada out of the Middle East; End the occupation of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan; US, France out of Africa.

## Fire This Time Basis of Unity (Farsi)

امروزه، انسان و انسانیت، در هر لحظه با جنگ‌افروزی، بحران‌های اقتصادی، قحطی و گرسنگی، قتل و -تایید- تهدید می‌گردد. همه این‌ها -تایید- ناشی از چپاول مردم توسط سرمایه‌داران و جاسوسان اروپایی است. هدف ما -تایید- مبارزه و جدایی و جدایی از دولت‌های استبداد است. ما باید همه نیرو و توانمان را جهت ایجاد بنیادی از زحمتکش و دانشجویان در مقابل با سرمایه جهانی و نمایندگان و موسسات محلی آنان و همه ابزار و روش‌هایی که آنها برای تفرقه ما به کار می‌برند، متمرکز کنیم. اصول اولیه‌ای که ما بر اساس اتحاد و همبستگی فعالیت با مردم زحمتکش علیه فقر و بی‌سامانی، چه در سطح محلی و چه در سطح جهانی، تشکیل یافته است. البته، بر همه ما باید روشن باشد که بدون شرکت و حرکت فعال مردم، این اصول مشتق کلیات بروی کاغذ بیش نیستند. چرا که استمرار این مبارزه علیه منافع طبقات حاکم محلی و جهانی سرمایه‌داری است، و آنان بی‌شک از هر امکان و وسیله‌ای که در دسترس دارند استفاده خواهند کرد که ما را به جان هم انداخته و ما که تولید کنندگان واقعی ثروت و پیشرفت

مردم، ما را به ... و ... مبارزه. **Fire This Time** - سازمانی - مردمی، که بر اساس اصولی سیاسی، عملی -تایید- مردمی، خواهان اتحاد مردم زحمتکش و فقیر برای ایجاد سازمانها و ارگان‌های توده‌ای آنان است. ما مستعدیم -تایید- ما را، قابل امر -تایید- جهت منافع -تایید- دولت لیبرال بریتیش -تایید- حقوق مردم در زمینه‌های اقتصادی، اجتماعی و سیاسی، و اقدامات توزیع‌کننده سرمایه‌داری آن، برقرار ساختن ارگان‌های توده‌ای و مستقل مردم می‌باشد. ما با هر گونه استثمار و استعمار، و عقاید نژاد پرستانه، سکسیسم، ضد همجنس‌گرایی، و هر گونه ایده‌ای که شکاف و بدبینی را در صفوف زحمتکش و ستم‌دیده‌گان تشدید کرده و مانع اتحاد انقلابی آنان گردد در اساس و بنیان مخالف بوده و علیه آنان مبارزه می‌کنیم. سازمان ما متعهد است که با شرکت در مبارزات کارگران، زنان، جوانان و تمامی ستم‌دیده‌گانی، که متحمل زبان‌های مالی و حقوق انسانی و دمکراتیک گردیده‌اند، صفوف آنان را مستحکم نموده و از این طریق، چالش و بدیلی اساسی در مقابل سیاست‌های ضد مردمی دولت لیبرال بریتیش کلمبیا، که انتشار ضربه‌پذیر جامعه، از جمله پناهنده‌گان، مهاجرین غیر سفیدپوست، زنان، جوانان، معلولین، بومیان کانادا، همجنس‌گرایان، بیکاران و خانواده‌های نداشتن را مدد قرار داده، ایجاد کنیم. در ضد کلام، مدد اساسی ما در این امر، اتحاد مناسبتی مردمی و تمام مردم است. ما را، تسویه، سرافراز بریتیش کلمبیا -تایید-

ما سرمایه‌داریست و به سرمایه‌داریست. ما را، تسویه، سرافراز بریتیش کلمبیا -تایید- ما سرمایه‌داریست و به سرمایه‌داریست. ما را، تسویه، سرافراز بریتیش کلمبیا -تایید- ما سرمایه‌داریست و به سرمایه‌داریست. ما را، تسویه، سرافراز بریتیش کلمبیا -تایید-

- Translated by Nasim Sedaghat

## Police and Human Rights Abuses

From page 1

Already, the results of the displacement of drug users, dealers and 'crime' have been noted by other areas in the city. Not only did needle exchange levels decline by one third throughout the police operations and condom distribution to sex trade workers go down by a whopping two thirds; arrests of dealers outside of the DTES went up by two thirds in that same period, from 50 to 150 arrests.

The displacement of drug users and sex trade workers from the DTES is not in the benefit of these oppressed people or of any working or poor person. There are 5,000 IV Drug Users in the DTES; 30% of them have HIV / AIDS and an incredible 90% have Hepatitis C. Chasing users

from the resources they rely on to be safe and forcing them into hiding in shooting galleries will only cause another epidemic and drive transmissions out of control.

To prevent another health disaster and for the rights of drug users, sex trade workers and of all people targeted by the police in Vancouver and throughout the country, Operation Torpedo must be stopped. We must demand immediate access to health care, needle exchange and safe injection sites for all people in Vancouver, in BC and in Canada. We must demand the legalization of all drugs for an end to the criminalization of drug users, an end to the criminalization of the poor, and for a healthy and community controlled downtown and the rights of people over business everywhere.

## 'Building The Antiwar Movement'

From page 3

During the war, for example, when Baghdad was taken, independent working class politics meant that the focus must shift from war to occupation. Likewise, when the independent Iraqi resistance continued and grew, the focus had to shift to occupation and a continuation of war. More emphasis in this area would have led to a movement that was stronger from the point of view of politics and consciousness, and, as a result, we could have fought and educated more successfully against imperialism and the current demoralization we are now battling.

### Occupation, a central issue

On other programmatic and agitational fronts, the Vancouver anti-war movement and its leadership was successful in maintaining a focus on Iraq before and during the bombing and invasion. Focusing on Iraq does not mean ignoring other issues related to the war, it means exploring them via the primary focus. We use a point of unity, one that many poor and working people agree on, to introduce immediate issues that are relevant to oppressed people immediately. This method strengthens our political position as it puts people in a better position to advance the struggle against imperialist aggression. For example, through the focus on Iraq we were able to explore the occupation of Palestine and enforce the similarities and relationship.

Once the war turned to occupation, as the leadership of the Vancouver anti-war movement, we failed to switch decisively and quickly to a strategy against occupation of Iraq and for self-determination. This was a failure to maintain a strategic focus and weakened our ability to mobilize, which is an ongoing problem.

Now we need to learn from where we were successful and where we fell short and more importantly what to do next. The first thing that must be established is the political, that the war on Iraq is NOT over and the US-led occupation remains the axis of imperialist aggression. What this means now is that the accompanying occupations of Afghanistan, and Palestine are encompassed by the focus of ending occupation and demanding self-determination for oppressed nations.

### The Next Step

Throughout the building of this anti-war movement there was the constant necessity of broadening the leadership in order to reflect the people who were coming to the streets and the politics that those people were representing. This is still a necessary task to undertake. Currently we see an almost total resignation and

a halt in activity, which comes from a feeling of shock and disbelief and a false sense of being defeated. However, through spending time talking to people in the streets, doing outreach work, and participating in political forums, it is obvious that there is a potential that is not currently being exploited by StopWar.ca. Much of this is due to a disconnection from the movement itself. If the leadership is not close to the movement, if the leadership does not develop with the movement, if the leadership itself does not reflect the movement, it can in no way adequately respond to the movement.

This task of broadening the leadership is one that is still in front of us. Despite the changing dynamics of the movement, we still need a leadership that will reflect what exists in the streets. Now that momentum has been weakened this will be a more difficult task. We are now faced with working to catch up and to do much of the work that we fell short of doing in the past months.

The focus of any anti-imperialist work must be on the main axis of imperialist military intervention. That axis remains occupation, which means Iraq, and now, as stated before, encompasses the undermining of sovereignty in Afghanistan and the occupation of Palestine for more than fifty-years by the Zionist Israeli state. At this time it is crucial for the anti-war movement to maintain a focus on opposing occupation, and supporting the self-determination of oppressed nations.

### Vietnam Syndrome

The imperialist powers have yet to establish a strong foothold in Iraq and are still involved in a combat with the Iraqi people that has resulted in a civil war to expel the US. Demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of people have been taking place in Baghdad and Basra, and all across Iraq. Suicide bombers and organized resistance are killing American soldiers. Iraqis and Kurds together are condemning the US control of Iraq. All across the nation the people of Iraq are fighting for control of their country. In response, the US has accelerated its military presence and repression. The US is attacking and the Iraqi people are resisting, therefore it is our political and moral responsibility to fight alongside the Iraqi people, in solidarity against occupation and for self-determination.

The fact that the war has continued, despite the May 1st declaration by the US president that major combat has ended, is a result of the heroic resistance of the Iraqi people. The drop in media coverage of the occupation and the lies of the US that they are in control of the situation is meant to distract the people of the world and make

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday July 24th at 7:00 pm

Maritime Labour Centre  
(Victoria Drive at Triumph)

Speakers:

Vladimir Mirabal, 3rd Secretary, Cuban Embassy in Canada  
Bill Saunders, President, Vancouver & District Labour Council  
Eduardo Luro, Committee for Solidarity with Colombia  
Shahdin Farsai, Free the Cuban 5

Admission by donation.

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## Prisoners Justice Day Events

### FILM NIGHT

Tuesday August 5 at 7 PM

Sentenced to Life

Directed by Marie Cadieux

SFU Harbour Centre, 515 W. Hastings

Admission by donation.

### ROCK AGAINST PRISONS

Benefit Concert

Friday August 8 at 8 PM

WISE Hall, 1882 Adanac Street.

Donations at the door, proceeds go to local prisoner support groups.

This is an all ages event. Children welcome.

## 27th ANNUAL PRISONERS' JUSTICE DAY MEMORIAL RALLY

Sunday August 10 at 11AM

Claire Culhane Memorial Bench

SE Corner of Trout Lake, East Vancouver

Everyone welcome. Kids activities on site. Rain or shine. ASL interpretation.

## Reportback from Palestinian Right of Return Convention

Thursday, July 31 at 7 PM

SFU Harbor Centre (515 W. Hastings)

Terasen Room

Speakers:

Hanna Kawas, Canada Palestine Association  
Derrick O'Keefe, PSG

For more information email palsolidarity@yahoo.com, or visit www.palsolidaritygrp.org.

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## What do you think about this newspaper?

### Discussion of Fire This Time # 5

Monday August 3rd at 6 PM

IWA Hall in Vancouver  
2859 Commercial Drive  
(Commercial and 13th)

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them believe this is over. The last thing the US/UK and other imperialist forces want is mass mobilizations across the globe calling for an end to the occupation and for the self-determination of the Iraqi people. This relates directly to the central issue of all struggles in Canada, which is the self-determination of Indigenous nations in Canada and the sovereignty of Quebec.

Claiming an end to the war and declaring a victory is a tactic used by the US-led

imperialists to quell dissent and make people give up. It is an attempt to kill the anti-war movement. We must reject the claim that the Iraqi people have been defeated, and we must deny the US supposed victory, as it is a lie. As long as the Iraqi people fight, as long as the US occupation is still unstable, we must not accept defeat. We must not shift our focus from war, aggression and occupation and we must fight in solidarity with the people of Iraq, the people of Palestine and the people of Afghanistan against imperialism.