

In English / En Español

We are realists... We dream the impossible - Che

# FIRE THIS TIME

Free



## Fidel 80: Life Long Struggle for Humanity



Cuban doctor in Venezuela



Cuban medical team in Pakistan



Cuban soldiers in Angola fighting  
Apartheid South African Army.

# Verdict of Saddam's Trial: A Guilty Verdict for George Bush & US Imperialism

By Ivan Drury

On November 5, Saddam Hussain was sentenced to hang by a court in an Iraq occupied by around 150,000 US troops. The Prime Minister of the government that oversees this court is headed by a man whose friends and co-Dawa-party members were the ones that Saddam has been condemned to death for slaughtering. In an 'incredible' prediction, this Prime Minister said, a month in advance of this sentencing, "It won't be long. An execution order on this criminal despot and his criminal aides will be passed soon."

## Hanging judge in a victor's court

Saddam Hussain was sentenced to hang by the same sort of kangaroo court that he was convicted of setting up against his attempted assassins back in 1982. This court of the "new Iraq" disposed of three judges in one year for not silencing Saddam, for being too sympathetic to Saddam, and for being too mindful of the rights of Saddam – respectively. This "liberated" court oversaw the assassination of three defense lawyers, and its "rule of law" guaranteed that Saddam went through the last days of his trial without a lawyer at all (except for the court-appointed lawyer, who he refused).

But make no mistake, this is not a legal case. This ridiculous court was exactly the tool required for the ridiculous job. It



Iraqi women protest.

*"The international community has repeatedly accused Saddam Hussein of war crimes, genocide, and atrocities during his reign in Iraq. Some of the allegations include using poison gas against Iranians during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, dropping chemical weapons on Halabja, which killed up to 5,000 people, and committing crimes against humanity and possibly genocide against the Marsh Arabs and Shi'a Arabs in southern Iraq, as well as against Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq."*

There, in one paragraph, is the summary of the entire case against Saddam Hussain. But each of these sentences swell like a body fermenting in a cell. The art of the US occupying forces in setting up the trial of Saddam Hussain was three-fold:

1. To fertilize the myth that Saddam is the root of all evil in Iraq, and that his removal equals liberation for the Iraqi people.

Iraq. But rather than draw attention (and investigation!) to this massacre carried out with the direct material and political support of the U.S., this first trial concentrated on the execution of a group of relatively isolated assassination-conspirators... even though they both happened at the same time.

The famous 1988 massacre of 5,000 people in the Kurdish city of Halabja, just after the ceasefire with Iran, was carried out with U.S. bombs from U.S. supplied planes and helicopters. Just as they would again three years later when the Iraqi army was in retreat at the end of the 1991 U.S.-Gulf war, the retreating soldiers became advancing rebels and began a march on the presidential palace. And just as they would at the end of the 1991 US-Gulf war, the U.S. supported Saddam's brutal suppression of these soldier-rebels, in the hope that they could wash the rebellious spirit out of Iraq with

did not and does not matter what the specific charges are against Saddam. It does not matter what evidence, what proof comes. The trial of Saddam Hussain is not a criminal trial. It is a 'heel'-ing of a dog. Sewed into the seams of every "crime of Saddam Hussain" are the characteristic markings of American craftsmanship – and an example must be made.

## Saddam: a US weapon tried by its master

2. To issue a warning to the temp-labour office full of devils currently on CIA payroll that they had better do their job well of suppressing the people in their countries and doing whatever they are told. This is a message directed towards the likes of Mubarak in Egypt, King Abdallah II in Jordan, Musharraf in Pakistan, Faisal in Saudi Arabia, and of course Prime Minister Malaki in Iraq... and the rest.

3. To cover-up the role of the U.S. as the motor-force in the various serial-crimes of the Saddam Hussain regime, in order to maintain purpose numbers one and two.

In order to accomplish all three of these tricks at once, the US-court on the Euphrates began by trying Saddam for the relatively obscure, and relatively minor crime of putting 142 men and boys to death in response to an attempted assassination plot that failed against him in 1982. While the U.S. was undoubtedly aware of this crime at the time, rather than say or do anything at the time, they busied themselves arranging the covert shipping of weapons to Saddam to help him in his war against Iran... and whatever else he needed them for at home.

## Poison gas, genocide, and the price of diplomatic relations with the US

Also in 1982, and also with the knowledge of the U.S., there was a massive Kurdish uprising in the Kurdish areas of Iraq, Iran, and Syria. In all three countries, this uprising was put down brutally, and tens of thousands of Kurds were murdered. In Iraq in particular, this uprising took on a popular anti-government bent, as soldiers left the battle lines within the Iranian border and retreated to join the uprising against their own government. In response Saddam announced that all deserters from the army would be immediately shot. In the summer of 1983, this pronouncement was carried out with a massive carpet bombing murder of the tens of thousands of army deserters who had taken refuge in Southern

blood spilled by the hand of Saddam.

## War crimes in the 1980-1988 war with Iran

Saddam Hussain became the president of Iraq in 1979... the same year that the U.S. lost their contemporary-historic foothold of 'influence' in the Middle East to the Iranian Revolution. In 1980, Saddam began an eight-year-long war with Iran.

As the George Washington University national security archive explains, "Initially, Iraq advanced far into Iranian territory, but was driven back within months. By mid-1982, Iraq was on the defensive against Iranian human-wave attacks." The Saddam push to overwhelm the newly independent Iranian government was met by the force of a people in motion, and a practically unlimited volunteer army eager to defend the revolution. People in Iran rightly saw that behind Saddam's invasion was a more powerful 'puppetmaster' force. In response to the Iranian counter-offensive, the U.S. stepped up their support of Iraq. From the beginning of the war, the U.S. had begun preparations for a re-initiation of diplomatic relations with Iraq – frozen since the 1967 Israeli war on the Middle East.

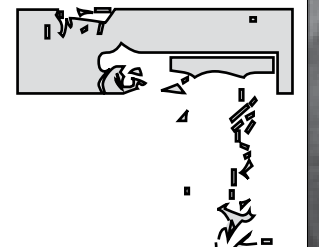
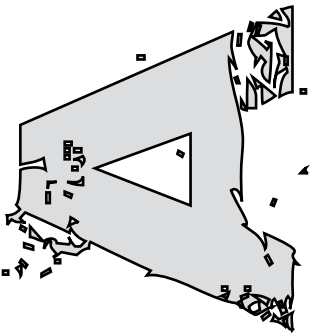
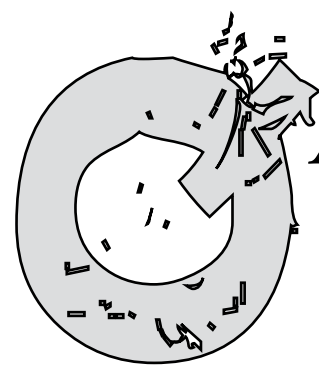
In February 1982, the U.S. State Department removed Iraq from its list of "states supporting international terrorism" and began selling Saddam weapons. An immediate over-the-table purchase of military helicopters was followed by the covert shipping of millions of dollars in howitzers, helicopters, bombs and other weapons to Baghdad in 1982-83 through Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Kuwait. In February 1992, the LA Times reported, "There was a conscious effort to encourage third countries to ship U.S. arms or acquiesce in shipments after the fact. It was a policy of nods and winks."

On January 1, 1984, The Washington Post reported that the United States "in a shift in *Continues on Page 3*

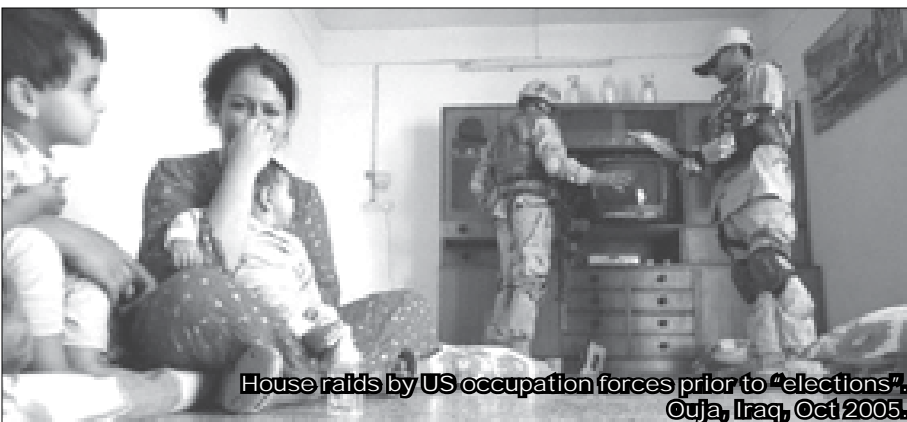
*"A former dictator feared by millions, who killed his own citizens without mercy or justice, who waged wars against neighboring countries, has been brought to trial in his own country - held accountable in a court of law with ordinary citizens bearing witness."*

- U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, reacting to Saddam's sentencing

On the U.S. Law Library of Congress website, there is a summary of the trial of Saddam Hussain. This is what it says:



Rally in Baghdad, Dec 27 2005.



House raids by US occupation forces prior to "elections", Ouja, Iraq, Oct 2005.



Iraqi men shout at US occupation soldier, Baghdad, May 2006.

# A Tribute to Fidel

## A True Revolutionary who Inspires Us to Fight for a Better World!

**Why do we celebrate his 80th Birthday?**  
**Why do we like him as a leader?**  
**What can we learn from him?**

By Tamara Hansen

"Sentence me. It doesn't matter. History will absolve me."

It was with these words that Fidel Castro, a fiery 26-year-old lawyer, closed his own defense statement in a courtroom in Cuba in 1953.

On July 26th 1953, Fidel and about 150 other young fighters had attacked the Moncada military barracks in an effort to begin an uprising against the dictator Batista. But many factors in this first attempt by Fidel at an insurrection were miscalculated, and many of the 150 fighters were murdered or tortured to death in Batista's prisons afterwards. After giving his now famous courtroom speech against the brutal rule of Batista, Fidel and with his other compañeros were found "guilty" and were each sentenced to between 5 and 15 years. However, because of growing protests and discontent in Cuba, the dictator Batista was pressured to release them only two years later, in 1955.

That same year, Fidel Castro and other revolutionaries came together to form the July 26th Movement. They went to Mexico to re-group and plot their victory against Batista. Fifty years ago this month, Fidel, Che and 80 other revolutionaries boarded the Granma in Mexico and

headed back to Cuba to begin their historic battle against Batista's army in the Sierra Maestra Mountains.

There were 82 men and a heavy supply of weapons on the small yacht, which was really only meant to hold about 25 people. One engine failed during their journey and they were met with other delays because of the ship's weight and miscalculations in their navigation. However, important lessons were learned on this trip, especially the story told by Norberto Collado, helmsman on the Granma, who recounted what happen when one of the men on the ship fell overboard only hours before their landing in Cuba. He said, "the search began. Many believed that because of the state of the waves and the weight of his clothes, he had drowned. The delay compromised the mission, but Fidel said, 'I won't abandon any of my comrades,' and after a great effort, we found him in the dark. Fidel's humanist position really impressed me. It's the same one he's maintained throughout the Revolution."

Only a few days after their arrival, Batista's army ambushed the fighters. At the end of this fight, only 12

But from there it was to continue to be an uphill battle. The dreams and visions of Fidel and those other revolutionaries ran very deep. They wanted to flip Cuba upside down. When they came to power, 90% of the land was controlled by US institutions, with the wealth of their country being swept into the pockets of a small minority. They planned for the wealth to be distributed among the poor, with land given to the landless, and fundamental human rights for ALL, such as education, housing, jobs and healthcare.

In his first speech upon his arrival in Havana on January 9th 1959, Fidel was very honest about these future battles to maintain the revolution. He explained, "The tyranny has been overthrown, but there is still much to be done. Let us not fool ourselves into believing that the future will be easy; perhaps everything will be more difficult in the future."

The battles Cuba has fought since those days have not been easy. Some were physical battles, such as the battle against bandits in the Escambray Mountains or the Bay of Pigs invasion. However, most were not battles of physical might,



remained to re-group in the Sierra Maestra Mountains. But this did not dampen their spirits. It was then that Fidel said, with the outlook of a truly exceptional leader, "We will win this war...we're just beginning to fight!" And fight they did. They gained support from people throughout Cuba and fought against Batista's forces for two years and one month. On Dec 31st 1959, Batista fled to Miami, and after two years and one month of intense and impassioned fighting, Fidel and the July 26th Movement had won!

**THE UPHILL BATTLE OF THE REVOLUTION**

but battles of ideas. But with every twist and turn, every up and down Fidel has been one of the first leaders to say, 'this way forward' or 'we made a wrong turn, we must change course'.

Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961 was the largest attempt by the US at a physical invasion of Cuba. The US backed and trained 1,500 men, to invade Cuba and overthrow Fidel. The idea was that Cubans on the island would join the US in its fight to defeat Fidel and the revolution. However, after less than 72 hours, the frontline invaders were forced to surrender to the revolutionary army of Cuba. José Manuel Gutiérrez, one of the members of the US-backed invasion army said, "a jeep passed shooting and saying: 'Surrender, surrender'; a little later, a group of

us came out and turned ourselves over. It was Fidel in that jeep, and I said to someone: 'That's why we lost, because Fidel is with them, fighting on the frontline.'" Fidel, the strategist and frontline fighter in this battle had shown to people in Cuba that he was a visionary leader who not only talked the talk but also walked the walk.

Basically a year later, Cuba had continued concerns about potential US attacks against the island. This factor, along with the US officially imposing an economic blockade against Cuba, caused Cuba to look to the Soviet Union for help. The Soviet Union snuck nuclear weapons into Cuba without the US knowing. This went against what Cuba had negotiated with them, and when a US spy plane discovered the weapons, the US came very close to retaliat-

ing against Cuba. The Soviet Union then went in, to negotiate with the US, leaving Cuba out of the discussions. Forty years later in an interview with Barbara Walters, Fidel remarked, "Believe me. We were not interested in becoming part of the whole contention between the two countries. We would not have accepted the missiles if they had said that it was related to the balance of power." This trick by the Soviet Union would put Fidel in a better position to understand how to work with the Soviet Union in the future.

Cuba sent 30,000 soldiers into Angola in 1975 to help with their fight for independence. After a small victory against the South African apartheid army, Cuba wanted to push forward, and in the words of Fidel "exact a heavy price from South Africa for its adventure, the application of UN Resolution 435 and the independence of Namibia." However, Fidel also explained that, "on the other hand, the Soviets, worried about possible US reaction, were putting strong pressure on us to make a rapid withdrawal. After raising strong objections, we were obliged to accede, at least partially, to the Soviet demands."

**FIDEL'S HISTORICAL ROLE IN AFRICA**

But in 1987, the South African apartheid army hit back again at Angola. This time Fidel took matters into his own hands. He explained how the South African army "advanced strongly towards Cuito Cuanavale, an old NATO airbase. Here it prepared to deliver a mortal blow against Angola. Desperate calls were received from the Angolan government appealing to the Cuban troops for support in fending off presumed

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**Editorial Board:**

Shannon Bundock, Ali Yerevani, Ivan Drury, Tamara Hansen, Aaron Mercredi

**Editor** - Ali Yerevani

**Layout & Design** - Shannon Bundock

**Copy Editor** - Tamara Hansen

**Assistant Copy Editing**

Nita Palmer

**Publicity & Distribution Coordinators**

Mike Chimenti, Kira Koshelanyk

**Contributors to this Issue:** Thomas Davies, Nita Palmer, Esteban González Arteaga, Glora La Riva, Kira Koshelanyk, Nicole Burton, Lindsay Clarke, Noah Fine

**Contact**

**Phone** - (604) 322-1764

**Fax** - (604) 322-1763

**Email** - [info@firethistime.net](mailto:info@firethistime.net)

**Mail** - PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC, V5L 5G3

**Subscriptions**

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**Distribution**

For Fire This Time in your area across BC, Canada, and Internationally contact Publicity and Distribution Coordinator Mike Chimenti  
 Phone : (604) 518-5009  
 Email : [distro@firethistime.net](mailto:distro@firethistime.net)

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disaster; it was unquestionably the biggest threat from a military operation in which we, as on other occasions, had no responsibility whatever." Despite the fact that the responsibility to defend Angola's sovereignty was not Cuba's, Fidel sent 55,000 soldiers to Angola. Remaining in Cuba, Fidel spent days and nights strategizing the fight in Angola. These strategies were victorious, and the victory against the apartheid army in Cuito Cuanavale weakened them severely. Fidel again set an example of courage and leadership that not only awed military strategists, but changed the course of history for South Africans.

What were the people of Africa's reaction to Cuba's involvement under Fidel's leadership? Angolans did not only feel the victory in Cuito Cuanavale. The famous anti-colonial leader Amilcar Cabral from Guinea-Bissau also said, "Cuban fighters are ready to lay down their lives for the liberation of our countries, and in exchange for this aid to our freedom and the progress of our people, all they take from us are their comrades who fell fighting for freedom."

Along with Amilcar is Nelson Mandela, who has said many times, "the defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale has made it possible for me to be here today." On Fidel, Nelson Mandela said in 1995, "I went to Cuba in July 1991, and I drove through the streets with Fidel Castro. There were a great deal of cheers. And I also waved back believing that these cheers were for me... But when I reached the square where I had to make some remarks to the crowd, then I realized that these cheers were not meant for me, they were meant for Fidel Castro... Then I realized that here was a man of the masses... Those are the impressions I have about Fidel Castro in Cuba."

**FIDEL: AN INSTRUMENT OF REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE**

A new and difficult challenge fell upon Fidel Castro in 1989. This was the case of his former comrade and friend Ochoa, or "Case No. 1 of 1989". This was when four high-ranking officers in the Cuban military were caught involved in smuggling drugs through Cuba. One of these four was Arnaldo Ochoa, a highly decorated officer who had fought alongside Fidel in the Sierra Maestra. Cubans were outraged and felt a deep sense of betrayal, as these men's actions left the Cuban government very vulnerable to be attacked by US. Karen Lee Wald, an American journalist, wrote "Most Cubans believed that all of the accused committed high treason... They tended not to ask whether Castro was guilty, too... but rather, 'how could they do that to Fidel?'" Wald continues, saying that Cubans generally flipped during the trial as to whether or not they should be given the death penalty. However, after all of the members of the Council of State (including Fidel) explained their reasons for supporting the death penalty "most people in the country were convinced of the necessity of this action."

This case was especially offensive to Fidel because Ochoa had been in charge of troops in Angola and they had pulled him out before the battle at Cuito Cuanavale, but had they not, who knows what might have happened. Years later, looking back at this case in 1999, Fidel stated, "they had taken part in the organization of drug trafficking through our country, an extremely serious offense that jeopardized the prestige and security of the nation. [...] We had found their justification incredible, since they said that they had concocted the plan to help the country... even if drug smugglers

had delivered a billion or five billion dollars, if they had paid Cuba's foreign debt, the Revolution would never accept the passage of even a kilogram of drugs, because our country is worth much more. What it has achieved in health, education and many other fields as a matter of sheer justice with the sacrifice of many lives is worth much more than that amount; the life of just one person is worth much more, and we had had to sacrifice many lives."

**THE DIFFERENCE OF TWO METHODS: SOVIET UNION DOWN, CUBA UP**

But the challenges the Cuban revolution faced did not come anywhere near an end there. In the mid-1980s, the political and economic situation in Cuba began to show challenges ahead for the maintenance of the revolution. The country was showing signs of stagnation and increased bureaucratic tendencies. This was when Fidel called for Rectification.

When being asked why Cuba was not following the Soviet Bloc on its economic policy of perestroika, Fidel responded to the news agency Paris AFP in 1988, "problems must also be resolved with honor, morals, and principles." Soon after the process of rectification, the Soviet bloc collapsed.

The fall of the Soviet Bloc meant not only that Cuba was losing its main trading partner, but gave the US government an opportunity to tighten its grip around Cuba's neck. Basically since 1959, but officially from 1962, the US government imposed an economic blockade against Cuba. This limited Cuba's access to medicine, food, construction materials, etc. The US also stopped importing Cuban sugar, which meant that Cuba had been forced to rely instead very heavily on the Soviet Bloc for trade. The US government knew

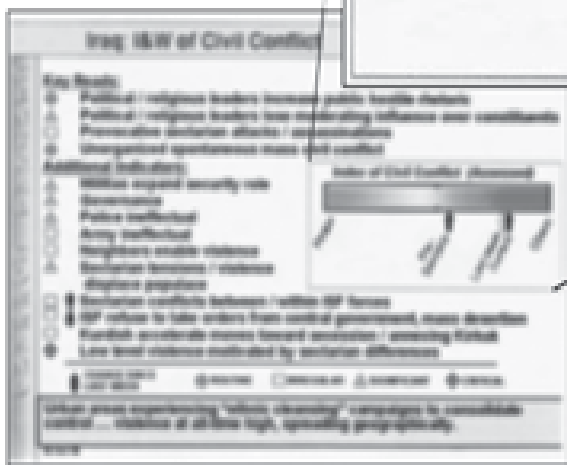


A man in Cuba holds a picture of Fidel taken during the Bay of Pigs Invasion.

this, and after the collapse of Soviet Union, they passed the Torricelli Act in 1992 and the Helms-Burton Bill in 1996 (see article about US blockade on Cuba in this issue of FTT) in order to further strangle Cuba's economy. These two things launched

Cuba into the special period. After the revolution, political and social education in Cuba was widespread, and most people in Cuba understood the importance of defending the gains of the Cuban economy. These two things launched

# Iraq



Continued From Page 1

policy, has informed friendly Persian Gulf nations that the defeat of Iraq in the 3-year-old war with Iran would be 'contrary to U.S. interests' and has made several moves to prevent that result."

February 1984, upon gaining intelligence that Iran may have been planning a counter-invasion of Iraq, the Iraqi government stated ominously, "the invaders should know that for every harmful insect there is an insecticide capable of annihilating it whatever the number, and Iraq possesses this annihilation insecticide." No, at that point in time, Saddam's "saber-rattling" didn't rattle then-presidential-envoy-to-the-Middle-East Donald Rumsfeld. He met

again with Saddam for the second time in three months in late March. The very same day that Rumsfeld and Saddam were shaking hands in Baghdad, a report went to the United Nations that "mustard gas laced with a nerve agent has been used on Iranian soldiers in the 43-month Persian Gulf War between Iran and Iraq, a team of U.N. experts has concluded" But it should not be surprising that Rumsfeld did not cut off his talks with Saddam at this news - he already knew. In a U.S. State Department report issued on March 5, 1984, the U.S. acknowledged, "available evidence indicates that Iraq has used lethal chemical weapons."

And, according to the New York Times in 2002, even though "senior officials of the Reagan

administration publicly condemned Iraq's employment of mustard gas, sarin, VX and other poisonous agents... President Reagan, vice president George Bush [Senior] and senior national security aides never withdrew their support for the highly classified program in which more than 60 officers of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) were secretly providing detailed information on Iranian deployments, tactical planning for battles, plans for air strikes and bomb-damage assessments for Iraq."

**The execution of a scapegoat**

History is a ruthless judge. Not always expedient... but ruthless in the end. The U.S. used Saddam Hussain as a tool for its interests in the Middle East, especially in their attempt to regain their pre-1979 position in Iran and the Middle East. With a package deal, they bought and paid for all of the repression that Saddam had to carry out at home to stay in power. But Saddam failed to do the job for the U.S. in Iran... and that was the beginning of his downfall.

Faced with a world economic crisis and the need to take control over the Middle East from their imperialist competitors in the European Union and around the world, the U.S. ruling class knew that Saddam was not to be counted on. The massive U.S. military machine knocked Saddam's regime over as easily as they had built it up - but they inherited the resistance of the Iraqi people that he had earned... to scale. For every criminal war and war crime that Saddam carried out, opposition to him grew throughout Iraq, and burst out of the ground in nearly annual popular antigovernment movements. The wars and war crimes of the U.S. are, incredibly, much more brutal, and widely felt and resented. The result is that the movement against them is even more broad, more popular, and constant.

The trial and conviction of Saddam Hussain is not, as Bush claims, "a milestone in the Iraqi people's efforts to replace the rule

of a tyrant with the rule of law," because the trial contained no "rule of law" and had nothing to do with the "efforts of the Iraqi people." It is a unilateral Nuremberg, a show trial and execution of a scapegoat, and it solves nothing - and that is a crime.

Saddam Hussain was used by the U.S., yes, but he was useful because he was willing to carry out any crime against oppressed people in Iraq and the whole Middle East for his own narrow capitalist class interests. The people of Iraq deserve to try him for his crimes, alongside his masters in Washington. His were not the crimes of one man, and his sentence should not be his alone either.

The conviction of Saddam Hussain is a conviction of U.S. imperialism for crimes against the Iraqi, Iranian, and Kurdish people. History will make that clear. It's a shame that the sentence is not so easily transferable.



British army checkpoint in Basra, Iraq.

By Nita Palmer

“NATO is a key component of the international community’s engagement in Afghanistan, assisting the Afghan authorities in providing security and stability, paving the way for reconstruction and effective governance.”

- NATO International Security Assistance Force website

# Afghanistan:

## Where are we going from here?

Canada and NATO are facing a quagmire in Afghanistan today. Five years after the US-led invasion, the millions of impoverished people in Afghanistan are rising up against an occupation that has cost them their lives, their land, and their dignity. Claims about bringing “security and stability” to Afghanistan seem laughably false. On November 15<sup>th</sup>, NATO troops shot and killed an Afghan doctor who was “driving suspiciously” toward a checkpoint in the Helmand province of Afghanistan. Less than two weeks later, on November 28<sup>th</sup>, Canadian troops were involved in the killing of another civilian, who they said was “driving irrationally”. On top of direct military killings, thousands of Afghans die from lack of food, water, and basic health services. Women in Afghanistan are no better off either. A recent report from the United Nations’s IRIN news service showed that hospitals in Kabul treated *three times* more cases of self-immolation – women burning themselves to death – than in 2002.

not represent working people, students, or poor and oppressed people in Canada or other NATO countries. While billions that could be put into social programs at home are spent instead on a war drive abroad, the only ones who stand to gain anything from control of Afghanistan are those who will make money from the control of trade

occupying troops. This was the factor that Canada, the US, and NATO underestimated when they invaded Afghanistan. Afghanistan may have been easy to invade, but Afghan people are proving that it will be impossible to occupy.

**Outcome of NATO Summit: A reflection of the depths of quagmire in**

occupying Afghanistan exposed the crisis that the occupation has created, not just for Afghan people, but among the occupying countries that are unable to win this war. Accusations flew towards countries seen as not doing enough to contribute to the occupation, particularly from Canada. “All NATO allies must prove themselves by sharing the burden in all regions of Afghanistan,” Defense Minister Gordon O’Connor told the summit. As the government of Canada faces more of a crisis in its occupation of Afghanistan, it is increasingly calling on other NATO members to contribute to the occupation, as they cannot maintain the occupation, and therefore their interests, without more military support.

According to Helle Dale, an analyst for the Heritage Foundation, a right-wing US think tank, “The future of NATO has become inextricably linked to the future of Afghanistan.” Toronto Star columnist Veronica Kitchen notes that, “The Europeans will co-operate among themselves, and the Americans will direct ad-hoc coalitions as they are needed. [NATO] would fall into disuse and Canada’s voice on the international scene would be smaller and quieter.” Canada’s ruling class sees the occupation of Afghanistan as a crucial deciding factor not only in Canada’s bid for economic dominance in Afghanistan, but also for its position in the world as a whole.

**What next for Afghanistan? What next for the anti-war movement?**

While NATO’s leaders sit around their high tables and discuss how to make “progress” in Afghanistan, people in Afghanistan suffer the devastating effects of their “progress”. Afghans see that a NATO summit is nothing more than a summit where the rich leaders will discuss how to consolidate their plunder of Afghanistan, leaving Afghans with nothing. And so, as they have done throughout history,



Demonstration in Iran against the US invasion of Afghanistan, 2001.

markets in that area. Poor and working people who do not hold major shares in big companies and financial institutions do not see a cent of this. Today though, NATO countries are desperately grappling to hold on to their economic interests in Afghanistan as a growing resistance there prevents them from taking that control.

### Afghan Resistance Battles NATO Occupation

“NATO is failing the test in Afghanistan” - David Bercuson, military analyst

### Afghanistan

Last summer, the government of Canada made a major bid for control in Afghanistan, with an increase of troop levels to 2,300; a doubling of the military budget to \$25.8 billion dollars; and a goal of adding 13,000 more troops to the Canadian Forces. In 2006, it was stepped up even further, with another \$15 Billion pledged to buy military vehicles, and a deployment of 450 more troops to Southern Afghanistan. One year later, the government of Canada is finding itself in a crisis of occupation, with 44 dead

In Kandahar, the number of recorded cases is over 100 in the last eight months alone, although the number of unrecorded cases is likely much higher.

### Why Continue the Occupation?

“What kind of war is this? This was supposed to be a war to help the poor people of Afghanistan. In fact this is a war where the rich get richer, the foreigners who are here included.” – Kandahar Civilian

What interest do Canada and NATO see in Afghanistan that they continue such a brutal occupation? Already, the occupation has cost tens of thousands of Afghan lives, as well as billions of dollars on military spending. Canada’s war drive in Afghanistan alone is projected to rise to about \$1.6 Million per day (CBC). But to Canada, the US, and the imperialist governments of other NATO countries, the reasons behind participating in the mission in Afghanistan are not in the interests of Afghan people or of regular people in their own countries.

Foreign Affairs Canada says that “Canada and the world have a strategic interest in a secure, self-sufficient, democratic and stable Afghanistan”. The Department of National Defense says that the occupation of Afghanistan is in “our national interests”. But what exactly are these “strategic national interests”? Primarily, Afghanistan is located at the hub of important world trade markets, between Europe, the Middle East, China, and India. To control Afghanistan is to have control of these growing trade markets. Furthermore, Afghanistan is a neighbour of Iran – and controlling Afghanistan makes it far easier to isolate and attack Iran, a central hub of the Middle East. Afghanistan’s strategic interest has become important today in a world where there is increasing competition among advanced capitalist countries. At the same time, this strategic interest does

When the US invaded Afghanistan in 2001, they claimed that they were going to make life better for Afghan people. Afghan people, who were tired of decades of fighting against decades of occupations and repressive government, hoped that just maybe this was their chance for change. They were soon proved wrong though, and once again began fighting against the occupation. The Taliban government, who were weak and lacked popular support, was toppled by the vicious US bombing campaign in little more than a month. The government of Canada supported the mission from the very beginning, deploying 22 warships and 18,000 troops to the Persian Gulf to support the invasion. Subsequent deployments have raised Canada’s troop levels in Afghanistan to 2,300. On August 9<sup>th</sup> 2003, NATO took over the International Security Assistance Force mission there. But today, all of these forces are faltering in their attempt to control the country. Millions of poor Afghans are witness to the lies that they were told about having “reconstruction, peace, and stability” brought to their country, and will stand no longer for the destruction and exploitation that they face.

In one of the occupation’s most blatant examples of economic exploitation, foreign companies are allowed to set up shop in their country and take 100% of the profits away with them (Law on Domestic and Foreign Private Investment in Afghanistan). With this, hundreds of thousands of Afghans have joined in an anti-occupation resistance that is growing every day. They have picked up guns, stones, whatever they have, and have held off 32,800 well-armed

troops and increasing sentiment against the occupation at home. With this crisis on their hands, they went into the November 28-29 NATO summit to request more support for their failed leading role in the plunder of Afghanistan.

The Afghanistan mission is NATO’s largest mission ever, and it was the focus of the summit. This gathering of the countries



Opium production in Afghanistan has skyrocketed since the 2001 US invasion of the country.



Rally against attacks on Afghanistan. Peshawar, Pakistan.

Afghans organize themselves once again to fight against the occupiers, to fight for their self-determination and right to build their own country. Afghan people will prove to Canada, to NATO, and to the world once again that no one can successfully occupy their land.

But the fight Afghan people are waging is not a short or easy one, and more than ever it is our responsibility as poor and working people in Canada to fight with them for their sovereignty. Hundreds of Afghans are killed each week by this war drive. In Canada, billions of dollars that could be better spent on social housing, jobs, healthcare, or education are instead pumped into this war drive. We must continue to organize and fight back against this war drive here in Canada.

In Vancouver, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) has collected over 12,000 signatures calling for an immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan. They are calling for an independent public inquiry into the Canadian war drive, to ask why the mission in Afghanistan was carried out and then extended without public consultation or debate, and to ask why money is going to war instead of to healthcare, social housing, jobs, and education. It’s time to take on the call for an independent public inquiry along with demanding an end to the occupation of Afghanistan and self-determination for the people of Afghanistan. It’s time to educate and organize ourselves to confront this vicious war drive.

**Canada out of Afghanistan!  
NATO out of Afghanistan!  
Call for an Independent Public Inquiry!**

# Message from President Fidel Castro to participants in the celebrations for his 80th birthday

Dear compatriots and dear friends from all over the world:

During this time, I have worked intensely to guarantee in our country the objectives of the Proclamation of the 31st of July.

Now we find ourselves facing an adversary who has led the United States into a disaster of such magnitude, that it is almost certain that the U.S. people themselves will not allow him to conclude his presidential mandate.

In addressing you, intellectuals and prominent individuals of the world, I was in a dilemma: I could not bring you all together in a small venue. It was only within the Karl Marx Theater that all of the visitors would fit and, according to my doctors, I was still not in a condition to face such a colossal encounter.

I opted for the variant of speaking to all of you utilizing this channel. My thinking is well-known regarding José Martí's ideas of glories and honors, when he said that they

can all fit on a grain of corn.

Your generosity really overwhelms me. There are so many people that I would like to mention here that once again, I am opting not to do so, and I ask you to forgive me for mentioning just one name: that of Oswaldo Guayasamín, because he was able to synthesize many of the best virtues of those present here.

He made four portraits of me. The first one that he painted in 1961 was lost. I looked for it in every possible corner, and it never appeared. I suffered so much when I found out what an exceptional person Guayasamín was. The second was in 1981 and is kept at the Casa Guayasamín in Old Havana. The third, in 1986, is kept at the "Antonio Núñez Jiménez Foundation for Nature and Man." How far we were, he and I, when we first met, from imagining that the fourth portrait would be his birthday gift in August 1996.

How inspired his words were when he said: "From Quito and in any corner of the Earth, leave a light burning, because I will be back later."

About Oswaldo Guayasamín, I wrote one day, during the inauguration of the Capilla del Hombre, "He was the most noble, transparent and humane person I have ever known. He created at the speed of light, and his magnitude as a human being was limitless."

As long as the planet exists and human beings breathe, the work of creators will exist.

Today, moreover, thanks to technology, the work and knowledge



that humanity has created throughout thousands of years is within everyone's reach, even though it is not yet known how human beings are affected by the radiation from billions of computers and cell phones.

Recently, the prestigious World Wildlife Fund, based in Switzerland and considered internationally to be the most important NGO overseeing the global environment, stated that all of the measures taken by Cuba to protect the environment made it the only country on Earth that meets the minimum requirements for sustainable development. This is an encouraging honor for our country, but of little importance in the world, given the weight of its economy. That is why, on this past 23rd, I sent a message to President Chávez saying:

"Dear Hugo:

"By adopting a Comprehensive Energy Savings Program, you have become the most prestigious defender of the environment in the world.

"The fact that Venezuela is the country with the largest oil reserves is extremely important, and will make you an example that will draw along all other energy consumers to do the same, saving a countless amount of investment.

"Just as Cuba, a nickel producer, can mobilize resources worth billions of dollars for its development, Venezuela, with its exports of hydrocarbons, could mobilize trillions.

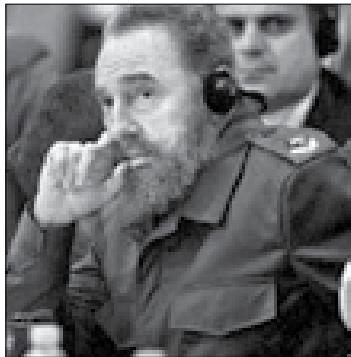
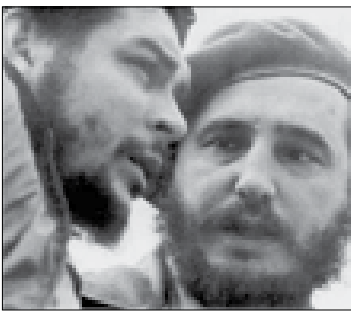
"If the rich industrialized nations were to achieve the miracle of reproducing throughout the planet – within several dozen years – solar fusion, having first destroyed the environment with hydrocarbon emissions, how will the poor nations, who constitute the immense majority of humanity, be able to live in that world?"

"¡Hasta la victoria siempre!"

Finally, dear friends, who have done us the immense honor of visiting our country, I very sorrowfully take my leave of you, because I was not able to personally thank you and embrace each one of you. We have the duty to save our species.

**Fidel Castro Ruz  
November 28, 2006**

(Translated by Granma International)



Queridos compatriotas y queridos amigos de todo el mundo:

En este período he trabajado intensamente para garantizar en nuestro país los objetivos de la Proclama del 31 de julio.

Ahora nos encontramos frente a un adversario que ha conducido a Estados Unidos a un desastre de tal magnitud, que casi con seguridad el propio pueblo norteamericano no le permita concluir su mandato presidencial.

Al dirigirme a ustedes, intelectuales y personalidades prestigiosas del mundo, estaba ante un dilema: no podía reunirlos en un pequeño local. Solo en el teatro Carlos Marx cabían todos los visitantes, y yo no estaba todavía en condiciones, según los médicos, de afrontar tan colosal encuentro.

Opté por la variante de hablarles a todos utilizando esta vía. Es

conocido mi pensamiento martiano sobre las glorias y los honores, cuando él dijo que todos cabían en un grano de maíz.

La generosidad de ustedes realmente me abruma. Son tantas las personas que me gustaría mencionar aquí, que nuevamente opto por no hacerlo, y les pido perdón por mencionar un solo nombre: el de Oswaldo Guayasamín, porque él logró sintetizar muchas de las mejores virtudes de los aquí presentes.

Me hizo cuatro retratos. El primero que pintó, en 1961, se perdió. Lo busqué por todos los rincones posibles y nunca apareció. Cuánto sufrí cuando supe qué clase de persona excepcional era Guayasamín. El segundo fue en 1981 y se conserva en la Casa Guayasamín en La Habana Vieja. El tercero, en 1986, se conserva en la "Fundación Antonio Núñez Jiménez de la Naturaleza y el Hombre". Qué lejos estábamos él y yo, cuando nos conocimos, de imaginar que el cuarto retrato sería su regalo de cumpleaños en agosto de 1996.

Cuán inspiradas fueron sus palabras cuando dijo: "De Quito y en cualquier rincón de la Tierra dejen una luz encendida, que regresaré tarde".

De Oswaldo Guayasamín escribí un día, al inaugurar la Capilla del Hombre: "Fue la persona más noble, transparente y humana que he conocido. Creaba a la velocidad de la luz, y su dimensión como ser humano no tenía límites."

Mientras el planeta exista y

# Mensaje de Fidel a los participantes en la celebración de su 80 cumpleaños

los seres humanos respiren, la obra de los creadores existirá.

Hoy, además, gracias a la tecnología, las obras y los conocimientos que el hombre ha creado a lo largo de miles de años están al alcance de todos, aunque aún no se conozcan los efectos que tendrán sobre los seres humanos las radiaciones de miles de millones de computadoras y teléfonos celulares.

En días recientes la prestigiosa organización Fundación Mundial para la Vida Silvestre (WWF International por su sigla en inglés), radicada en Suiza y considerada mundialmente como la más importante ONG que controla el medio ambiente global, declaró que el conjunto de medidas aplicadas por Cuba para proteger el medio ambiente la convertían en el único país de la Tierra que cumple los requisitos mínimos de desarrollo sostenible. Esto constituyó un honor estimulante para nuestro país, pero de escasa trascendencia mundial, dado el peso de su economía. Por ello, el pasado día 23 envié un

mensaje al Presidente Chávez que decía:

"Querido Hugo:

"Al adoptar un Programa Integral de Ahorro de Energía, te convertirás en el más prestigioso defensor mundial del medio ambiente.

"El hecho de ser Venezuela el país de mayores reservas de petróleo es de enorme trascendencia y te convertirá en un ejemplo que arrastrará a todos los demás consumidores de energía a hacer lo mismo, ahorrando sumas incalculables de inversión.

"Al igual que Cuba, productora de níquel, puede movilizar recursos por miles de millones de dólares para su desarrollo, Venezuela, con sus exportaciones de hidrocarburos, podría movilizar millones de millones.

"Si los países industrializados y ricos lograran el milagro de reproducir en el planeta, dentro de varias decenas de años, la fusión solar, destrozando antes el medio ambiente con emanaciones de hidrocarburos, cómo los pueblos pobres, que constituyen la inmensa mayoría de la humanidad, podrán vivir en ese mundo.

"¡Hasta la victoria siempre!"

Por último, entrañables amigos que nos han hecho el inmenso honor de visitar nuestro país, me despidió con gran dolor por no haber podido darles personalmente las gracias y abrazar a cada uno de ustedes. Tenemos el deber de salvar nuestra especie.

**Fidel Castro Ruz**

**28 de noviembre del 2006**

*“You don't have a duty to be anywhere, Fidel: your duty to humanity is to look after yourself and go on living...”*

**A message from Alfredo Vera, Director of International Relations of the Guayasamín Foundation. Coordinator of the Tribute.**

Dear brother and sister followers of Fidel:

Fidel's transparency has made us clearly understand reality. But what he would most want is that we continue going forward. First you heard the voice of Oswaldo Guayasamín, creator of the Foundation 30 years ago, and whose living memory holds the thinking and sentiment of hundreds, thousands, millions of human beings, who are here or who have been unable to come to be with us in these days that are going to be marvelous, not only because of the love that we, you and the maestro's family will be giving, but because of the personality of the man who is being honored: that volcano called Fidel!

The Guayasamín Foundation wishes to share with you, the visiting women and men from 80 countries, the privilege represented by being able to participate in this unparalleled tribute.

It is our wish that each segment of the program will be fulfilled as successfully as possible. It includes the Guayasamín exhibition, made concrete in an embrace from the artist to his brother Fidel; the international concert **Todas las voces, Todas** (All Voices To-

gether) in which artists and singer-songwriters who are generously dedicating their music to Fidel will participate; and the colloquium in which we are going to dialogue on and update the memory of what has taken place and look at the projections of what is to happen in this world in turmoil, everything in relation to Fidel and to Cuba, both of whom symbolize the real concept of Revolution.

In the framework of this tribute, we are going to launch a book reproducing the works of Oswaldo Guayasamín twinned with poems from Pablo Neruda's **Canto General** (General Song), and another book that brings together marvelously the thinking and a large part of the history of the *Comandante, Cien horas con Fidel* (One Hundred Hours with Fidel), written with such intelligence by the journalist Ignacio Ramonet, present here, in its third edition, which is an additional privilege for all of us.

However, that is little enough of what we can do as a tribute to a man who has given everything in favor of others, his own Cuban people and other peoples from Latin America and the world, whom he treats as if they were his own in the exemplary attitude of

converting himself into the driving force of the most internationalist solidarity known to contemporary history.

An example of decorum, of austerity, of total detachment from material ambition, personal sacrifice in his inexhaustible work, all those virtues that have brought him to occupy that unique place in the history of these times in which he has dedicated most of his 80 years to fighting, leading battles, defeating – one after the other – the governments of imperialism and many of their figureheads, with all their blockades, their assassination attempts, their perverse genocidal practices.

Eighty years, which are many, many more for a person who found the strength to extend his days and working hours to the infinite.

His being this volcano that he has been, as Oswaldo Guayasamín describes him, is the reason for us meeting here to say to him:

Thank you, Fidel, for existing...

Thank you for having had the valor to forge the 26th of July...

Thank you for everything that you have done and for attaining the absolution of history a long time ago...

Thank you for the *Granma* landing, the beginning of the victory...



Fidel Castro, 1959. Speaking after the triumph of the Revolution.

Thank you for making Cuba a free territory...

With the beneficiaries of the “I Can Do It,” Operation Miracle (programs), and the thousands of medical students, we say to you: Thank you for making your dreams of social justice a reality...

Thank you for continuing to be a guerrilla...

With Elián González and with the five patriots imprisoned by the empire, we say to you: Thank you for being tenacious and for winning all your battles...

You do not have a duty to be anywhere, Fidel: your duty to humanity is to look after yourself and to go on living...

Friends: And so that Fidel hears from where you are, from the hand of the memory of Oswaldo Guayasamín, let us lavish to that volcano of tenderness the most loving standing ovation...

**ALFREDO VERA**



Cuban poster: solidarity with Korea.



*“Tú no tienes deber de estar en ninguna parte, Fidel: tu deber para con la humanidad es cuidarte y seguir viviendo...”*

Queridos hermanos en el fidelismo:

La transparencia de Fidel nos ha hecho conocer con franqueza la realidad. Pero lo que él más quisiera es que sigamos adelante.

Ustedes escucharon primero la voz de OSWALDO GUAYASAMÍN, el creador de la Fundación, hace 30 años, cuya memoria viviente recoge el pensamiento y el sentimiento de centenares, millares, millones de seres humanos, que están aquí o que no han podido venir, para acompañarnos en estas jornadas que van a ser maravillosas, no solo por el amor que entregaremos, ustedes y la familia del Maestro, sino por la personalidad de quien es homenajeado: ese volcán llamado ¡Fidel!

La Fundación Guayasamín quiere compartir con ustedes, los visitantes mujeres y hombres de más de 80 países, el privilegio que representa poder participar en este sin par Homenaje.

Anhelamos que se cumpla con todo éxito cada segmento del programa, que incluye la exposición de Guayasamín, que se concreta en un abrazo del artista para su hermano Fidel; el Concierto internacional **Todas las Voces, Todas**, en el que participan artistas y cantautores que generosamente dedican a Fidel su música; y el Coloquio en el que vamos a dialogar y actualizar la memoria de lo sucedido y ver las proyecciones de lo que va a acontecer en este mundo en ebullición,

todo ello en torno a Fidel y a Cuba, que simbolizan el real concepto de revolución.

En el marco de este Homenaje, vamos a poder presentar un libro que reproduce obras de Guayasamín hermanadas con poemas del **Canto General** de Pablo Neruda y otro libro que recoge maravillosamente el pensamiento y buena parte de la historia del Comandante, **Cien horas con Fidel**, escrito con tanta inteligencia por el periodista Ignacio Ramonet, aquí presente, en su tercera edición, lo que es un privilegio adicional para todos nosotros.

Y, sin embargo, aún es poco lo que podemos hacer como homenaje por un hombre que ha dado todo a favor de los demás, de su propio pueblo cubano y de otros pueblos de Latinoamérica y del mundo a los que generosamente trata como si fueran suyos, en actitud ejemplar al convertirse en impulsor de la solidaridad más internacionalista que se haya conocido en la historia contemporánea.

Ejemplo de decoro, de austeridad, de desprendimiento total de ambiciones materiales, de sacrificio personal en su inagotable trabajo, de todas esas virtudes que lo han llevado a ocupar ese sitio único en la historia de este tiempo, en que casi todos sus 80 años los ha dedicado a luchar, a liderar batallas, a derrotar sucesivamente, uno atrás de otro, a los gobernantes del imperio y muchos de sus testafierros, con todos sus bloqueos, sus intentos de asesinato, sus prácticas perversas de genocidio.

80 años, que son más, muchísimos más, para una persona que encontró la fuerza para ampliar los días y las horas laborales hasta el infinito.

Por ser ese volcán que ha sido, como lo describe Guayasamín, es que estamos aquí reunidos para decirle:

Gracias, Fidel, por existir...

Gracias por haber tenido la valentía de forjar el 26 de Julio...

Gracias por todo lo vivido y alcanzar que la historia te absuelva desde tanto tiempo atrás...

Gracias por el desembarco del Granma, que es el inicio de la victoria...

Gracias por hacer de Cuba un territorio libre...

Con los beneficiarios del “Yo sí puedo”, de la “Operación Milagro” y los miles de estudiantes de medicina, te decimos: Gracias por hacer realidad tus sueños de justicia social...

Gracias por seguir siendo guerrillero...

Con Elián González y con los 5 Patriotas retenidos presos por el imperio, te decimos: Gracias por ser tenaz y vencer en todas tus batallas...

Tú no tienes deber de estar en ninguna parte, Fidel: tu deber para con la humanidad es cuidarte y seguir viviendo...

Amigos: Y para que Fidel oiga desde donde esté, de la mano de la memoria de Guayasamín, prodiguémosle a ese volcán de la ternura, la más amorosa ovación, poniéndonos de pie...

**ALFREDO VERA**

**Director de Relaciones Internacionales de la Fundación Guayasamín.**

**Coordinador del Homenaje.**



# SIX NATIONS: THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES



divisions among non-Indigenous people towards the legitimate fight of Six Nations. Meanwhile, the people who went to the reclamation site to defend Six Nations sovereignty continued to stand their ground.

With the onslaught of winter, they plan on maintaining their presence at the reclamation site, and so we need to continue to echo the demands of Six Nations

By Aaron Mercredi

Winter has approached and another season has passed for people at the Six Nations reclamation site near Caledonia, Ontario. Another season of Canada denying their inherent Indigenous rights and its own responsibility to deal with them on a nation-to-nation basis. With the settling in of winter, people continue to occupy the land that was reclaimed on February 28<sup>th</sup>, when members of the Six Nations of the Grand River community took over land that the Ontario government illegally sold to Douglas Estates to develop a residential complex.

Since then, the government has stalled negotiations with the Six Nations people, used force by the Ontario Provincial Police in an April 20<sup>th</sup> raid, and continued harassment and intimidation, as well as stirring up lies and deepening racist

people and show our solidarity with their struggle.

Included in the following pages is a fundraising request by Coalition In Support of Indigenous Sovereignty to financially help out the struggle at the Six Nations site, as well as a recent statement by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy on their land rights to provide readers with more of a background and perspective from Six Nations people. As well, there is a petition to show the international support for the struggle at Six Nations that can be signed online at <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/Iroquois/>.

**Appeal Letter from the Coalition in Support of Indigenous Sovereignty for Six Nations fundraising**  
November 10, 2006

Dear Friend(s):

As you know, the members of the Six Nations of the Grand River community have been engaged in a land reclamation near Caledonia, Ontario since February 28, 2006. This historic action impacts all First Nations on Turtle Island (North America) and beyond; it has advanced indigenous struggles to a level not seen since the start of colonization.

However, it cannot succeed without your help.

The monthly cost of maintaining the camp over the winter months totals \$19,000. This is for fuel to keep the generators going, a snow blower, food, clothing, supplies, etc.

A further \$10,000 is needed to retain a team of lawyers to defend Onkwehonne people (indigenous people) who are facing criminal charges for participating in this action.

The Coalition in Support of Indigenous Sovereignty is comprised of diverse solidarity and community groups led by an Indigenous Caucus that has come together to support First Nations Sovereignty on Turtle Island. We are spearheading a campaign to raise \$29,000 for the Six Nations Reclamation by December 31, 2006.

Please consider supporting this important action. Every cent collected goes directly to the Reclamation Project.

Cheques can be made payable to Janie Jamieson and mailed to 10 Britain Street, Toronto, ON, M5A 1R6.

To donate using a VISA or MC please email [amadahy@rogers.com](mailto:amadahy@rogers.com) or fax 416-598-4468 with the following information:  
Cardholder's name  
Credit card number  
Expiry date  
Amount of donation

More information follows.  
Skennon (Peace)

The Coalition in Support of Indigenous Sovereignty is led by an Indigenous Caucus and comprised of Al-Awda Palestinian Right to Return Coalition, Arab Students Collective U of T, CKLN Community Radio, Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid, CUPE 3903, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, No One is Illegal.

For more info: [the.i.c@hotmail.com](mailto:the.i.c@hotmail.com)

**Haudenosaunee Confederacy Land Rights Statement**

- As adopted in council November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

The Council of Chiefs of the Haudenosaunee, Grand River Territory, wish to affirm and clarify our land rights in the tract confirmed by Governor Frederick Haldimand on October 25, 1784. In making this statement, the Council of Chiefs wants to make it clear that we hold certain land ethics and principles that must be respected in any agreements on land use or occupation. The Haudenosaunee, and its governing authority, have inherited the rights to land from time immemorial. Land is a birthright, essential to the expression of our culture.

With these land rights come specific responsibilities that have been defined by our law, from our Creation Story, the Original Instruc-

tions, the Kaianeren:kowa (Great Law of Peace) and Kariwio (Good Message). Land is envisioned as Sewatokwa'tshera't, (the Dish with One Spoon); this means that we can all take from the land what we need to feed, house and care for our families, but we also must assure that the land remains healthy enough to provide for the coming generations. Land is meant to be shared among and by the people and with the other parts of the web of life. It is not for personal empire building.

First and foremost is the concept that we are connected to the land in a spiritual way. The earth is our mother and she provides for our long-term well-being, provided that we continue to honour her and give thanks for what she has provided. We Haudenosaunee have upheld our tradition of giving thanks through ceremony, and in the cultural practices that manifest our beliefs, values, traditions and laws. Planting, cultivating, harvesting, gathering, hunting, and fishing also have spiritual aspects that must be respected and perpetuated if the land is to provide for our future generations, and the future generations of our neighbours. We are stewards. Our spiritual obligation is part of that stewardship.

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## BC's "New Relationship" with Indigenous people: Maintaining the old colonial traditions



Chief Madeek, Chief Woos, and Chief Kloum Khun confront Mining CEOs in Calgary.

By Aaron Mercredi

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, the Tse Keh Nay Nation announced that they will shut down a flawed environmental assessment review taking place in Victoria that is supposed to discuss the proposed Kemess North mining project on their land. The Tse Keh Nay Nation is made up of the Takla, Tsay Keh Dene, and Kwadacha First Nations in north-central BC. After appealing to both the federal and provincial governments to deal openly and honestly with First Nations regarding decisions on mining developments, the Tse Keh Nay Nation continues to protest against the potential developments happening on their land.

### The lake, the mine, and who wants it

The mine in question is the proposed Kemess North mine, which Vancouver-based Northgate Minerals is

planning on investing \$190 million in to Kemess North for an expected 11 more years of mining. Northgate plans to use Duncan Lake as a huge tailings pond for the 700 million tons of mining waste that will be left over. This, according to the company, is the only economically, most environmentally sound, and most viable option, though they have not proven it. The Tse Keh Nay disagree.

Duncan Lake, a 6-kilometre long, clear mountain lake, is known to the Tse Keh Nay people as Amazay Lake, which means 'Little Mother,' and comes from the lake's historical use by caribou for calving. There is a lot of concern on what this mine would mean in the area and neither Northgate nor the governments of BC and Canada have convinced members of the Tse Keh Nay that the environment will not be harmed and they will be not be robbed in this project. Concerned community members

trying to develop in an area 430 kilometres Northwest of Prince George, between Williston Lake reservoir and Smithers. This mine would be an extension of the Kemess South mine whose resources are expected to be tapped out by 2008. In order to continue their investment and pursue gold and copper in the area, they are

water downstream.

In its environmental-impact assessment, Northgate plans on transplanting the Dolly Varden, rainbow trout, and whitefish into nearby lakes, while it builds a 90-metre-high dam on one end of the lake and two smaller ones on the other side to prevent water from getting in and out of the lake. But throughout the research and assessment process, not only have the Indigenous people not been consulted, but the province has been pushing the development. Initially, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) stated that the company must carry out more fish studies and provide more details about their proposed habitat replacement plan. However, after a secret meeting with company officials this summer, the DFO reversed their position and said that the company's habitat replacement plans were now acceptable.

Meanwhile, the Tse Keh Nay people have been left out of this process altogether. In March 2005, The federal and provincial governments announced that they would be conducting an environmental assessment of Northgate's proposal. To this day, the Tse Keh Nay have not been included in this assessment, and public consultations and hearings in Tse Keh Nay communities have been pushed aside. The government has not met its own legal requirements to consult and accommodate First Nations. In a press release sent out on October 30<sup>th</sup>, the Tse Keh Nay announced that they would be participating in the joint Federal-Provincial Environmental Panel under protest.

### History of deceit

There is a good reason for the Tse Keh Nay to be skeptical about a mine on their territory and the dams and developments that will come with it. There is a destructive history of these kinds of developments harming

Continues on Page 8



# "It is Self-Evident That We Must Organize to Win!"

## An Interview with Bolivian Revolutionary Lydia Robles Arteaga

By Ivan Drury & Esteban González Arteaga

Translated by Esteban González Arteaga

Lydia Robles Arteaga is the Coordinator of Water and Textile Workers of Cochabamba Bolivia. As an Indigenous woman, a trade unionist, and a revolutionary in Bolivia, her experiences in the revolutionary movement in Bolivia are valuable for all working people in Canada and around the world. As Bolivian president Evo Morales said when Bolivia signed on to the "ALBA" trade agreement with Cuba and Venezuela, "Together, united, we are going to change history, and not only in Bolivia."

Fire This Time met with Lydia Robles in Vancouver on October 17<sup>th</sup> at the final speaking event of a cross-Canada tour that she had been part of to build education and support in Canada for the Bolivian revolutionary process. Lydia herself is a great example of the process of change that is unfolding in Bolivia. A physically small woman, her presence was enormous when she lifted her head and looked around the room.

Lydia spoke as though the victory of the movement in Bolivia was guaranteed. She brushed away the concerns of some of the commentators at the forum about the difficulties of the nationalization of gas in Bolivia as 'temporary problems that the movement will overcome.' And then she



Lydia Robles Arteaga.

an Indigenous people, which has been torn from its land, has the right and the authority to reclaim what once belonged to them. That is how these strong movements were born, so strong that they have led to a government. In Bolivia almost eighty percent of the population is indigenous, so Indigenous people have always been organized. They have always been wary. But there have been imperialist-colaborator governments that have come to steal their land.

Today workers and Indigenous people are marching together, because they want their country to progress.

In regards to women; and the role they are taking today in power, it is very clear

**FTT: What has been the effect of the support and solidarity between Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia? What has it meant for the government of Evo Morales?**

**LYDIA:** It has meant a lot, because we have the same ideology. We all have the same situation of being countries which imperialists want to subjugate according to their own desires and timeline. But the three countries have identified with each other, we are all of Bolivar, and will never belong to anyone else. This is why Bolivia is named after Bolivar...and because Bolivia belongs to Bolivar it has to produce the first movement of discontent. Enough with the theft of our lands of



On the Day of Indigenous Resistance in La Paz, Bolivia.

explained how appalled she had been at the conditions that Indigenous people in Canada are forced to live in, on the reservations she had visited during her tour. She said that these conditions themselves are a desperate call to action... for working people in Canada.

Through Lydia, it was possible to glimpse the dynamics of the revolution and the revolutionaries in Bolivia today – always on fire, organizing, fighting. Fire This Time was honoured for the opportunity to speak to her, and to share this short interview with you.

**FTT: Could you explain to us what is the importance of the demands and struggles of Indigenous people and women within the union movement in Bolivia, and specifically what their role is within the government of Evo Morales?**

**LYDIA:** It is self-evident that Indigenous movements should organize, because

that before the role of women was not taken into account, but now it is. They are taking on a task that many women who have gone to university and many women who have had some government position because they worked with imperialism, could not do.

Before, women never had such high-ranking posts in the government. We have a minister of justice who was a domestic worker, a legislator who is a unionist on the part of the *cocaleros* of Bolivia, a minister of education, and many other ministries.

Perhaps we are not yet raising their names up high, because we are just beginning to see their work. Same thing happens with our president. They are not experts in maneuvering, but they have the will to fight for their country. Today men as well as women are propelling the country forward. I believe that with the thrust of an entire people they will achieve it.

South America! This is why are relations with Cuba and Venezuela will always be of solidarity. We will always be fighting for the same cause, and for one common objective of being free and independent in our own lands.

**FTT: What can workers and Indigenous people in Canada learn about revolutionary struggle, about the revolutionary process in Bolivia?**

**LYDIA:** What they must learn is that they have to be perseverant, that they have to continue with their struggle. Here in Canada your struggles are not as strong as they should be. In a powerful country that has capitalism on top of it, your struggles are barely surviving, but you must know how to organize, you will not see the fruits from one day to another, rather you must always continue with the same perseverance, and looking to see what is happening in other countries.

You need a clear understanding of your country, this has meant a difference many times in history. This is how Bolivia organizes. Organization does not just appear out of nowhere. It is an arduous task, a task that begins with the development of consciousness of each worker. In our organizations we discuss topics from the social, to the political, to the economical. Not only is it to learn about the rights of each worker, but also for them to take more interest on what is occurring in their own country; because the worker can become disoriented if they do not have an understanding of what is happening, or of what the government is doing. You can also do it, with unity, with understanding your country.

**FTT: Thank you Lydia, our hopes and dreams are with you and your struggle in Bolivia.**

## Amazay Lake continued

Continued From Page 7

Indigenous people throughout Canada, but specifically in their area of BC. In 1952, the Kemano Power Project flooded the traditional Cheslatta homeland in the Cheslatta and Murray lakes area, forcing communities to relocate. When the W.A.C. Bennett Dam on the Peace River was finished in 1967, the Willison Lake reservoir flooded a 200-kilometre stretch of the Rocky Mountain Trench, dislocating Indigenous communities throughout the area. In both of these cases, the floodings took place on short notice, without proper consultation and with no compensation. Everything that people owned, the hunting, trap lines, food gathering and fishing areas, were swept away with the flood.

As a result of this, families were displaced and many were forced to move to non-Native communities away from their traditional living. Families who relied on the resources from their land were now trying to work their way out of poverty, unemployment and welfare, while having to fight off alcoholism and the effects of colonialism.

**Whose resources anyway?**

*"As a nation we are not opposed to mining or economic development, but we have to remember what is important. Gold does not run through our blood. We are all made of water. We have pushed the boundaries too far if we are willing to destroy life itself, water as a means of getting cheaper gold."* -Chief John Allen French

Northgate Minerals, Canada, and the province of BC are working together to

take resources from Indigenous people in a province where 97% of the land that holds these resources is unceded Indigenous territory. If this project goes through, it sets an ugly precedent for other resource-based companies to go on to Indigenous people's land and steal from them. The frustration felt by the Tse Keh Nay is a feeling that reverberates around the province as more and more Indigenous land is being put in the scope of big business. On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, the hereditary chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en Nation confronted the BC government, Norwest Corporation and Outrider Energy Ltd. to stop the development of a coalbed methane project on their land.

As a way of trying to make people forget about their record with Indigenous people, in their second term in office, the BC Liberals adopted a 'New Relationship' on how they will deal with Indigenous people in the province. It was basically a big public relations campaign that they used to try to make people forget the fact that it was they who brought in the racist referendum on treaties and who have taken an offensive of stealing Indigenous land and resources while at the same time criminalizing those who resist. With the Tse Keh Nay, the government has failed to live up to the three basic principles that they set for this relationship: that Aboriginal rights and title exist; that First Nations have the ability and authority to make decisions with respect to territories; and that there be shared decision-making between government and First Nations. They have shown that the relationship is still colonial, is still based on oppression, and that the only way for Indigenous people to survive is to fight back.

# "Es Contundente que los Movimientos se Organicen"

## Una entrevista con Lydia Robles Arteaga, revolucionaria Boliviana

Por Ivan Drury y Esteban González Arteaga

Lydia Robles Arteaga es la Coordinadora de los Trabajadores del Agua y Fabriles de Cochabamba. Como una mujer indígena, una sindicalista, y revolucionaria Boliviana, sus experiencias en el movimiento revolucionario Boliviano son invaluable para todos los trabajadores de Canadá y de el mundo. Como dijo el Presidente de Bolivia Evo Morales cuando firmo el tratado de la "ALBA" junto con Cuba y Venezuela, "Juntos todos, unidos, vamos a cambiar la historia, no solo de Bolivia sino de toda Latinoamérica."

Fire This Time se reunió con Lydia Robles en Vancouver el 17 de Octubre en su ultimo evento en un tur Canadiense en el que ella había participado para educar y consolidar el apoyo en torno al proceso revolucionario Boliviano. Lydia es en si un gran ejemplo de el proceso de cambio que se esta desarrollando en Bolivia. Físicamente una mujer pequeña, cuando alzaba su cabeza su presencia era enorme.

Lydia hablo como si la victoria de el movimiento en Bolivia estuviera garantizado. Refuto las preocupaciones

y luchando. Para Fire This Time fue un gran honor platicar con ella, y poder compartir con ustedes esta breve entrevista.

**FTT:** ¿Nos podrá explicar cual es la importancia de las demandas y las luchas de los Pueblos Indígenas y de las mujeres dentro de el movimiento sindical en Bolivia, y específicamente cual es su rol en el gobierno de Evo Morales?

**Lydia:** Es contundente que los movimientos indígenas se organicen. Porque un pueblo que es indígena, que a sido enajenado de sus propias tierras, tiene el derecho y la potestad de reclamar lo que un día le perteneció, y que se lo quitaron. De esta manera es que nacen estos movimientos tan fuertes, y tan potentes que han llevado ahora a un gobierno. Hoy en Bolivia casi el ochenta por ciento

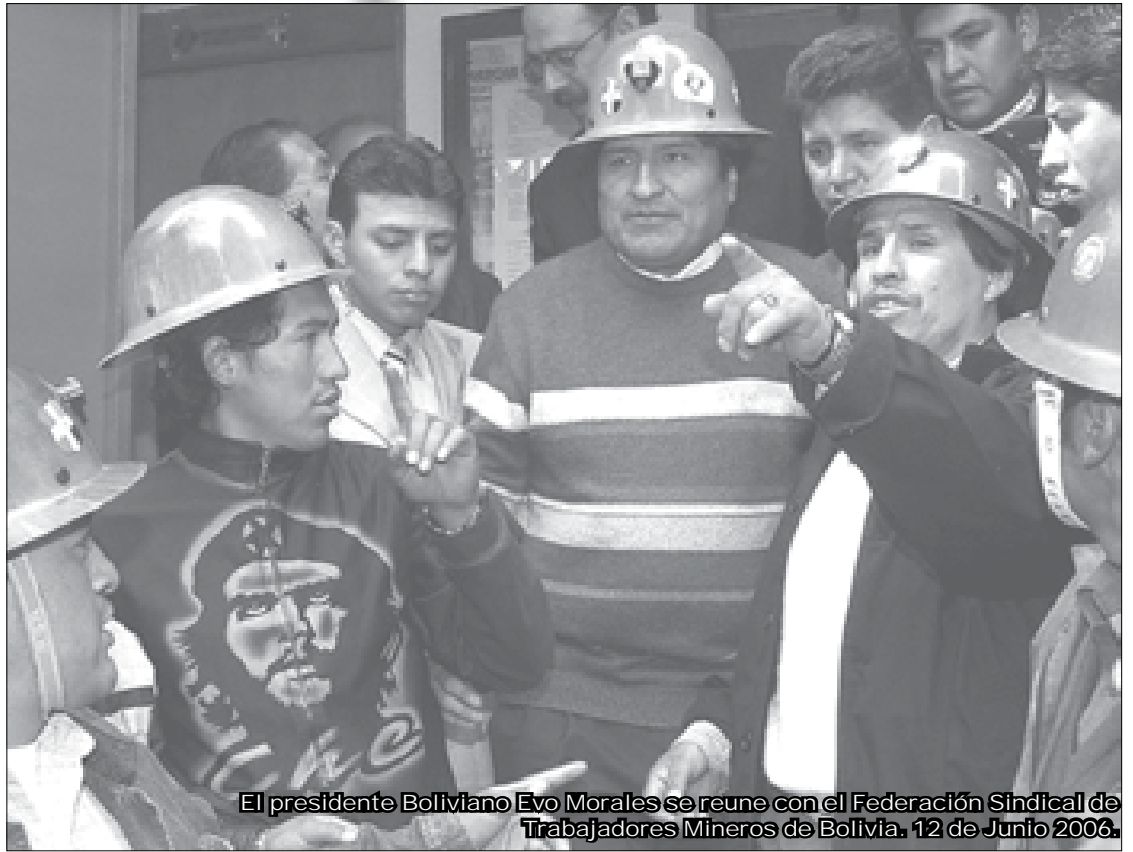
son indígenas, entonces los indigenas siempre han estado organizados. Siempre han estado cauteloso. Solo que han habido gobiernos [imperialistas - colaboradores] que han venido a robar sus tierras.

Hoy en Bolivia los trabajadores y los indígenas andan juntos porque quieren sacar adelante a su país.

Referente a las mujeres, que rol están tomando hoy en el poder, es muy claro, antes el rol de la mujer no era tomado en cuenta, pero ahora si. Ellas están tomando un trabajo, que quizás muchas mujeres que han podido entrar a la universidad, muchas mujeres que han [tenido puestos porque] se prestaron a el imperialismo, no han podido hacer.

Pero también nunca habían tenido unos puestos tan jerárquicos dentro de gobierno. Pero ahora personas que nunca fueron a la universidad están ejerciendo y mucho mejor. Tenemos una ministra de justicia que es una trabajadora de el hogar, tenemos una diputada que es sindicalista de la parte de los cocaleros de Bolivia, tenemos un ministra de la educación, tenemos ministras de parte de muchos negocios.

Quizás no les estamos llevando el



El presidente Boliviano Evo Morales se reúne con el Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia. 12 de Junio 2006.

nombre en alto porque primero estamos empezando a verles su trabajo. Igual es lo que le sucede con nuestro presidente. No son expertos de manejar, pero tienen el alma de poder sacar adelante a su propio país. Hoy tanto hombres como mujeres están encaminando a este país. Yo creo que con el impulso de un pueblo lo van

las mismas ganas, y viendo lo que pasa en otros países. Es una clara vision de tu país, esto quizás a dado un vuelco a muchas historias. Es haci que Bolivia se organiza. Tiene que hacerse un trabajo muy arduo, un trabajo que viene primero de la conciencia de cada trabajador. En nuestras organizaciones se discute tanto



El Día de la Resistencia Indígena. La Paz, Bolivia. 12 de octubre del 2006.

de algunos comentadores en el foro sobre las dificultades en la nacionalización de los hidrocarburos en Bolivia como 'problemas temporarios que el movimiento superara.' Luego explico que le había alarmado las condiciones en las que los Pueblos Indígenas en Canadá son forzados a vivir, en las reservaciones que visito durante su tur. Digo que estas condiciones son un llamado urgente a la acción... a el pueblo trabajador de Canadá.

A través de Lydia, fue posible captar las dinámicas de la revolución y de los revolucionarios en Bolivia hoy en día—siempre enardecidos, organizando,

a lograr.

**FTT:** Como a afectado el apoyo y la solidaridad de parte de Cuba y Venezuela. ¿Que a significado para el gobierno de Evo Morales?

**Lydia:** A significado mucho, porque en parte tenemos un mismo idealismo, todos tenemos una misma causa de ser países que queria someternos a su gusto y paciencia el imperialismo. Pero nos hemos identificado los tres países, que un día fueron de Bolívar, y que nunca llegaron a ser de otra persona. Es por eso que Bolivia tiene el nombre de Bolívar... y como Bolivia es de Bolívar tiene que dar el primer movimiento de descontentó. ¡Basta ya de la enajenación de nuestras propias tierras de Sud América! Y es por eso que nuestras relaciones tanto con Cuba que con Venezuela siempre van a ser solidarias. Siempre vamos a estar mirando por una misma causa, y por un solo fin de ser libres y soberanos en nuestras propias tierras.

**FTT:** Que pueden aprender los trabajadores, y los pueblos indígenas de Canadá. Sobre la lucha revolucionaria, sobre el proceso revolucionario en Bolivia.

**Lydia:** Lo que tienen que aprender es que tienen que ser perseverantes, tienen que saber seguir con sus luchas. Aquí en Canadá sus luchas no están tan fuertes como deberían ser. En un país tan poderoso que tiene al capitalismo encima, apenas están pudiendo sobrevivir sus luchas, pero que tienen que saber también organizarse, a medida que pase el tiempo, no se ven los frutos de la noche a la mañana, sino hay que estar con la misma perseverancia, con

en el ámbito social, político, económico. No solamente es saber los derechos de los propios trabajadores, sino de interesarse mas de lo que pasa en su propio país, porque al final de cuentas el trabajado se ve afectado cuando esta desorientado, cuando no tiene ningún conocimiento de lo que pasa, o de lo que están haciendo sus propios gobiernos. Ellos también lo pueden hacer, con la unidad, con el ver como se encuentra su propio país.

**FTT:** Gracias Lydia, nuestros sueños y esperanzas estan contigo y tu lucha en Bolivia.

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By Tamara Hansen

**Blockade on Cuba: Crime Against Humanity**

Fifty years ago, the path that Cuba was following was the same as most countries in Latin America. Cubans' rate of illiteracy was very high, the level of prostitution was high and many of the Cuban people lived in poverty and hunger. Ninety percent of Cuba's telephone and electricity services, over 50% of Cuba's railways, and over 70% of its land were owned by American institutions. The United States had sup-

shamefully were sent home with their tails between their legs.

The failed Bay of Pigs invasion led the US to cease both economic and diplomatic relations with Cuba, leading to the official declaration of a full economic blockade against Cuba in 1962. With cutting imports from Cuba, the US government hoped to cripple Cuba's economy and force the new government

**US Intensification of Blockade Against Cuba: 2004 - Today**

"For nearly 50 years, the regime of Fidel Castro has condemned the people of Cuba to a tragic fate of repression and poverty... to accelerate the demise of Castro's tyranny, President Bush created the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba."

- US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, July 2005.

What is this commission? The US Depart-

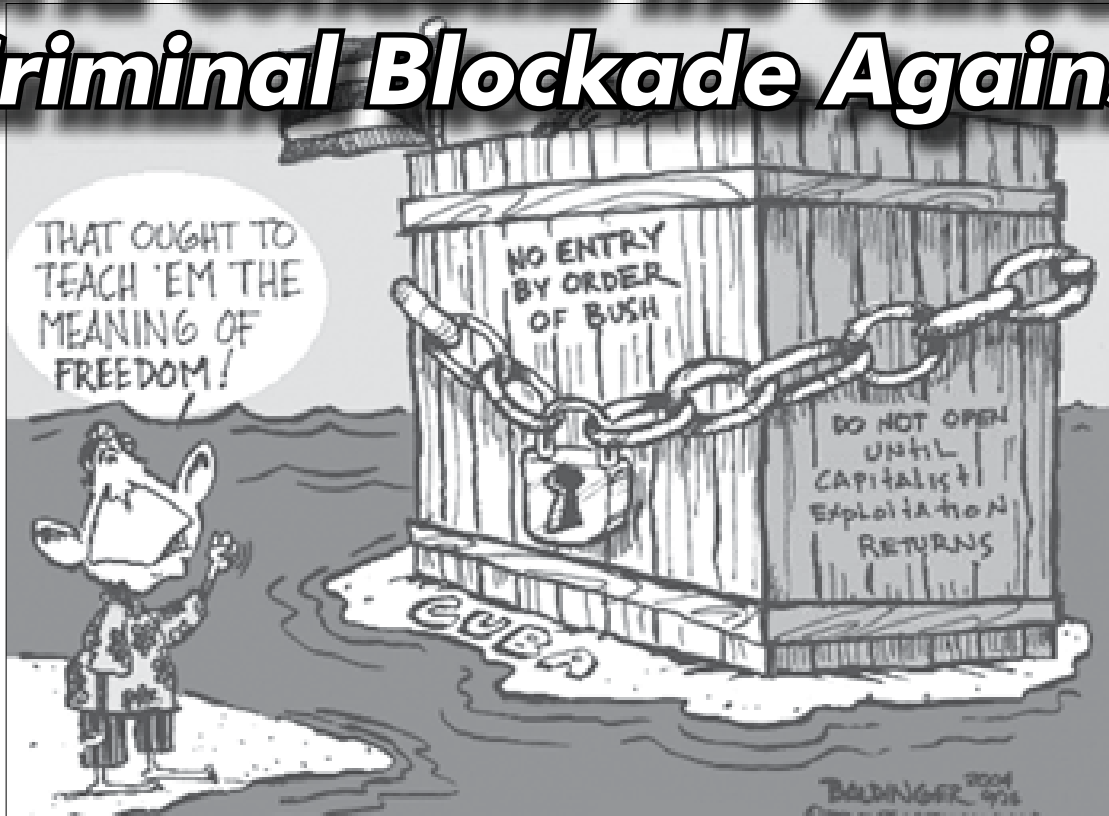
cret section, sealed off from the public. We must ask, if you are already stating publicly that one of your objectives is to, "bring to an end the dictatorship" then what could you possibly need to hide?

Part of the commission's money is for sending "aid" money to right-wing anti-Cuba groups in Miami. At least a few million dollars of the commission's money will go to USAID. In mid-November 2006, a report from the US Congressional audi-

# NO AL BLOQUEO: the World Condemns the United States' Criminal Blockade Against Cuba

ported a series of brutal dictators in Cuba which ensured that resources and money were siphoned off the island at the expense of poor and working people throughout Cuba. In December 1956, when Fidel Castro and 82 other revolutionary fighters arrived in Cuba from Mexico on their small ship, the Granma, their aim was to end this abuse by the United States.

In 1959, when Fidel Castro and the revolutionary fighters had spread their vision to millions of people throughout Cuba, they defeated the US imposed dictator Batista and were brought to power in the country. One of the first things their new government implemented was land reform. First, in May 1959, they expropriated all farm lands that were larger than 1,000 acres and then redistributed it to over 200,000 Cuban peasants. Second, in July 1960, they nationalized all US companies and properties, which meant that



tors concluded that at least 30% of the exile groups who received USAID grants showed questionable expenditures, including "aid" like chocolate and cashmere clothing.

**Why does the US have a Blockade on Cuba?**

Two simple reasons: First, their imperialist economic interests in Cuba. Second, because Cuba is the threat of a good example, socialism against capitalism, humanism against imperialism. It is the example of the battle of ideas of which Cuba and Fidel are consistently the winners.

First, we must look at Chapter 5 of the 2006 report from the Commission for Assistance to a



profits would no longer be funnelled off the island, but could instead go to funding literacy programs, a healthcare system and education.

It quickly became clear that the US would not be able to use Fidel Castro as a pawn in their game. In March 1960, US President Eisenhower called for a US ban on Cuban sugar, oil and gun imports. During this time, the US also tried to intervene in Cuba militarily, with the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. This US backed and funded invasion was a dramatic and desperate attempt to overthrow Cuba's new revolutionary government. The plan called for Cuban exiles (mainly rich Cubans and beneficiary of the previous colonial Cuba, who fled after the revolution) to attack Cuba and attempt to overthrow Castro's revolutionary government. Within only 72 hours, with the direct leadership and guidance of Fidel Castro, this attempt failed and the US and its reactionary allies embarrassingly and

to bend under US pressure. Despite the United States aggression and attacks against the newborn Cuban revolution, the Cuban people rose up to this challenge and changed the course of their own history.

Since the beginning of the inhuman US blockade against Cuba, the US has prevented Cuba from importing and exporting everything from food, to medicine and even sports equipment. The blockade has been tightened and loosened tactically at different times but has always remained firm and vicious. There were two important increases in the blockade during the 1990s: the Torrecelli Act of 1992 (ironically, the US government officially named it the "Cuban Democracy Act") declared that ships of any nationality that dock in Cuba or are transporting Cuban merchandise cannot dock in the US for 160 days afterwards. The US again updated its hostile policy towards Cuba in 1996 with the Helms-Burton Act. This act not only forbids American companies from trading with Cuba, but also seeks to criminalize foreign companies who trade with Cuba. These acts both stopped many tonnes of food, medicine and supplies from reaching the Cuban people - because really, look at the size of the two countries: if you were a company looking to make profit, where would you go?

ment of State website clearly identifies the objectives the commission by stating, "United States policy towards Cuba is clear:

- Bring an end to the ruthless and brutal dictatorship;
- Assist the Cuban people in a transition to representative democracy; and
- Assist the Cuban people in establishing a free market economy.

To achieve these objectives, the President created the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba with a mandate to identify:

- Additional measures to help the Cuban people bring to an end the dictatorship;
- Elements of a plan for agile, effective, and decisive assistance to a post-dictatorship Cuba."

Created in May of 2004, this commission initially promised \$59 Million over two years towards securing these objectives. When that money ran out this year the commission published its second report in July, now requiring \$80 Million over the next two years. This new report from the commission contained the same objectives as quoted above, but also contains a se-

Free Cuba, where we can almost hear the drool dropping from the US government's mouth. They are hungry for Cuba's markets and resources. The report states that they will assist a "free" Cuba by: "opening avenues of cooperation between public/private US transport entities and their Cuban counterparts." Or by "seeking donor assistance from the international community and organizations such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank to help...undertake the privatization of utilities, encourage competition in services, and develop regulatory mechanisms for natural monopolies."

Great, so Cuba can borrow money from the World Bank, and use it to pay US companies

*Continues on Page 11*

Countries that supported our resolution (183)

The world has increasingly come out in opposition to the genocidal blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba				
Year	IN FAVOR	AGAINST	ABSENT	ABSTENTION
1992	59	3	48	71
1993	88	4	35	57
1994	101	2	33	48
1995	117	3	27	34
1996	137	3	20	25
1997	143	3	22	17
1998	157	2	14	12
1999	165	2	23	8
2000	167	3	15	4
2001	167	3	15	5
2002	173	3	11	4
2003	179	3	7	2
2004	179	4	7	7
2005	182	4	4	1
2006	183	4	4	5

Adapted from: <http://www.granma.cubaweb.com/ingles/news/07.html>

revolution at this time of severe crisis. Most Cubans stood beside the revolution during the special period, despite delays and overcrowding of public transportation, power blackouts, food shortages, and long line-ups at stores.

Fidel, always the optimist, reminded people in 1996, "After five years of blockade combined with the special period, the people's spirit is stronger, because mankind is brave and gains strength under adversity, under struggles, under difficulties. Man is no meringue topping that fades under a whiff. Humans are children of their own history, and very few countries have a history as beautiful as ours." It is because of this belief that the revolution can overcome all obstacles and is fully supported by the people of Cuba, who continue to defend the revolution and their Comandante en Jefe Fidel.

In order to pull Cuba out of the immense poverty and hardship of the special period, Cuba opened its doors to tourism. This was basically what some call a "necessary evil", meaning that although it went against the overall goals of creating equality among all Cubans it was the only solution for the revolutionary government of Cuba if it wanted the gains made by the revolution to survive. This was a difficult choice for Fidel, but he was willing to make it.

A fight against the corruption of the 'new rich' that resulted from tourism was presented by Fidel in a speech on November 17th, 2005. "We have a people who have learned to handle weapons. We have an entire nation which, in spite of our errors, holds such a high degree of culture, education, and conscience that it will never allow this country to become their colony again. This country can self-destruct, this Revolution can

destroy itself, but they can never destroy us. We can destroy ourselves, and it would be our fault." These statements by Fidel opened the idea that another rectification of Cuba's direction could be necessary in the near future as the Cuban economy recovers from the special period.

**GAINS**

The challenges for Cuba and Fidel's revolutionary leadership to maintain its road forward have been and continue to be numerous. Despite these ongoing challenges, Cuba has not stopped making large strides forward for its people. Javier Rodriguez, a writer for Granma International recently wrote, "Irrespective of the fierce US economic and commercial blockade, Cuba was able to develop education, health and other fields... Cuban experts and technicians joined with nations of the region to jointly work on projects targeting the quality of life of the most underprivileged of Latin America. Strategies to eliminate illiteracy through Cuba's "Yo Sí Puedo (I Can Do It) system were successful in Venezuela and are being implemented in Bolivia and other countries. Medical assistance to the poorest populations in Latin America is complemented with the training of thousands of doctors."

Cuban economist Carlos Tablada explained that even in the difficult times between 1985 and 1989, under the leadership of Fidel the Cuban revolution continued to fight for a better life for people in Cuba. He cited these statistics: "The number of inhabitants per doctor fell from 1832 to 303 over the same period, reaching 274 in 1990 ... Infant mortality stood at 10.2 per thousand births in 1990, against 15 for the developed world, 52 for Latin America and 76 in the underdeveloped world."

What we can see from this is that

through many of the unforeseeable ups and downs of the revolution, Fidel Castro's consistent revolutionary method in approaching Cuba's challenges and his consistent visionary leadership role, has provided guidance in all difficult stages, has led Cuba to succeed. These battles have been fought and overcome through the pressure and devotion of the Cuban people to their revolution and its gains, but also through the clear foresight of Cuba's revolutionary government led by Fidel Castro.

**FIDEL TODAY**

In a short interview with Armando Hart about his lifelong friendship with Fidel, he explained the basic concept that while imperialists attempt to "divide and win" in Latin America, Fidel and Cuba want to "unite and win". Someone who I think would agree with this is Wayne Smith, former head of the US Interest Section in Havana under US President Jimmy Carter. Smith said, "Castro is celebrated as a hero throughout Latin America. It isn't because they all want to be socialist now. No, it's because he's the only one who stood up to us and succeeded." Indeed! Fidel has now watched and outlasted 10 different US presidents. Along with this, the US government and the CIA have attempted to take Fidel's life over 600 times since 1959.

But with all of these great accom-



plishments to celebrate (from surviving assassination attempts, to helping defeat the racist south African army, to the countless other feats we have discussed in this article) in August, only a few days before his 80th birthday, Fidel announced that he had had emergency surgery and that Minister of Defence Raul Castro would take over his responsibilities in government. This meant that his birthday celebrations were postponed until Dec 2nd, which also marks the 50th anniversary of the landing of the Granma. Despite his illness, Fidel declared, "In terms of my spirits I am perfectly well. What is important is that everything

in the country is running and will continue to run perfectly well...We must fight and work."

For the celebration of Fidel's 80th birthday, 5,000 foreign visitors and Cubans came to the open night on November 28th, with 300,000 expected at his birthday rally on Saturday Dec 2nd. Others around the world who could not make it to Cuba are holding special celebrations in their countries. At the same time, earlier in November the world stood with Cuba at the United Nations, voting for a resolution to condemn the US blockade. 183 countries voted in favor of condemning the blockade, and only 4 voted against the resolution.

"Our enemies are counting the minutes, hoping and waiting for the demise of Fidel, but they fail to understand that Fidel is all the people; he is every man and every woman on the planet willing to fight for a better world," said Cuba's Foreign Minister, Perez Roque, on November 30th 2006. He continued, "All that Fidel wants to bequeath are his ideas, nothing else. Recovering and returning to the struggle, he will once again be defeating his enemies, those who are so full of hatred and mediocrity."

We wish Fidel a speedy recovery from his illness, and call along with people across Cuba and around the world:

**"¡Viva Fidel! ¡80 Años Más!"**  
**"Long Live Fidel! 80 More Years!"**

to 'reconstruct' their country... you know, like all of the reconstruction they have been doing in Iraq? What an alternative for Cuba!

Secondly, we cannot forget the US administration's accusation that Cuba forces its population to live in "repression and poverty." Interestingly, by the CIA's own statistics we can see the great advances Cuba has made despite 47 years of economic blockade by the U.S. Some

university PhD. This includes not only tuition, but also uniforms, books and in many cases three meals a day. What can the US offer to attract any Cuban?

**A Changing Latin America: Making an Example of Revolutionary Cuba, Living with Humanity and Dignity**

The US blockade on Cuba is basically an attempt to create poor living conditions for the people of Cuba in hopes that they will lose faith in their government and their revolution due to hunger, illness and other problems, and the US will be able to intervene. The reason? One of the assistant Secretaries of State in the US, Roger Noriega said it best: "The emerging axis of subversion forming between Cuba and Venezuela must be confronted before it can undermine democracy in Colombia, Nicaragua, Bolivia, or another vulnerable neighbour."

While the United States is using its accusations against Venezuela and Cuba as part of the reason for upholding the blockade on Cuba, the US is better known in Latin America as a supporter of the death squads in El Salvador, of dictators from Pinochet in Chile to Batista in Cuba, and of coup d'états in Haiti and Venezuela.

Basically, all countries in Latin America have had the US intervene in their government, land, and resources for many decades. They see what US 'democracy' means for third-world countries: exploitation, sweatshops, plundering and the raping of their rich lands for other peoples' profits, namely those of US corporations and the US capitalist ruling class in general. Cuba is a country that since 1959 has stood firmly against this US-sponsored exploitation and colonial policies. The US cannot afford to have its companies and influence kicked out of any more resource-rich Latin American countries. In other words, the gains made by the Cuban revolution for poor and working people are the threat of a good example for all of

Latin America, or more accurately, FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.

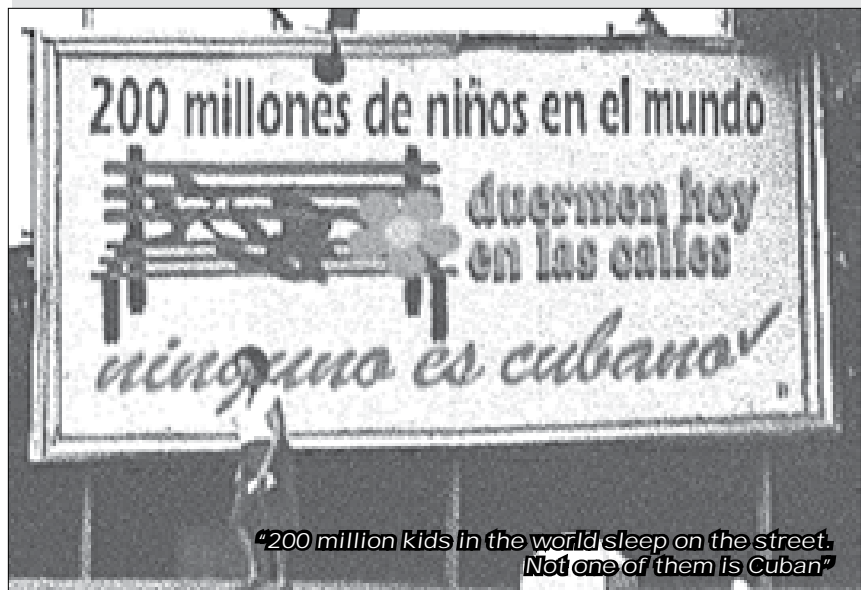
With all the criminal and illegal activities against Cuba by US imperialists, their attempts to kill the spirit of the Cuban revolution and its influence are failing. The winds of Latin America are blowing in a very new direction right now. A string of leftist or progressive leaders have been elected to power, with Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia, the re-election of Lula Da Silva in Brazil, the recent elections of Rafael Correa in Ecuador and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, and the protest rallies of millions in Mexico against the election fraud that prevented the progressive candidate there, Manuel Lopez Obrador, from winning. All of these progressive and leftist leaders have a lot to live up to, because whether they like it or not, the working and oppressed people in those countries are demanding their legitimate share of wealth that they produce. They see what has happened in Cuba over the last 48 years and how Venezuela is following the same path, and yes, above all they know that a better world is possible and necessary, because as Fidel said, there is no other option.

**47 Years of Solidarity Against the US Blockade of Cuba!**

In November 2006, the United Nations general assembly voted for the 15th consecutive year to condemn the US blockade against Cuba. The vote was overwhelmingly in Cuba's favour, with 183 countries voting to condemn the blockade while only four voted against the motion, with one country abstaining. This is a huge blow every year to the United States, and if Cuba can convince so many countries internationally to stand with them against the United States, then it is our human obligation, our job to get people in our cities and communities to get on board as well.

US government attacks against Cuba must be taken seriously. Not only because these hostile policies infringe on Cuba's right to self-determination, but even more, because of what we stand to learn from Cuba - a country that is fighting for real human rights, such as jobs, education, health and housing, and above all, human dignity.

**LIFT THE US BLOCKADE ON CUBA!**  
**US HANDS OFF CUBA!**



examples of this are Cuba's unemployment rate, 1.9%, which is lower than the U.S. at 5.1%. Cuba's infant mortality rate is also lower than that of the US, and the lowest in all of Latin America. At the same time, Health Affairs (a US policy journal) says, "Currently, 46 million people or nearly one in five non-elderly adults and children lack health insurance in the United States." Add to this that for most students, getting a post-secondary education in the US means drowning in a huge and unacceptable debt. Then turn your head to Cuba, a third world country, where healthcare is free and universally accessible whether you live in the heart of Havana or up in the mountain ranges. Education is completely free, all the way up to getting a

*“The truth must not  
only be the truth,  
it must be told”  
- Fidel*



# SUDAN

## The Hue & Cry Over Darfur: Imperialists Attempt to Extend War & Occupation to Africa



By Thomas Davies

A slightly critical mind should be forgiven for exploring a definite "déjà vu" when confronted with the current onslaught of media coverage and government statements regarding the conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region. Who wouldn't? Headlines and UN resolutions scream of a ruthless regime, the complete humanitarian catastrophe of civil strife, and the apparently obvious need for tens of thousands of foreign troops and sanctions to solve it all. The similarities between the pre-invasion propaganda for the invasions and occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Haiti are endless. There are very good reasons to be critical of the hype and intentions surrounding imperialism's new favorite catastrophe – starting only with the last five years.

### The Era of War & Occupation

We live in an era characterized by wars and occupations waged by profit-driven imperialist countries like the United States, England, Canada and France against the third world. They're competing with each other for land, resources, and strategic areas with which to gain more land and more resources.

Starting in 2001, the US, Canada, and NATO carpet bombed Afghanistan, apparently to rid the world of terrorism, bring freedom to women, and "reconstruction" for all. Five years later and the life expectancy in Afghanistan has dropped 4 years to 42 years of age, the literacy rate of women remains at a pitiful 9%, and you'd be hard pressed to find even a photo of any of the great humanitarian projects promised anywhere.

Iraq is a similar success story. Since the 2003 US/UK invasion, 655,000 Iraqis have been killed according to the Lancet Medical Journal, child malnutrition is up from 4% in 2002 to 25% in 2006, and inflation is soaring at 32%.

Move on to Haiti where, after at US, France and Canada invaded in 2004, the United Nations took over the occupation of the poorest country in the Caribbean and the forced removal of its first democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The UN forces have been consistently reported as training and participating in death squads targeting Haiti's poorest slums, and continue to target opposition political organizers. Is 80% unemployment and the new Canadian sweat-shops there a success story for the Haitian people?

So why would we then expect these self-named benevolent invaders to improve even one aspect of the lives of ordinary Sudanese people?

### Obvious Catastrophe

It would be ridiculous to deny that there exists an incredibly grave situation in Darfur. Since 2003 there has been increased fighting between the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) against the Sudanese government. The African News Agency claims the US has, "through its

closest allies helped trained the SLA and JEM Darfuri rebels", while links between the Janjaweed militias that are responsible for horrific atrocities and the Sudanese government are not hard to find.

However, Sudan is unfortunately not the only country in the world, and certainly not in Africa, to deal with internal conflict and strife. The Washington Post reported last year that 3.5 million people were killed in the last four years in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and more than 1.4 million Somalis are suffering today in one of the worst famines to hit that region. It's only the tip of the iceberg, and if the imperialists were so concerned about genocide, you'd think they would have stopped their own in Iraq and Afghanistan by now.

Where is their urgent concern about the AIDS pandemic in Africa? According to UNAIDS, Africa had 2.4 million (out of 3.1 million worldwide) AIDS deaths in 2005, with 25.8 million people living with HIV. This didn't pop up overnight; it's been well established. These imperialist governments and their allies have kept the drugs and resources necessary to save lives and minimize infections out of reach of millions of dying Africans, and now we are supposed to trust them in Sudan?

### Obvious Manipulation

There are currently 7,000 African Union troops stationed under a "peacekeeping" banner in

Darfur. They have extended their mission by six months with some sort of UN participation. The UN's role is hotly contested by the Sudanese government.

The UN Security Council passed resolution 1706 in April of this year, calling for a 20,000-troop UN force to take over the operations in Darfur. In theory, the motion does need Sudanese ratification to be initiated. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan took it upon himself to announce Sudanese acceptance, but was quickly rebutted by Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who said, "It is clear that any forces coming to Sudan under resolution 1706 are colonizing forces."

The Security Council is trying to force al-Bashir to accept the UN forces by backing him into a corner with their current propaganda and



Hundreds of Sudanese student union members protest in front of the US embassy building in Khartoum Sudan, Sept 20, 2006.

isolation campaign. This is their best shot to legitimize their invasion and smother opposition. Why else would they be pushing so hard through the UN and for Sudanese acceptance when it is clear internal support is not something they ever cared about in the invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan, or Haiti?

### The Growing Campaign

Tony Blair has already said that Britain would send 5,000 troops to Darfur, and the European Union has issued joint statements alongside the US to condemn the Sudanese government. Canada supports UN Resolution 1706 and has, according to the Canadian government's website, "played an important advocacy role with [Security] Council members, including the development of a targeted sanction regime". Canada also admits to already engaging a multi-pronged intervention force in Sudan through other missions, involving Foreign Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The word "genocide" is constantly splashed across TV screens and used liberally by all of these imperialist governments and huge numbers of NGOs in reference to Darfur. This is despite the fact that last June, a UN commission determined that what has been taking place in Darfur, however awful, does not constitute a genocidal policy by the Sudanese government.

Well-funded rallies took place across North America this April calling for an "End to Genocide!" and for foreign intervention in Darfur. Organizers in Washington D.C. were even granted a personal appointment with George W. Bush prior to the rally, where he declared that, "Those of you who are going out to march for justice, you represent the best of our country." Sound suspicious? Why was it that major news media gave the "Save Darfur" rallies more prominence than either the anti-war rally of 300,000 in New York City the day before, or the millions of people demonstrating across the U.S. for immigrant rights the day after?

### The Bridge to Africa

To understand this current campaign we need to understand that imperialists see that Darfur is to Africa what Afghanistan was to the Middle East – a resource rich and vulnerable opening to the rest of the continent.

Sudan, the largest country in Africa, is believed to have oil reserves rivalling those of Saudi Arabia, and large deposits of natural gas. In addition, it has one of the three largest deposits of high-purity uranium in the world, along with the fourth-largest deposits of copper. It's obvious these resources are coveted by Western powers, especially since China is currently Sudan's largest trading partner and has significant control over oil resources there. China abstained along with Russia and Qatar on the Security Council resolution 1706, and obviously understands the motion's intent as well.

Sudan also borders nine other African countries (Afghanistan borders six in the Middle East) and has access to the Red Sea and the Middle East beyond it, unlike many land-locked African countries. Conquering Sudan would mean the best head start for any foreign power wishing to expand across Africa. If we see that they are interested in doing this in the Middle East, why would it be any different in Africa?

### But What Next?

"You don't send in killers to stop the killing"

- Dennis Brutus, anti-Apartheid activist formerly imprisoned with Nelson Mandela, when asked about the proposed foreign intervention in Sudan

Having all the facts laid before them regarding foreign intentions for the invasion of Sudan, many still support the invasion, invoking some unsubstantiated hope that "things will be differ-

# MAWO: RESOLUTION AGAINST INTERVENTION IN SUDAN

Adopted at November 29, 2006 Mobilization Against War & Occupation General Meeting

Whereas there is currently a growing international imperialist propaganda campaign calling for foreign intervention in Sudan. Those pushing this campaign are the governments of imperialist countries such as the United States, Britain and Canada, all citing the current internal conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan as an attempt to justify foreign military intervention and sanctions.

Be it resolved that firstly, we as Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) reaffirm that Sudan is an independent and sovereign nation. No foreign country, coalition of foreign countries, or international organizations has the right to impose their will or interests on Sudan's internal affairs.

Secondly, we point to the recent invasions, wars, and occupations that imperialists tried to cover with "humanitarian" concerns – whether working separately or together in the destruction and pillaging of Iraq, or under a "multilateral" mandate like the United Nations death squad occupation of Haiti, or the NATO organized destruc-

tion of Afghanistan and Yugoslavia. We have not forgotten the last five years.

We know that Sudan is also very rich in natural resources with huge deposits of oil, natural gas, copper, and uranium. All of these are coveted by Sudan's self-professed "benevolent" invaders. Sudan also borders nine other African nations and would be used, like Afghanistan in the Middle East, as a bridge to war and occupation throughout Africa.

Therefore, MAWO demands an immediate end to the imperialist intervention and threats against Sudan, whether by individual countries or through a United Nations or NATO mandate.

Canada/US/UN/EU/NATO Hands Off Sudan!

No to Invasion of Sudan! End Imperialist Threats Against Africa!

Self-Determination for All Oppressed Nations!

ent this time". Sudan is a country with huge civil unrest, an obvious target for imperialist intervention. Supporting the invasion of Sudan would be the same as declaring that when a pack of lions chases after the sickest or the slowest antelope that they are really planning on helping it across the savannah. It defies sanity.

But wouldn't a United Nations mandate make everything "okay" somehow? Look at the history: The 1990 UN resolution used to justify bombing attacks that destroyed Iraq's infrastructure. The 13 years of UN sanctions on Iraq that resulted in the deaths of more than 1.5 million Iraqis. The US occupation of South Korea for more than 50 years under a UN Security Council resolution, and the more than

Continues on Page 19

## An Interview *Maria de la Luz Mendoza and Felipe Velasco*

By Ivan Drury & Esteban González Arteaga  
 Translated by Esteban González Arteaga

*Felipe Velasco and Maria de la Luz Mendoza are two Mexican activists who live and organize in Vancouver. They have been founding and leading members of organizations like "Relatives and Friends and of Mexican Political Prisoners," and "The Other Campaign Vancouver and Organizations in Solidarity with Atenco" that have organized in defense and solidarity with Mexico against imperialism and the agents of imperialism in Mexico.*

*On Wednesday November 15<sup>th</sup>, Fire This Time sat down with these two Mexican activists to talk about the explosive situation in Mexico: the legacy of state repression of social movements in Mexico, this past summer's election and the subsequent electoral fraud carried out by the ruling class, the massive anti-fraud movement that is still shaking Mexico, and the near-revolutionary movement that has completely overtaken Oaxaca, a poor, mostly Indigenous state in Southern Mexico.*

*We think that these two activists give a clear picture of what is happening today in Mexico, and especially what both the stakes and*

*potentials are for the working, oppressed, poor, and Indigenous people who are in struggle there. As one of the main slogans of the anti-electoral-fraud movement says, "if there can't be a solution... there will be a revolution..."*

**FTT:** What we would first like to ask you, because you have a great deal of experience in this, is what is the role and position of political prisoners in Mexico? How is repression used as a tool by the government and why is there repression?

**FELIPE:** Something that is important to point out is that Mexico has had almost a quarter of a century of neo-liberal politics. In Mexico there is a capitalist economy that is under-developed and dependent upon the United States. And the combination of both of these situations, under-developed capitalism that is dependent upon the United States, and neo-liberal politics, is an atrocious combination for the conditions of life of any people. This quarter century under neo-liberalism has generated conditions of extreme poverty where the great majority of us, more than fifty percent, live in poverty; and also, forty percent of Mexicans live in extreme poverty. These conditions of life have generated a constant social struggle. And the Mexican state has responded, primarily, through the use of repression and systematic violence.

We have endured already many years of 'dirty war' in Mexico. What we are talking about is that after the movement of '68, a student movement heavily repressed by the government, generated such indignation that desperate movements were created to try and change Mexico through armed struggle. Many organizations were created, many new acronyms. And this exasperated the possibility of repression against these movements and the places they operated in. This created a 'dirty war' that left hundreds disappeared, detained, kidnapped, and murdered. More recently repression in Mexico has escalated to what is known as state terrorism. And it has become fashionable, for example in the



Esteban González Arteaga conducting the interview.

case of Guerrero, Aguas Blancas, which is televised, it is televised how the police criminally murder the *campesinos*, who were making their way to a demonstration. We are astonished that this would be broadcast on the principal television chain and monopoly to engender fear in the populace, to send the veiled message 'if you organize, if you fight against the government you are going to receive this criminal treatment.'

State terrorism has come to the national stage with Atenco. With Atenco you have the practice not only of broadcasting the repression on commercial television, but the preparations for the repression as well... we would expect it in the remote rural areas of Chiapas and Guerrero, but nonetheless it occurs close to the colossal Mexico City. And it is carried out with such viciousness and brutality, that is within what the government of Mexico and many governments around the world recognize as state terrorism. What is occurring in Oaxaca can also be contained within this policy.

**FTT:** We should talk about the recent events in July, the election. What is the significance of this election?

**FELIPE:** I think that the recent presidential elections in Mexico were of great importance, given that, for a moment there was the

possibility of the continuity of the neo-liberal program.

Amongst the candidates to win the election, certainly the most likely was Obrador, the candidate of the coalition 'For The Good of All'.

While his program, in its essence, did not differ much from a neo-liberal program, he did gain the sympathy of the populace. He won over many who felt great indignation at the injustice of the neo-liberal projects

The people had hope, and they saw in the elections a peaceful, electoral, and legal way to achieve substantial changes of social benefit. The theft of the popular vote, the fraud, is an attack against the rule of law, it is an attack against the will of the majority, and it is a cancellation of the possibility of peaceful, democratic change in the country within the current context.

**LUZ:** What was the response of the people, those who voted for Lopez Obrador, to the fraud? Socially there is an environment of much desperation and depression.

Even people that we know who openly supported Lopez Obrador showed signs of demoralization. A situation of 'now what?'  
*Continues on Page 15*

Por Ivan Drury y Esteban González Arteaga

Felipe

*Velasco y Maria de la Luz Mendoza son dos activistas Mexicanos que viven y organizan en Vancouver. Son miembros fundadores y dirigentes de organizaciones como "Relativos y Amigos de Presos Políticos Mexicanos," y "La Otra Campaña Vancouver y Organizaciones en Solidaridad con Atenco" que han organizado en defensa y solidaridad con México y en contra de el imperialismo y sus agentes en México.*

*El 15 de Noviembre, Fire This Time se junto con estos dos activistas Mexicanos para platicar sobre la situación explosiva en México: el legado de la represión de estado contra movimientos sociales en México, las elecciones del verano pasado y el fraude electoral que lo siguió, el enorme movimiento en contra del fraude que todavía esta sacudiendo a México, y el movimiento casi revolucionario que a envuelto a Oaxaca, un estado mayoritariamente Indígena y pobre en el Sur de México*

*Pensamos que estos dos activistas dan una imagen clara de lo que esta pasando en México hoy en día, y especialmente cuales son los riesgos y cual*

# La Lucha en Mexico

## "No Hay Punto de Conciliación"

Una Entrevista con *Maria de la Luz Mendoza y Felipe Velasco*

**porque ustedes tienen mucha experiencia, es cual y la posición y el rol de los prisioneros políticos en México. Y como es utilizada la represión como una herramienta política por el gobierno y porque hay represión**

**FELIPE:** Lo que es importante señalar es que en México se tiene casi un cuarto de siglo con una política neo-liberal. En México se da un capitalismo sub-desarrollado y dependiente de los Estados Unidos. Y la combinación de ambas situaciones, capitalismo dependiente de Estados Unidos y sub-desarrollado y política neo-liberal es una combinación atroz para las condiciones de vida de cualquier pueblo. Este cuarto de siglo bajo la política neo-liberal ha generado condiciones de pobreza extrema donde la gran mayoría, más del cincuenta por ciento de mexicanos vivimos en pobreza, y se da un cuarenta por ciento de mexicanos en extrema pobreza. Estas condiciones de vida han generado una lucha social constante.

Y el estado mexicano lo que a hecho prioritariamente a sido responder mediante la represión y el uso de la violencia sistemática.

Tenemos ya muchos años de guerra sucia en México. Estamos hablando que después del movimiento del sesenta y ocho un movimiento estudiantil que fue duramente reprimido por el gobierno mexicano. Se Genero tal inconformidad que se

dieron movimientos desesperados de grupos por tratar de transformar la realidad mexicana por la vía armada. Surgieron muchas organizaciones, muchas siglas. Y esto recrudesció la posibilidad de represión hacia estos movimientos y a los lugares

a donde ellos acudían. Se genera una guerra sucia que deja a cientos de desaparecidos, de detenidos, de secuestrados, y de asesinados. Actualmente esta guerra sucia a escalado a ser un terrorismo de estado. Se da la modalidad, por ejemplo el caso de Guerrero, el de Aguas Blancas, que es televisado, es televisado como la policía, de manera criminal, acribilla a los campesinos, que se iban dirigiéndose hacia una manifestación. Ha nosotros nos llamo muchos la atención como fue posible que esto se transmitiera en la principal cadena y monopolio televisivo.

El hecho de que arriba al plano nacional el terrorismo de estado se da con Atenco. Con Atenco se da la modalidad de que no solo se pasa en los medios televisivos comerciales la represión en si, si no los preparativos para la represión...ya lo esperábamos en las zonas indígenas apartadas, como son las zonas campesinas apartadas de Chiapas o de Guerrero, sino se da cerca de la ciudad monstruo de la Ciudad de México. Y se da con una saña y brutalidad, que esta dentro de lo que el gobierno mexicano y muchos gobiernos en el mundo, reconocen como terrorismo de estado. Lo que esta sucediendo en Oaxaca también se inscribe dentro de esta política.

**FTT:** Deberíamos platicar de los acontecimientos recientes en México que fueron en Julio, la elección. ¿Cual el significado de esta elección?

**FELIPE:** Creo que tienen una gran importancia las recientes elecciones federales en México para cambio de presidente, dado que por un momento se daba la posibilidad de poder generar una continuidad del programa neo-liberal.

En los posibles candidatos a ganar la contienda, definitivamente el que era más probable era el candidato de la coalición Por el Bien de Todos. Concretamente el candidato del Partido por la Revolución Democrática (PRD) Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Si bien su programa político no distaba mucho de

ser la esencia de un programa neo-liberal, si logro la simpatía de la población, si gano, de una u otra manera, el voto de los que se inconformaron con la injusticia de los proyectos neo-liberales.

Se daba la esperanza de el pueblo que veía en las elecciones una manera pacífica, electoral, legal de lograr cambios substanciales para beneficio social.

El robo del voto popular, el fraude, es un golpe al estado de derecho en México, es un golpe a la voluntad popular, y es un golpe a las posibilidades, de cambios pacíficos democráticos, en el país en esta coyuntura.

**LUZ:** Cual fue la respuesta del pueblo, de la gente que voto por López Obrador ante el fraude. A el nivel social hay un ambiente de mucha desesperación y de mucha depresión, incluso gente que abiertamente apoyan a López Obrador demostraron realmente un desanimo. Una situación de '¿Bueno, y entonces?'. Si no se logra por medio de las elecciones el cambio, como se va a poder lograr el cambio.

Y es un ambiente que también a creado ese apoyo que se le esta dando a el Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca (APPO) horita. Porque mucha gente que esta apoyando al APPO son bases del PRD, y son gente que también están allí en el movimiento. Esto también conflujo, el hecho de que se allá dado el fraude de un lado y la represión por otro logro que mucha gente, aparentemente diferente, este apoyando [a la APPO.]

**FTT:** Como decía el movimiento en contra del fraude, rápidamente se volvió un movimiento de masa, para que la gente expresara su inconformidad con las injusticias. Y otro movimiento que esta surgiendo en México es el de Oaxaca. Este movimiento ha llegado



Manifestación en Ciudad de Oaxaca, Oaxaca. 20 de noviembre 2006.

*es el potencial de el pueblo, oprimido, pobre, e Indígena que hoy luchan en Oaxaca. Como dice uno de las consignas populares del movimiento contra el fraude, "Si no hay solución...habrá revolución*

**FTT:** Lo primero que les quisiéramos preguntar,

*continuado en la página 15*

# Interview

Continued

Continued From Page 14

If change can't be achieved through elections, how will we achieve change?

This is an environment that is also creating support for the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO). Because many of the people that are supporting the APPO are rank and file of Obrador's party, the Party for Democratic Revolution (PRD), and they are people who are there in the movement. The confluence of the fraud on one side and the repression on the other meant that many seemingly politically different people are together in support of the APPO.

**FTT:** As you said the movement against the fraud, quickly has become a mass movement, through which people have been able to express their resistance to injustice. And another movement that is growing in Mexico is that of Oaxaca. This movement has reached its' most organized point and therefore, I would say, its' most revolutionary. Especially with the formation of the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO). Could you explain to us the importance of this movement in Oaxaca?

**FELIPE:** You could say that it is one of the contemporary movements of largest social and popular importance. Never had the kinds of mobilizations organized by APPO been seen before, 1,200,000 people marching in the streets of Oaxaca. Even when there were 20,000 soldiers from the marines and the national army in Oaxaca. Even with 4,000 members of the Federal Preventive Police (PFP). Even with the presence of elite police squads, like AFI. When the plain clothes police, mercenaries, and paid killers of the 'Caravan of Death' is there. When there had already been murders, detainments, disappearances, torture, rapes. And this demonstration occurs at the same time! It is really a historic event.

This would not have happened, could not

have happened, without the sympathy and the active solidarity of people who had come together at this moment. It is possible to see that a wide spectrum of political tendencies are active in support of the movement in Oaxaca. This is setting an important precedent for the struggles of Mexican people. The APPO has brought together more than 350 popular organizations with a sensible program, not of exclusion, not of theoretical confrontation, but one that vindicates popular organization, and encourages solidarity.



Rally in Oaxaca, Nov 25, 2006.

The APPO has created a situation when so many tendencies are supporting the present movement in Oaxaca.

**FTT:** You mentioned that there is a great spectrum of organizations that are participating. Which are the most prominent, or symbolic of what the APPO is?

**FELIPE:** One of the principal initiating forces of this movement, was section 22 of the teachers movement. This is part of the spinal column of the movement.

The movement in Oaxaca is a popular movement of many years. Oaxaca is one of the

poorest states in the country. Fifty percent of indigenous people and ethnicities that exist in Mexico are in Oaxaca. A great part of daily life in Oaxacan communities is governed by traditions and customs, where communal participation and solidarity have been practiced for many years. This makes it possible that in the face of the repression of the teachers movement that was ordered by the governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz on July the 14<sup>th</sup>, the great majority of the spectrum of organizations have responded.

Solidarity with the teachers has formed this movement and the support and solidarity within Mexico is amazing. The National Democratic Convention (CND) was formed by the different parties, including the PRD, who participated in the election and who truly had the popular vote stolen from them. The PRD has declared their unconditional support for Oaxaca, for the APPO. This is very important, since the PRD is central to the anti-fraud move-

ment, one of the most important contemporary movements parallel to Oaxaca, due to the context of this election.

Another movement, which is Zapatismo, and the 'Other Campaign', has become active in a different way in the past months, but has given an effective solidarity...

The APPO has recently called for a barricade to be laid [around the Zocalo in Oaxaca] so that no police can leave the downtown for two days. What may happen at that moment could be incredible.

And something else that confronts more the state in Mexico, is that on the first of Decem-

ber the APPO has called for a general peaceful insurrection. That is the day that Felipe Calderon has planned, in accordance with the rules of the constitution, to take political power. This is the day that the CND, which is organizing in defense of the popular vote, has promised that they will not permit the presidential inauguration. And that is how the three the principal forces of the social movement in Mexico, the APPO, the Other Campaign, and the CND, find a common enemy: the Mexican state and the imperialist plans towards Mexico.

**FTT:** We have discussed that this moment in Mexico is of crucial importance, not only for people in Mexico, but also for people around the world. What can people in Canada learn from the struggle that is being carried out in Oaxaca?

**LUZ:** My opinion is that the struggle that is taking place in Oaxaca is an example for Mexico and the world because it has been an inclusive struggle... I think that's an important lesson. That when organizations unite for a common struggle you can have a movement like the one in Oaxaca. It is interesting that this movement has maintained itself and has achieved truly important victories; like that the PFP was not able to take the university. The people made them retreat, and they retreated after seven hours of pitched battle... We are truly awed by the example of dignity and anger that people are showing.

But there is also a terrible page being opened in the history of Mexico.

Although it is true that there has been more than thirty years of 'dirty war', right now there is total impunity. They are no longer interested in hiding what they did before. Calderon said 'I will become president, *cueste lo que cueste*' [at any price]. This is a very clear threat. Obviously this means more repression, because there can be no conciliation...

**FTT:** Thank you for giving us this interview, because your experiences are invaluable for us. The struggle will continue - La Lucha Sigue!

# Entrevista

Continuada

continuado de la página 14

a su punto más organizado, y por lo tanto a su punto, yo diría, más revolucionario. Especialmente, con la creación de la Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca. ¿Nos podría explicar cual es la importancia de este movimiento en Oaxaca?

**FELIPE:** Se pudiese decir que es uno de los movimientos contemporáneos de mayor envergadura social y popular. No se había dado en la historia contemporánea las movilizaciones que la APPO ha levantado. En la última que se habla de 1,200,000 personas, manifestándose en las calles de Oaxaca. Aun cuando había en Oaxaca alrededor de 20,000 efectivos de la marina y del ejército nacional. Que hay casi 4,000 miembros de la Policía Federal Preventiva (PFP). Que están grupos de elite policíaca, como la AFI. Que esta la 'Caravana de la Muerte', cual esta conformado por policías vestidos de civil, sicarios, y asesinos a sueldo. Que ya se había asesinado, detenido, desaparecido, torturado, y violado a mujeres. ¡Y se da esta manifestación popular, al mismo tiempo! Realmente es un hecho histórico

Que no se había dado, que no se hubiera dado sin la simpatía y la solidaridad activa que se ha generado al momento. Y es posible ver que es una gran gama de tendencias políticas. Que se están manifestando de manera activa en apoyo al movimiento de Oaxaca. Se esta asentando un precedente importante de como en las luchas del pueblo mexicano con una política incluyente, amplia, como es la APPO que dio cabida a mas de 350 organizaciones populares. Que aglutina la APPO. Con una política sensata, no de descalificación, no de confrontación teórica. Pero de reivindicar la organización popular. Con la solidaridad se pueda dar una situación que tantas tendencias que estén apoyando actualmente al movimiento Oaxaqueño.

**FTT:** Menciono que es un gran espectro de organizaciones que están participando. ¿Cuales son unas de las organizaciones mas prominentes, o las mas simbólicas de lo que es el APPO?



Manifestación en contra de el fraude electoral en la Ciudad de México, 10 de noviembre del 2006.

**FELIPE:** Una de las fuerzas principales iniciales de este movimiento, fue la sección 22 del movimiento magisterial [de maestros]. Que es parte de la columna vertebral de este movimiento.

Pero resulta que el movimiento en Oaxaca es un movimiento popular de muchos años. La situación de Oaxaca se da que es uno de los estados más pobres del país. Se da también que más del cincuenta por ciento de las etnias y los grupos indígenas que existen en México están en Oaxaca. Se da también que gran parte de la vida cotidiana de las comunidades oaxaqueñas se da bajo usos y costumbres, donde la participación comunal y la solidaridad son practicas de hace muchos años. Los posibilitan que ante la represión que se da de parte del gobernador Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, la represión de el catorce de julio. La gran mayoría del espectro de organizaciones responde.

En solidaridad con los maestros conforman este movimiento es increíble la solidaridad y el apoyo internamente en México. Bueno, la misma Convención Nacional Democrática formada por los diferentes partidos que llegaron a las

elecciones y que realmente se les arrebató el voto popular. Recientemente el PRD ha declarado la su incondicionalidad en el apoyo ha Oaxaca, hacia la APPO. Es importantísimo ello, ya que [el movimiento en contra del fraude] es uno de los movimientos contemporáneos más significativos junto a Oaxaca debido a la contienda y coyuntura electoral.

Otro movimiento, lo que es el zapatismo, y la Otra Campaña, que de otra manera a venido activándose desde hace varios meses, pero que dio una solidaridad contundente...

La APPO ha llamado en estos días a tenderle un cerco [al Zócalo] para que ningún policía de la PFP o de la AFI salga del centro de Oaxaca por dos días. Va a ser increíble que cosa pueda suceder en ese momento.

Y lo otro que confronta mas a el poder en México. Que es que el primero de diciembre la APPO llama a una insurrección general pacífica, porque ese es el día que Felipe Calderón tiene planeado y de acuerdo a la constitución, tomar el poder político. Este es el día que la CND, que esta organizando la resistencia en defensa del

voto popular también manifestó que no van a dejar tomar posesión al presidente de la republica. Y es como así tres fuerzas principales conformadas por la APPO, por la Otra Campaña, y la CND, encuentran un enemigo común. Que es el estado mexicano y los planes imperialistas hacia México.

**FTT:** Como hemos platicado este momento en México es de importancia crucial, no solo para la gente en México, sino para la gente en todo el mundo. Que es lo que puede aprender la gente de Canadá de esta lucha que se esta llevando a cabo en Oaxaca.

**LUZ:** Mi opinión es que la lucha que se esta llevando a cabo en Oaxaca es un ejemplo para México y el mundo en términos de que a sido una lucha que a sido muy incluyente... yo creo que eso es algo que se tiene que tomar como lección. Que cuando las organizaciones se unen para poder luchar por algo común, se pude lograr un movimiento como el que se esta dando en Oaxaca. Porque lo interesante es que este movimiento se a mantenido, se a mantenido y han logrado triunfos verdaderamente importantes, como el hecho que la PFP no haya podido tomar la universidad...

A nosotros nos tiene verdaderamente sorprendidos ese ejemplo de dignidad y de coraje, que la gente esta mostrando. Pero también se esta abriendo una pagina negra en la historia de México.

Porque si bien, es cierto ya tenemos más de treinta años que en México se ha llevado a cabo una guerra sucia. Ahora es la total impunidad. Horita ya no hay interés de ocultar lo que hacían antes. Calderón digo, 'voy a tomar posesión cueste lo que cueste'. Eso es una amenaza muy clara... Obviamente esto significa mayor represión, porque no hay punto de conciliación...

**FTT:** Gracias por darnos esta entrevista porque sus experiencias son invaluable para nosotros. ¡La Lucha Sigue!



# Where's the Justice?

National Committee to Free the Cuban Five's response to the sentencing of Santiago Alvarez and Osvaldo Mitat

By Gloria La Riva

Coordinator of US National Committee to Free the Cuban 5

A man like Santiago Alvarez, who can be heard on a telephone, calling on one of his underlings to throw C-4 explosives into Havana's Tropicana nightclub and "do away with all that"--all that being hundreds of people--a man like Santiago Alvarez who had machine guns, bazookas and grenades in a massive Miami arsenal, is sentenced to only a four-year prison sentence this week in a southern Florida federal court.

Yet, the Cuban Five, five men who were in Miami working to prevent a terrorist like Alvarez from killing innocent people, who never possessed a weapon, who never engaged nor intended to engage in the "espionage conspiracy" they were falsely convicted of, received 15 years to double life after their 2001 trial, and the added punishment of being denied family visits.

Alvarez and his accomplice Osvaldo Mitat were allowed to plead guilty to only one charge of weapons possession. Before their sentencing, federal judge James Cohn said, "This court recognizes the ultimate objective and goal of Mr. Alvarez and Mr. Mitat has always been a free and democratic Cuba. This court does not question the altruistic motive here. However we are a nation of laws."

The government's and courts' impunity towards the Miami terrorists is becoming more and more blatant.

Almost every day it seems, more news is coming to light in Miami of the vast and deep network of rightwing Cuban-American terrorists and their murderous plots: Antonio Llama, Roberto Ferro, Alvarez, Mitat, and of course, the most dangerous

he has remained completely silent about the rightwing Cuban-American terrorists who reside in the United States.

His actions are those of coddling the Cuban-American terrorists. U.S. Homeland Security waited two full months before arresting Luis Posada Carriles after he entered the United States illegally last year. When DHS was finally forced to detain Posada on May 17 because of a public press conference he held that morning, Homeland Security prosecutors avoided charging him with more serious crimes, like the Cubana plane bombing.

Instead, Posada's only formal charge to date is illegal immigration entry. To the extent that federal authorities may currently be investigating him for his role into several 1997 Cuban hotel bombings, it is probably to avoid prosecuting him for the plane bombing. That is because Bush Sr. was CIA director at the time of the Cubana bombing; Posada was a longtime CIA operative.

It is more than an oversight by Bush or previous presidents that Miami terrorists have existed, organized plots, and carried out attacks with total impunity.



Gloria La Riva.

Sin embargo, los Cinco, cinco hombres que estaban aquí en Miami trabajando para prevenir que un terrorista como Álvarez asesinara personas inocentes, que nunca poseyeron armas, que nunca estuvieron involucrados o pensaron involucrarse en "conspiración para cometer espionaje", fueron condenados falsamente y recibieron de 15 años a 2 cadenas perpetuas después de un juicio en el 2001, y el castigo adicional de negárseles las visitas familiares.

A Álvarez y a su cómplice Osvaldo Mitat se les permitió declararse culpables del único cargo de posesión de armas de fuego. Antes de su sentencia, el juez federal James Cohn dijo, "Esta corte reconoce que el objetivo final de los señores Álvarez y Mitat ha sido siempre una Cuba libre y democrática. Esta corte no cuestiona aquí la motivación al-

truista. Sin embargo, somos una nación de leyes."

La impunidad del gobierno y los tribunales hacia los terroristas de Miami se vuelve cada vez más obvia.

Casi cada día aparecen a la luz pública nuevas noticias en Miami sobre la amplia y profunda red de terroristas cubano-americanos de ultraderecha y de sus letales complots: Antonio Llama, Roberto Ferro, Alvarez, Mitat, y por supuesto, el mas peligroso de todos ellos, Luis Posada Carriles. Orlando Bosch, socio de Posada, aparece regularmente en la TV de Miami, desesperado por admitir su atroc crimen del vuelo 455 de Cubana de Aviación en 1976 en el que fueron asesinadas 73 personas. Bosch y Posada trabajaron mano a mano en la preparación del atentado.

¿Dónde está la justicia?

El 9 de agosto de 2005 una decisión histórica y sin precedentes fue tomada por un panel de tres jueces en el caso de los Cinco. Con una poderosa decisión de 93 páginas que le otorgaba a los Cinco un nuevo juicio, los jueces del Onceno Circuito decidieron que la situación en Miami era una "tormenta perfecta" que les negaba de forma efectiva a Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González y René González el derecho constitucional del debido proceso.

Parte de esta "tormenta perfecta" descrita por los jueces era la evidencia de los complots terroristas que los Cinco habían monitoreado mientras infiltraban las organizaciones extremistas de Miami. La jueza del juicio Joan Lenard rechazó la mayoría de esa evidencia como irrelevante.

Un nuevo juicio para los Cinco fuera de Miami sin duda alguna los hubiera exonerado. Sin embargo, la mano de la administración Bush intervino el año pasado, cuando el Fiscal General de Estados Unidos Alberto

por el atentado al avión. Esto es porque Bush padre era director de la CIA en el momento del atentado al avión; Posada fue un operativo de la CIA durante largo tiempo.

Que Bush y los presidentes anteriores no hayan visto que los terroristas de Miami existen, organizan complots y llevan a cabo ataques con total impunidad es más que una omisión. El fenómeno terrorista de Miami es financiado, armado y tiene el visto bueno de la CIA, el FBI y otros brazos del gobierno.

Existe una inmensa cantidad de evidencia que prueba sin ninguna duda, que el terrorismo contra Cuba es parte de la política del gobierno de Estados Unidos.

Si el gobierno no escucha a la justicia y la razón en el caso de los Cinco, si por el contrario escoge procesarlos de forma vengativa para mantenerlos encerrados durante años por atreverse a defender a su patria, entonces le corresponde al pueblo luchar aún más por su libertad. La misión de los Cinco no era solamente salvar vidas cubanas, sino proteger a todas las potenciales víctimas de la mafia de Miami, incluyendo a los norteamericanos.

El pueblo norteamericano apoyaría a los Cinco si solo conociera de su causa y su misión. El 11 de septiembre y Oklahoma son recordatorios permanentes del horror del terrorismo. El terrorismo contra el pueblo de Cuba no es menos criminal. Más de 3400 cubanos han muerto por los ataques terroristas originados en Estados Unidos.

La justicia demanda que los cinco activistas antiterroristas cubanos sean liberados inmediatamente. Adicionalmente, Posada debe ser extraditado a Venezuela o procesado completamente en Estados Unidos por el atentado al vuelo 455 de Cubana de Aviación.

of them all, Luis Posada Carriles. Posada's cohort, Orlando Bosch, gets to appear regularly on Miami TV, itching to admit his atrocious crime of the 1976 bombing of Cubana Flight 455 that killed 73 people. Bosch and Posada worked hand-in-hand in the plane bombing.

Where is the justice?

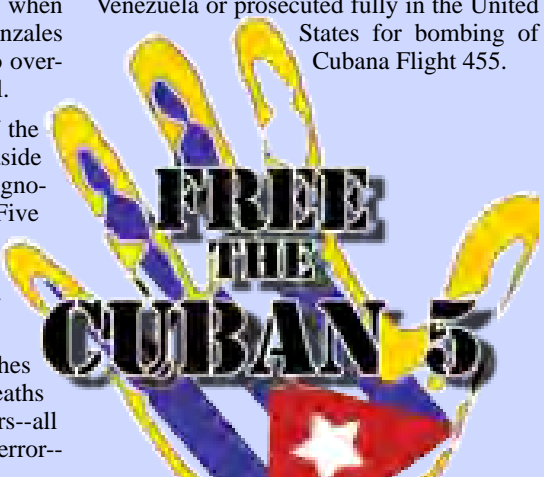
Last Aug. 9, 2005, an historic and unprecedented ruling was made by a panel of three judges in the case of the Cuban Five. With a powerfully-worded 93-page decision granting the Five a new trial, the 11th Circuit Court judges ruled that the situation in Miami was a "perfect storm" effectively denying Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González the constitutional right to due process.

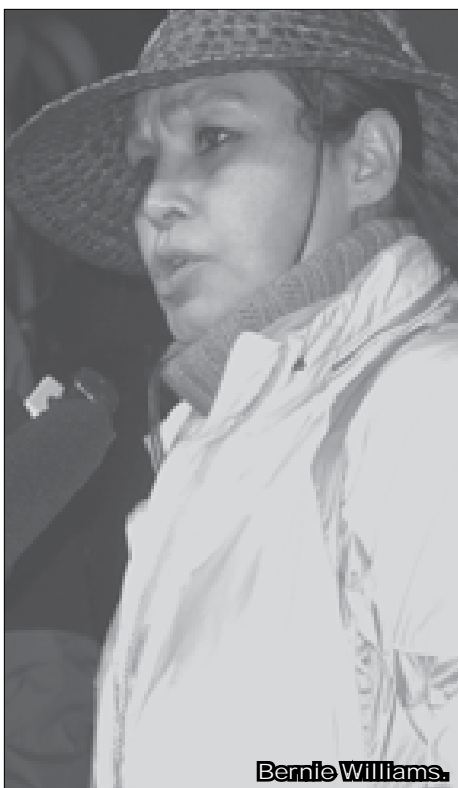
Part of that "perfect storm" described by the judges was the evidence of terrorist plots the Five had gathered while infiltrating the extremist Miami organizations. The trial judge Joan Lenard denied much of that evidence as irrelevant.

A new trial outside of Miami for the Cuban Five would have undoubtedly exonerated them. However, the hand of the Bush administration intervened last year, when U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales appealed the Five's victory, to try to overturn the panel's ruling for a new trial.

Unfortunately, the en banc panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals set aside the Cuban Five's victory. It ruled ignominiously on Aug. 9, 2006, that the Five received a fair trial in Miami, and that Judge Lenard properly denied them a change of venue out of Miami.

While George W. Bush unleashes bombs and destruction causing the deaths of Iraqis, Afghanis and U.S. soldiers--all in the name of a supposed war on terror--



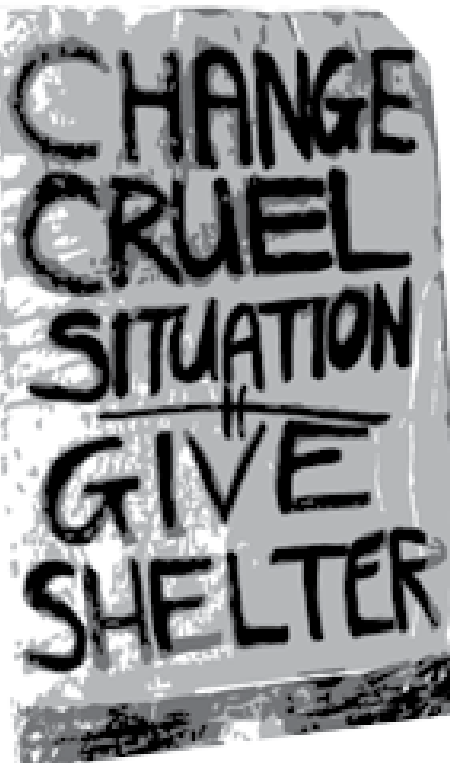


Bernie Williams.

# WOMEN TAKE A STAND:

*Shelter, Housing & Human Rights in Vancouver's DTES!*

## An Interview with Bernie Williams



By Shannon Bundock

On November 19, 2006, a group of over 40 women took action in protest to the severe lack of shelters and social housing for women on the Downtown Eastside (DTES), Vancouver. These women occupied the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC), which has been in operation since 1978, keeping it open and accessible to women 24 hours a day.

The center is regularly open daily until 5pm. The staff and volunteers at the center have been faced with a challenging situation – they see many of the women who use the center sleeping in the streets at night, with nowhere to go. The center doesn't have the funding to stay open 24 hours, despite the desperate need for a 24

women. The Centre reports 4,000 visits from women every month. The Centre has served not only as a warm, dry, safe space, but also a centre of education, advocacy and political action. Support groups for battered women, survivors of rape and violence are run on a regular basis. As well, the centre runs a Learning Group and Popular Education Group, providing literacy classes, First Aid courses and training in public speaking. In addition, the centre has ongoing arts, health and social advocacy workshops, as well as weekly outdoor recreation initiatives. Through all of this the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre has become an invaluable resource and support for thousands of women.

The problem that has forced the DEWC to hold open its doors 24 hours a day is one of funding cuts and attacks on social services for women. In 2001 in BC, all funding to women's centres was slashed to zero by the Provincial Government. Over

the occupation of the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre began, *Fire This Time* had the opportunity to sit down with Bernie Williams, Board member of the DEWC. Below is the short interview with this courageous woman, who is on the frontlines of struggle for women.

**FTT:** Let me know what has been happening at the Downtown Eastside Women's Center over the last 24 hours.

**BW:** What's going on is that we are occupying the Center to keep this place open as a 24 hour safe place for women. Last night we had 43 women here, not counting the women who were sitting. We just wanted to address the issue of homelessness with the women here who have been turned away because there's not enough shelters. There's not a safe place for women to go to. They are left at a really high risk out here. A woman last night, she was beaten. She stayed with us here last night, and she's homeless.

22 years - it's not gotten better. With [the 2010 Olympics] coming, everybody is just painting a different picture of what reality is. Reality is that people are homeless down here. Women don't have social housing. We need properly run places to look after these women. Not people that have Masters' degrees that go on for days or PhD's, we need people who genuinely care and have the compassion to work with these women. You know, I don't get paid for the job I do. I do everything here because I care about these women.

**FTT:** Since this action began have you had any response from the government?

**BW:** I spoke to Jenny Kwan a few hours ago, but she is the only one from the

hour space for women in the area.

The center's administrator, Cynthia Low, the staff, and the board of directors support the occupation, because they've had no success getting money from the city. She told CBC on Monday Nov 20<sup>th</sup>, "We've been trying for the past six months to talk to senior management to talk to different funding managers about the situation. And of course everyone says, 'Yeah, we know it's bad, but there's just no money to be had.'" It would cost about \$450,000 a year to operate the shelter 24 hours a day.

According to Downtown Eastside-based legal group Pivot Legal Society, 514 low-income housing units in Vancouver's downtown core were lost between June 2003 to June 2005. In addition, 295 low-income housing units were lost since June 2005. Projected gains between 2006-2009 are dismal, with 172 new low-income housing units created by 2007 and 125 new low-income single housing units available in 2009. In their 2006 report "Cracks in the Foundation", the Pivot Legal Society found that 3177 people in Vancouver would likely be homeless and on the street by 2010.

The crisis situation facing women on the Downtown Eastside is nothing new. Women are unable to access shelter space as there are no women's only shelters and therefore no space that is secure and safe for women seeking refuge from the streets. Finding safety in the Downtown Eastside is a serious matter for women. On the Downtown Eastside, women are routinely beaten and raped. The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) estimates that more than 500 women have gone missing in the last 20 years.

The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre has been a haven for many of these



Rally organized by the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre. Nov 20th, 2006.

the past five years, efforts have been made by women's groups and their supporters demanding that funding be restored. Mass demonstrations, lobbying, picket lines, letter writing and other efforts have been ignored. In October 2006, another hammer fell when the Federal Government announced a severe cut of 38.5% of the Status of Women budget, removing "women's equality" from the goals of the agency, pulling all funding for advocacy, lobbyists, or general research around women's issues, and finally chopping the head off of the Court Challenges Program. These attacks have forced women to take action, to respond with demands for the services we need, the services we deserve. The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre has set an example for women across BC and Canada to take action in defense of women's rights.

On Monday November 20, 24 hours after

This is not acceptable. This is really inhumane. There are shelters for the men, but the women are the ones who are really suffering, really suffering.

**FTT:** Who is here organizing and taking part in this action?

**BW:** The women from the Downtown Eastside. The members of the Center. And a lot of people that genuinely care about these women, which we're really grateful for.

**FTT:** What are the main demands of this action?

**BW:** The main demands are first to keep this place open as a safe 24 hour place. But we need the money! We need the funds. We need this place, but the flip side to that is that we need social housing. When I walk through the Downtown Eastside - I've been doing this work for

Provincial government that has contacted us. Now we have a woman down here from the city, but nothing yet from the Federal. We need a response from all three levels of government.

**FTT:** What are your plans for the future, where is this going?

**BW:** We are going to stay here. We're not going away. If they still don't come down, then we are going to take these streets. We're going to put tents through the streets. We're going to do whatever we need to do to keep on going.

**FTT:** What message do you want to send to people out there?

**BW:** Well, just come out and support us. These are mothers, these are sisters, these are daughters, these are grandmothers here. They belong to somebody, whatever their circumstances. Whatever happened in their life to make them end up here is really trivial. They are still human beings who have the right to be treated as such. It doesn't matter what kind of lifestyle they have, it has no bearing. They are homeless women.

I feel ashamed to even be a part of this country. I never have recognized myself as a "Canadian", I am a North American Indigenous woman, and I am ashamed to be in this country. I see what happens to these women, who are being violated every minute that these doors are closed, every minute they are being hurt out there. Nobody sees what we see. That is my message. Come out and support us. Rally for these women because you never know when this could happen to you. I never take things for granted and that's my message.

**FTT:** You're all strong women down here. Thank you for the interview.

By Nita Palmer

*"The magnificent Sandinista victory fills our people with joy and at the same time fills the terrorist and genocidal government of the United States with ignominy. That is why both you and the heroic people of Nicaragua deserve our warmest congratulations. Among the people of the United States themselves, you will have many friends, given that to fight for a better world is to fight for hope of life for all peoples."*

-Message from Fidel Castro to newly elected Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. November 8, 2006.

On November 7, 2006, another victory in the tide of progressive change sweeping Latin America occurred with the election

policies. In response to the repression of unions and poor working conditions, workers have risen up in major strikes. In 2004, thousands of students protested for days for increased funding to post-secondary education. At the same time, poorer wages and access to basic services have forced many Nicaraguans to do whatever they can to survive. Child prostitution rates are staggering, particularly among homeless children.

Fed up with conditions of poverty and looking to the successes of their brothers and sisters in other parts of Latin America, Nicaraguans put their hope behind former FSLN leader Ortega. Their hope was that this would be their opportunity to make gains like those of other countries leading progressive change in Latin America,

Sandinista guerilla movement to overthrow the repressive dictatorship. From 1979-1985, Nicaraguan people and the FSLN took their lives and their land into their own hands. Thousands of acres of land were confiscated from rich land owners and redistributed to poor farmers and peasants. Wages were raised for hundreds of thousands of poor workers, rent was reduced by 50% in many places, and major industries were nationalized. The country was set on a course of becoming a country that represented poor workers and farmers. In the leadership of this movement was the FSLN national directorate, of which Daniel Ortega was a main leader.

While these gains were being made, the U.S. reacted to what they saw as a threat to their interests in Latin America by funding



## DANIEL ORTEGA WINS NICARAGUAN ELECTIONS

### *Victory for leftist candidate indicates the will of the masses for change*



Nicaraguan President, Daniel Ortega.

the now-infamous contras in Nicaragua. The contras were counterrevolutionary forces aimed at overthrowing the FSLN government and the gains they had made for people in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas fought against these counterrevolutionary forces for many years.

Despite the major U.S. support of the contras, the Sandinistas won the war. But rather than build on this victory, in 1985 they began a retreat from the progressive gains made by the 1979 revolution. This retreat came along with a change in the mood of the Soviet Union at that time, with more concessions to U.S. imperialism, followed by the USSR's eventual collapse. This was a blow to the confidence of the leadership of the Sandinistas in the revolution. Their confidence in following

Bolivarian revolution through gains in health care programs, literacy, and women's rights, among others. In Bolivia, the poor majority of farmers and workers have pushed for gains such as nationalization of oil and gas production, implemented by president Evo Morales. In Ecuador as well, poor and working people have elected leftist candidate Rafael Correa, who already has promised to begin refining Ecuador's oil in Venezuela. People in Mexico are also demanding change. Millions of poor and working people in Mexico supported progressive candidate Lopez Obrador in the lead-up to this past July's presidential elections. Obrador was defeated by fraudulent elections in which thousands of ballots in his favour were found in garbage dumps, but this has led to rallies of over a million people supporting him,

of Daniel Ortega, leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua. Ortega won the election with a 38% majority over right-wing Eduardo Montealegre of the Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance. The return to the FSLN after 16 years of a pro-U.S. government is a reflection of the failure of the neoliberal policies of capitalist governments that have ravaged Nicaragua since 1990.

#### **Nicaragua: the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere**

Nicaragua's devastating poverty is second only to Haiti, with 80% of people living on less than \$2 per day. The unemployment/underemployment rates total 42%. One in three children suffers from malnutrition, and only 18% of women have access to reproductive health services. Forty percent of the population does not have access to safe drinking water, and three-quarters do not have access to sanitation services. These staggering poverty statistics are coupled with Nicaragua's broken economy. According to the U.S. State Department, 42% of Nicaragua's GDP in 2004 came from foreign aid. Nicaragua holds the world's highest per capita debt of \$1,400 USD. The majority of Nicaragua's GDP is pumped into paying off its massive foreign debt, resulting in health care and education spending that is 250% lower than spending on paying off the debt. Nicaragua's poverty is a result of exploitation by imperialist countries and neoliberal policies. This is shown by the fact that spending on education, for example, has dropped by more than three quarters since the 1990 election of a pro-big business, capitalist government. Poor and working Nicaraguans feel the hardest blows of this exploitation.

#### **Ortega – A bit of hope for dispossessed Nicaraguan masses**

The years since 1990 have been marked with protests of Nicaraguans against neoliberal

like Cuba, Venezuela, and Bolivia. By electing Ortega, people in Nicaragua were electing the best opportunity they had for change. They were electing Ortega with the hope that he could bring back some of the gains made under the FSLN after the 1979 revolution. More than any other candidate, there is hope that after Ortega's sixteen-year absence, he could reverse the agenda that the pro-imperialist ruling class of Nicaragua has held since 1990.

The battle to elect Ortega was not an easy one, due to massive U.S. intervention throughout the election process. The U.S. State Department lists one of its key policy goals for Nicaragua as "developing a free market economy with respect for intellectual and property rights" – in other words, ensuring that Nicaragua remains an open door for U.S. investment and plundering. The U.S. saw Ortega as a threat to that, and before the elections "Washington had previously warned that Mr. Ortega's election could lose Nicaragua US aid". (BBC News, Nov. 8) U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua Paul Trivelli also participated directly in trying to influence the outcome of elections, by endorsing the current right-wing Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance (ALN) government, and trying to unite right-wing forces in the country behind the ALN. But Nicaraguans showed that their desire for change was stronger than the U.S.'s intervention, and on November 8<sup>th</sup>, Daniel Ortega was elected Nicaragua's new president.

#### **¡No Pasarán! Ortega and the Sandanista Movement**

¡No Pasarán! – Only Over Our Dead Bodies! – was the rallying cry against U.S. imperialism throughout Nicaragua's Sandinista years of 1979-1990. By 1979, Nicaraguans had had enough of the 43 years of the brutal U.S.-supported dictatorship of the Somoza family. Masses of poor and working people joined together with the

politics of the revolution that was being carried out in Cuba faltered and failed. Eventually, this shattered confidence of the leadership and the halted gains of the revolution led to a crumbling FSLN, which was voted out of office and replaced by the right-wing National Opposition Union in 1990. The cry of "¡No Pasarán!" fell silent.

#### **People in Latin America want change**

Nicaraguans are not alone in their vote for change. They are remembering the later-defeated 1979 revolutions in Grenada as well as in Nicaragua. Following the lead of Cuba's 48-year-old revolution and the current revolutionary process in Venezuela and Bolivia, Nicaragua and now Ecuador have been charting a path of progressive change. In Brazil too, President Lula has been re-elected because he is the best option Brazilians see for progressive change. Brazil is now developing economic co-operation projects, such as the newly-opened Orinoco Bridge, with Venezuela. Venezuelans are seeing the gains of their

and a mobilization of people in Mexico to demand progressive change.

A great tide of change is creeping its way over Latin America – a tide of millions looking for change and demanding an end to neoliberalism and exploitation. Nicaraguans have now added their force to this tide. They hold a unique historical opportunity for change in their hands – an opportunity that could be realized and manifested by ALBA, the Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America and the Caribbean. ALBA is the challenge and alternative to the neoliberal and U.S.-controlled FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) that is put forward by Cuba, Venezuela, and Bolivia. These countries are joining together against neoliberal exploitation. Nicaragua's vote for Ortega is a vote for change, and the opportunity for implementing this change is with ALBA. Meanwhile, working people around the world must demand:

**U.S. Hands off Nicaragua!**

**U.S. Hands off Latin America!**



The triumph of the revolution, main square of Managua, June 20th 1979.

# Building an Effective Antiwar Movement: An Open Letter to Stopwar.ca

Dear Members, Coordinating Committee and Co-chairs of Stopwar.ca,

On October 28<sup>th</sup> 2006 I attended the rally in Vancouver organized by Stopwar.ca. During the march and rally I observed something with I consider very dangerous and which caused me grave concern. I witnessed indifference and a lack of sensitivity from Stopwar.ca organizers towards serious attempts to thoroughly undermined the goal and cause of the Oct 28 action.

During the march a group called "Third Camp" had a large banner which stated "NO TO US MILITARISM – NO TO ISLAMIC TERRORISM". This banner also was displayed prominently on the stage at the rally. While I understand that it is difficult to remove banners or signs from the march, I do not understand why this banner was allowed on stage. In addition, a very large banner was displayed at the top of the stage which stated "JOIN US TO STOP DARFUR GENOCIDE". This is basically US propaganda in order to justify a military intervention in Sudan either through the UN or through the US directly. Again, I found this confusing. Neither of these slogans are anti-war, they are in fact pro-war, and likely very confusing to those attending the march and rally.

This confusion was compounded for me when I was approached by a Stopwar.ca organizer who asked me to remove a banner I was holding on the stage which said "Mobilization Against War & Occupation". I asked "Why?", because I know that Stopwar.ca and MAWO share many



Banners at the Stopwar.ca demonstration, Oct 28 2006, Vancouver BC.

sight by the organizers. However, it was clear that the Stopwar.ca organizers were hyper-sensitive to the set up of the stage on Oct 28<sup>th</sup>, which was reflected in their asking the MAWO banner to move.

Why was Stopwar.ca indifferent to these banners? Is it acceptable to Stopwar.ca that "Third Camp" can set up an Islamophobic banner? Was the "JOIN US TO STOP DARFUR GENOCIDE" banner acceptable to

stand for the unity of the oppressed people of the world against the oppressor. In Canada it is especially important that working, poor and all progressive organizations take a clear stand against Islamophobia. We need to take a clear and strong stand in defense of all people under imperialist assault, Muslim or non-Muslim.

The second issue that arose, on the question of Darfur, is also impor-



dangerous and divisive political intervention by the reactionary "Third Camp". They were able to come onto the stage of an anti-war rally with a pro-war message. On top of this, confusion was further stirred up with the decidedly pro-war demand displayed at the top of the stage "JOIN US TO STOP DARFUR GENOCIDE". These two pro-war interventions were allowed to be present – and prominent – throughout the entire program of the Stopwar.ca rally. This sloppiness will no doubt put into question the seriousness of the leadership and organizers of Stopwar.ca about building an effective antiwar movement.

I don't agree with the ongoing factionalism of Stopwar.ca towards MAWO, but for the sake of unity of the antiwar movement I have tolerated it. However, there is no justification that the Stopwar.ca organizers were so sensitive to MAWO on Oct 28<sup>th</sup> and so tolerant and conciliatory towards these two reactionary and

cal problem at a Stopwar.ca event. On March 18, 2006, Stopwar.ca organized a rally in Vancouver for the anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq, which MAWO endorsed and built. On the stage at this rally were signs that said "No to War, No to Terror" written beside large image of the racist, Islamophobic Danish cartoon of Prophet Mohammed with a bomb on his head. This cartoon was condemned by the Muslim world and peace-loving people internationally. On top of this no

major newspaper in Canada or Britain would print these cartoons. Even Jack Straw, Britain's Foreign Secretary at the time stated that the publication of these cartoons was "unnecessary, it has been insensitive, it has been disrespectful and it has been wrong". I was utterly shocked to see these offensive, divisive and humiliating images displayed so prominently at, of all things, an antiwar rally. I believe that the banners of October 28<sup>th</sup> are a continuation of this very misguided and dangerous pattern.

I urge Stopwar.ca to take a more serious and principled approach. We must work to build an antiwar movement in Vancouver and in Canada, that has a clear message against war and occupation. We must unite all peace-loving people against the horrors of the era of war and occupation.

I hope that you are able to take this letter to heart and consider the points



March 18 2006 Stopwar.ca Rally. Explanation of photo in the letter.

common demands and I could not see a political problem with this banner remaining where it was. I received no answer to this question. Stopwar.ca co-chair Mable Elmore approached me and repeated that I must remove the banner from the stairs. She insisted that as organizers of the rally, the stairs were part of their stage and they had jurisdiction over them. We responded positively to the request and moved off of the stairs beside the stage at that point.

Within minutes of moving off of the stairs, "Third Camp" took the place that MAWO had been occupying. This group "Third Camp" set up their banner with the demands: "NO TO US MILITARISM – NO TO ISLAMIC TERRORISM".

Our banner against war and occupation had just been forced out, and welcomed in its place? A reactionary, Islamophobic, war-mongering banner. I was shocked.

In another circumstance, I may have accepted that this was a tragic over-

Stopwar.ca? Does Stopwar.ca support intervention in Darfur?

I believe that both of these slogans are against the principle of the antiwar and peace movement.

The "NO TO ISLAMIC TERRORISM" banner was a direct, clear attack on the Muslim community, spouting the same racist, intolerant, reactionary rhetoric as the Bush Administration itself. How can we build a broad, united antiwar movement while allowing this Islamophobic attack? How can we unite with the Muslim community if such hate is permitted? Would the Canadian Islamic Congress, one of the initiators of the Oct 28<sup>th</sup> call-out in Canada, have appreciated such a banner being present at this rally?

Islamophobia is a tool of division between people in imperialist countries like Canada and people in the "Muslim-world" and it has no place in the anti-war movement. The antiwar movement, and all progressive people and their organizations must

tant for the antiwar movement to address. The UN Security Council adopted resolution 1706 on Aug. 31 calling for the deployment of more than 20,000 UN troops to Sudan. Such intervention has been supported by the imperialist governments of the US and Canada, among others. However, mass demonstrations in Sudan have opposed such intervention, including a protest in Khartoum on Sept 20<sup>th</sup> against UN resolution 1706.

Why have so many people opposed the intervention? Well, just as the protests against invasion in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Haiti, the people of Sudan protest because they do not believe that the gunships of the US, or the boots of UN troops are working in their interest. Hundreds of years of colonial genocide has proven that the people of Sudan will not receive benevolent aid from imperialist forces, or their organization - the UN.

The antiwar movement cannot be confused by the crocodile tears of George W Bush and imperialist leaders. The so-called "humanitarian mission" proposed for Darfur is but a door to a new era of intervention in Africa. We need only look at the "humanitarian mission" into Iraq, to bring "liberation and freedom" to Iraqis, to see the future results of a mission into Sudan. I urge Stopwar.ca to take a position on intervention in Sudan, to approach the threats to Sudan critically and to not get swept away by this clever imperialist campaign.

Now, if what I witnessed at the October 28<sup>th</sup> demonstration was a result of a lackadaisical attitude, then it shows that Stopwar.ca is not taking these interventions seriously. As a result this sloppiness allowed for a

dangerous tendencies in the progressive movement.

I must also explain why I decided to write this as an open letter, it is because this is not the first time that I have witnessed this type of politi-

raised as friendly advice for building a stronger, broader, more effective antiwar movement.

In Solidarity,  
Shannon Bundock  
Co-Chair, Mobilization Against War & Occupation

## Sudan:

Continued From Page 13

4 million Koreans who died in the 1950-53 Korean War, which was fought under a UN flag. The UN ripped apart Palestine to create Israel in 1948, and has shown itself to be completely complicit in creation of the largest refugee crisis in the world. Over 6 million Palestinians are refugees thanks to a UN mandate. Now they will solve Darfur's refugee's problems?

## Self-Determination Now!

Most importantly though: Do we think that Sudanese people are completely ignorant to all of these international manoeuvres? That they don't understand their own resources, or their country's position? That they've been walking around with their eyes and ears closed to all of these invasions and occupations the entire time? Sudanese people are aware of what these foreign forces desire, and have staged consistent demonstrations against foreign intervention in their internal affairs.

Do we also see the Sudanese people as completely helpless? We must remember that these are the people who not so long ago overthrew British imperialism and became an independent country in 1956, overcoming Britain's attempt to essentially divide them into two separate North and

South colonies. In 1985, they also staged a general strike in the capital of Khartoum which paralyzed the country and brought an end to the US sponsored dictatorship of Colonel Jaafar Nimeiri. They are not foreign to fighting for their rights.

Sudan is an independent and sovereign nation, and its internal issues are the property of the capable hands of its residents. People around the world must trust in the people of Sudan and undertake the vital and important task of exposing these pro-invasion campaigns for what they are: an extension of war and occupation to Africa. If our concern is really that of humanity, we will undertake to fight alongside oppressed people from Kabul to Khartoum against what is obviously the largest "humanitarian disaster" we face today: imperialist war and occupation.

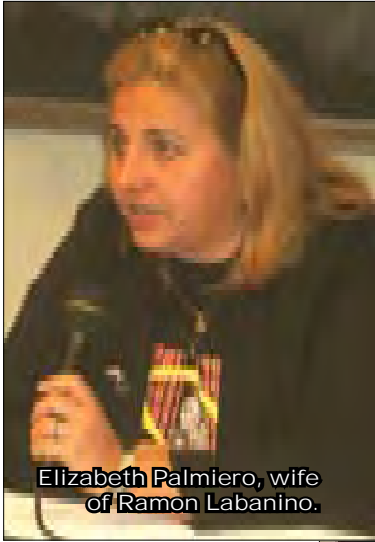
**Imperialists Hands Off Sudan!  
Imperialists Hands Off Darfur!**



# FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE CUBAN 5

## Recieve a Warm Embrace Across Canada!

### Irma Gonzalez & Elizabeth Palmiero Tour a Great Success



Elizabeth Palmiero, wife of Ramon Labanino.



Irma Gonzalez, daughter of Ramon Gonzalez.

By Noah Fine  
& Lindsay Clarke

From the end of October to the beginning of November 2006, two heroes traveled across Canada to deliver a message of love, hope, and solidarity from 5 great anti-terrorist Cuban fighters. They were Irma Gonzalez, the 22-year-old daughter of Rene Gonzalez and Elizabeth Palmiero, wife of Ramon Labanino. Irma's father and Elizabeth's husband are two Cuban men in a group known as the Cuban 5. These 5 men were sent by the Cuban government to Miami to investigate right-wing groups who were carrying out acts of terrorism against Cuba. The 5 collected evidence against the terrorist groups and presented it to the U.S. government. Instead of the U.S. imprisoning the terror-

mittee - Vancouver (FC5C), Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) and Canadian Cuban Friendship Association (CCFA). First was a stop at Capilano College in North Vancouver, which has a student committee that has been organizing consistently to free the Cuban 5 for the past three years. The event at Capilano College was organized by the Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Capilano, the Capilano Students' Union, and sponsored by the Capilano College History Department, Political Studies Department, Global Stewardship Program and the Latin American Studies Program.

Prior to the event there was a press conference with Irma and Elizabeth that brought out four reporters from Lower Mainland college and university press as well as Vancouver city press that covered the event.

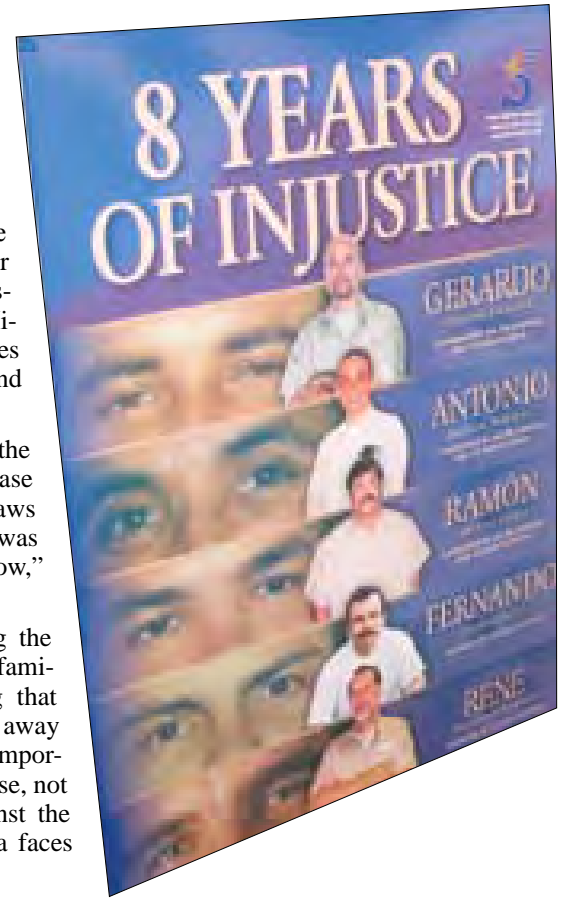
The event was opened by Jane Ivanova (coordinator of the Free the Cuban 5

event, which hosted over 120 people who came to hear the story of these women and their imprisoned family members. The event was co-MCd by Tamara Hansen (coordinator of VCSC and an executive of the CNC) and Ray Viaud (President of the CCFA). Both MCs gave a warm welcoming to the two honoured guests and invited former Vancouver city councillor Tim Louis, followed by coordinator of the FC5C Noah Fine, to welcome the guests on behalf of people in Vancouver.

Irma spoke first, explaining the events that led Cuba to send her father and four other men to investigate terrorism against Cuba in Miami, and the huge list of injustices that followed their arrest, trial and incarceration.

"We have been going throughout the world to raise awareness on the case of the 5. We are asking only for laws of the U.S. to be applied. If this was done, they would be free by now," concluded Irma.

Elizabeth spoke next, connecting the audience with the struggle the families had gone through, knowing that their loved ones have been locked away unjustly. She also explained the importance of organizing around this case, not just to free the 5, but also against the constant threats and attacks Cuba faces from the U.S. today.



The audience at the SFU Harbour Centre event in Vancouver November 2nd.

ists in Miami, they imprisoned the 5 heroes who had exposed the U.S.-based terrorist groups. Today, the Cuban 5 political prisoners continue to be held unjustly in U.S. jails on wrongful convictions.

The cross-Canada tour, with stops in Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, Windsor, Vancouver and Victoria, organized by the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC), featured Irma and Elizabeth, who demanded justice not only for their imprisoned family members but also for the Cuban people, who have faced Miami-based terrorism for 48 years.

On Thursday November 2nd, we in Vancouver had the great honour to host two events featuring our heroic Cuban visitors, Irma and Elizabeth. The Vancouver events were organized by the Free the Cuban 5 Com-

mittee-Capilano), followed by Gordon Bailey (Sociology Professor at Capilano College), who gave a welcoming on behalf of the faculty of Capilano College to Irma and Elizabeth. With over 120 students in attendance, this event was an important and successful way to further educate students and faculty on the case of the 5.

Second stop was the Vancouver citywide

The last event on the Canada-wide tour was in Toronto with Worker to Worker Canada-Cuba Labour Solidarity Conference. This event was an opportunity for working people in Canada to learn from the incredible gains made by working people in Cuba for human rights, democracy and humanity, with a special section featuring Irma sharing the case of the Cuban 5.

Vancouver will continue the struggle for freedom of the Cuban 5. While in Vancouver, Elizabeth compared Vancouver with Venezuela for its successful campaigning for the 5 so far - a great complement, and a great task to live up to!

This tour emphasized the importance of the case of these 5 anti-terrorist Cuban heroes for people in Canada. The case of the 5 is a true case of the fight of humanity against U.S. terrorism that threatens the world over. People in Canada have a great responsibility to continue to raise awareness about the case of the 5 Cuban heroes and we in Vancouver will continue to organize and educate people in Vancouver, British Columbia and Canada until the 5 are rightfully freed.

For more information about the case of the Cuban 5 and for upcoming events, please check out the websites at:

[www.canadian-networkoncuba.ca](http://www.canadian-networkoncuba.ca)  
[www.vancubasolidarity.com/freethefivevan.html](http://www.vancubasolidarity.com/freethefivevan.html)



The audience at the Capilano College afternoon event in North Vancouver November 2nd.

#### Buttons in Defence of the 5 Heroes

Available for 50 Cents ea.

To Order Contact:  
Free the Cuban 5 Committee  
Vancouver  
604.719.6947 or  
cuban5\_van@yahoo.com



#### Essential Readings on the Case of the Cuban 5

Available for \$1 ea.

To Order Contact:  
Free the Cuban 5 Committee  
Vancouver  
604.719.6947  
or  
cuban5\_van@yahoo.com



# IMPERIALIST AGRESSION & THE ERA OF WAR & OCCUPATION

## MAWO HOLDS 8th SUCCESSFUL ANTIWAR CONFERENCE!

By Kira Koshelanyk & Nicole Burton

As part of the October 28-29 International Weekend of Action for "US/UK out of Iraq!" and following a cross-Canada day of demonstrations demanding "US/UK Out of Iraq" and "Canadian Troops Out of Afghanistan!", Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) held an all-day antiwar conference. Nearly 100 people participated in the conference at the Britannia Community Centre to assess MAWO's work of building an effective movement against war and occupation. Through workshops, presentations and discussions, the conference focused on today's current imperialist occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the threat of imperialist expansion toward Iran, and a multimedia slideshow presentation on the July-August 2006 US-Israeli invasion of Lebanon by Vancouver-based activist Dr Warif Laila.

The conference opening was delivered by John Waller, Coordinator of the North American Caravan of Pastors for Peace, the largest Cuba solidarity organization in the U.S. As a long-time social justice activist and organizer in both Britain and North America, he gave a historical perspective by outlining the record of political developments that

have led to the current era of war and occupation.

"With the election of Bush in 2000, this wasn't just about an 'election of the people', but a decision made by the US ruling class majority that not only Bush, but a certain political and military leadership was correct for the era we are living in: they had the vision that US imperialism must become far more aggressive, must take over the world's oil resources, invade Afghanistan and Iraq, roll back the Iranian revolution, and much more." John concluded, "To use the same words as Fidel, I believe a better world is possible. But so too is a worse world. And what we've seen in the opening of this era of war and occupation is a harbinger of what that horrible world looks like."

Shannon Bundock, Co-chair of Mobilization Against War and Occupation, outlined the roots and causes of the occupation of Iraq in the first workshop of the day. At the end of her talk she emphasized that, "As people living outside of Iraq, who have an interest in ending destruction, human suffering and this criminal war we must continue with support, solidarity and echoes of the demands against occupation and for self-determination. The failure of the US/UK occupation of Iraq will be a massive blow to the imperialist agenda - not just for the US but for every country that is currently intervening in, occupying or waging war on an oppressed nation. And on the other side, the defeat of the occupation

in Iraq will be a huge victory for the struggle of oppressed people."

Nita Palmer, MAWO's acting secretary, spoke on the roots and causes of the occupation of Afghanistan, and specifically Canada's leading role. She closed by emphasizing that, "the antiwar movement in Canada must include the critical demand of 'Canada out of Afghanistan', and 'Self-Determination for Afghanistan' now," she said. "So too, are we using the call for an independent public inquiry into the Canadian war drive in order to unite with other progressive groups and individuals across Canada against the occupation."

Ali Yerevani, participant in the 1979 Iranian revolution and editor of the Fire This Time Newspaper, gave an analysis of the overall strategy of the US in the Middle East in order to understand the roots of imperialist hostility toward Iran, and the basis for the current imperialist preparation for intervention in Iran. He emphasized that after the unsuccessful Israel-US war against Lebanon and Hezbollah this summer, the US government had to adjust its strategy to isolate Iran, and build an international coalition for war against Iran. Part of this analysis was that the invasion of Lebanon acted a probe for the US before taking the next step of military action against Iran. He closed saying that the defeat of the US and Israel in Lebanon by Hezbollah's political and military forces and

its allies gave the US government no other option but to readjust and re-strategize its plan for regime change in Iran. Without a doubt this defeat increased overall the confidence of the Middle East masses against imperialists and clearly exposed the short comings and inability of imperialist countries and Israel to defeat the oppressed masses of this region.

In closing the last workshop of the day, Ivan Drury, coordinator of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice, said, "To build an independent antiwar movement means building a movement that is class-conscious and internationalist. It means throwing away the nationalist diversions of 'defending Canada's sovereignty' against the US and recognizing Canada as an imperialist country." He emphasized the need for a broad, expanding movement that can unite people on

the demands of self-determination for all oppressed nations.

Through these workshops and presentations, the day served as an important opportunity for progressive people in the Lower Mainland to dig deeply into the crises of war and destruction that are impacting humanity today. While in those eight hours, participants were able to gain a better understanding of the world around them and where we are in the anti-war movement are in relation to this. But it was only scratching the surface of the work ahead of us in Vancouver, Canada, and beyond.



Dr. Warif Laila speaks at the MAWO conference.



Discussion period at the conference.

## Hold on to Your Protest Signs as Support and Action to Free the 5 Cuban Heroes in Vancouver Continues to Grow!

By Noah Fine

12<sup>th</sup> Protest in as many months in Vancouver to Free the Cuban 5

On November 9<sup>th</sup> 2006, 40 people gathered together at the U.S. consulate to demand "Free the Cuban 5 Now!" Speaking at the protest was Andrew Barry, a student at the University of Victoria and an organizer with Victoria Goods for Cuba. Andrew spoke about the hypocrisy of the U.S.'s "war on terror" while imprisoning 5 fighters of terrorism.

Next up Aaron Mercredi, a board member of Redwire Native Youth Media and organizer with Indigenous Rights and Action Project (IRAP), connected the struggle of the Cuban 5 to that of Leonard Peltier, an activist in defense of Indigenous rights who has been illegally imprisoned for over 30 years. "The case of the Cuban 5 shares many commonalities with that of Leonard Peltier" Mercredi stated. "They had the same mission, to defend their people from U.S. terrorism."

The program of the picket was continued by Felipe, organizer with Friends and Relatives of Political Prisoners in Mexico. Felipe called for the immediate release of all political prisoners. The final speaker was John Waller,



coordinator for the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba. John closed the action stating that justice will be done for the 5. As part of a monthly protest campaign in Vancouver, this action represented the energy and willpower of people in Vancouver to demand justice in the case of the 5 Cuban Heroes.

**Organize, Educate, Mobilize: The case of the Cuban 5 and the road to justice**

For over eight years now, people fighting for peace around the world have been waiting anxiously, organizing events, and getting people involved in a campaign that touches all people under torment and terrorism by the U.S. government: the campaign to free the Cuban 5.

They are in prison for defending the people of Cuba and people of the U.S. from terrorism organized by Miami based anti-Cuban organizations that are

funded by the U.S. government. These groups have murdered over 3500 people through hotel bombings, poisoning of water and livestock, and most notably the in-air bombing of a Cuban passenger plane in 1976 that killed all 73 people on board.

Despite a declaration by the U.N working group on Arbitrary and Illegal Detentions that demanded a retrial for the 5, the decision of the original trial in Miami, where no fair trial to do with Cuba could be performed, was upheld.

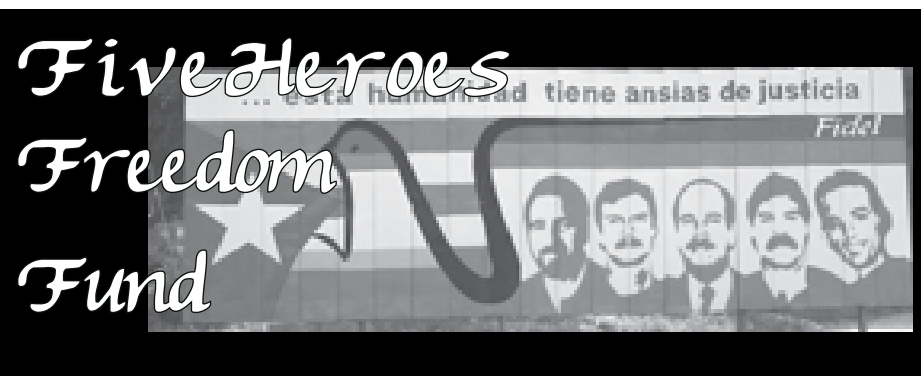
No matter which way the path to freedom of the Cuban 5 goes, we must continue to have hope that justice will prevail in this case of humanity against U.S. terrorism. We have no option: we must fight for these heroes until they are free.

**Join us: December 12-27 International Days of Action to Free the Cuban 5**

Dec. 12-27 will mark the 5<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the unjust trial and sentencing of the Cuban 5. In Vancouver we will be holding events to coincide with these days of action on December 12<sup>th</sup> with a forum called "U.S. Terrorism Against Cuba and the Freedom Fight of the 5 Cuban Heroes", as well as our monthly protest action at the U.S. consulate in Vancouver on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

For more information about the case of the Cuban 5, to become active or for upcoming events in Vancouver please contact us at:

**604-719-6947**  
**cuban5\_van@yahoo.com**  
**www.vancubasolidarity.com/freethethefivevan.html**



Since the imprisonment of the 5 Cuban Heroes in 1998, the biggest roadblock for the case has been a complete media blackout. The National Committee to Free the Cuban Five in the U.S. has launched a \$250,000 fund for a mass national media campaign. They are asking all individuals and organizations to do whatever possible in the raising of

this urgently needed money.

To make a donation or to find out more about the "Five Heroes Freedom Fund" please check out

[www.freethethefive.org](http://www.freethethefive.org) or  
[www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca](http://www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca)



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Second, according to our law, the land is not private property that can be owned by any individual. In our worldview, land is a collective right. It is held in common, for the benefit of all. The land is actually a sacred trust, placed in our care, for the sake of the coming generations. We must protect the land. We must draw strength and healing from the land. If an individual, family or clan has the exclusive right to use and occupy land, they also have a stewardship responsibility to respect and join in the community's right to protect the land from abuse.

We have a duty to utilize the land in certain ways that advance our Original Instructions. All must take responsibility for the health of our Mother.

Our ancestors faced overwhelming odds and relentless pressure to give up our lands. We all know that unscrupulous measures were employed to seduce our ancestors into "selling" the land. At other times, outright fraud took place, as was

acknowledged in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The agreements we recognize reflect an intention to share land, and to lease land, within the context of the Covenant Chain relationship that our nations maintain with the Crown.

Our wampum belts, treaty council documents and oral history inform us that we always retained the right to hunt, fish, and gather upon all of our lands. This reflects the spirit of sharing that we expect to continue, and is another example of the Dish with One Spoon.

We seek justice in our long-standing land rights issues. We seek an accurate accounting of the use and investment of the funds held by the Crown on our behalf, and land transactions conducted by the Crown involving our lands. For nearly two hundred years our Chiefs have been asking for such accounting and justice. Generations of our elders have passed away with these matters unresolved. It is time to end the injustice.

Our faith in the Canadian people is

strong, as we feel that the majority of Canadians also want to see justice on these matters. However, their elected representatives and public servants have failed to act effectively to address and resolve these matters. It is time to lift the cloud of denial and to wipe away the politics that darken the vision of the future. It is time we are heard clearly, and our cases should be addressed with utmost good faith and respect. We firmly believe that if we have respect and trust, we will find mutually agreeable solutions that will reflect our long-standing friendship.

We want the land that is ours. We are not interested in approving fraudulent disposessions of the past. We are not interested in selling land. We want the Crown to keep its obligations to treaties, and ensure all Crown governments – federal, provincial and municipal – are partners in those obligations. We want an honourable relationship with Canada.

That relationship, however, must be based on the principles that were set in place when our original relationship with the Crown was created.

That is the rule of law that we seek. It involves the first law of Canada - the law that Canada inherited from both France and Britain. It is the law of nations to respect the treaties, to not steal land, or take advantage of indigenous peoples by legal trickery. As the Supreme Court of Canada has frequently stated, where treaties are involved, the honour of the Crown is always at stake.

We seek to renew the existing relationship that we had with Crown prior to 1924. That relationship is symbolized by the Tehontaten-sonterontahkwa ("The thing by which they link arms") also known as the Silver Covenant Chain of Peace and Friendship. Our ancestors met repeatedly to polish that chain, to renew its commitments, to reaffirm our friendship and to make sure that the future generations could live in peace, and allow the land to provide its bounty for the well-being of all of the people. The Covenant Chain symbolizes our treaty relationship, also symbolized by Tekani Teyothata'tye Kaswénta (Two Row Wampum) which affirms the inherent sovereignty and distinctness of our governments. An essential part of the relationship is our commitment to resolve matters through good-faith negotiation between our governments, including consultation on any plans which might affect the other government or its people.

In any land issues, we want it understood that the following principles will govern any actions taken by the Haudenosaunee Council of Chiefs of the Grand River Territory:

- 1) The land is sacred to us. It defines our identities, belief system, languages and way of life.
- 2) We hold the aboriginal and treaty title to our lands collectively.
- 3) Our treaty relationship with the Crown is still alive and in force and

directs our conduct in our relationship to Canada. Within this relationship, the terms of the treaties continue to bind both our government and the Crown.

4) We require a careful accounting for the Crown's dealing with our lands, and the return of any lands that were improperly or illegally taken from our ancestors.

5) We require an accounting for the funds administered or held by the Crown for the Six Nations people, and restitution of any funds unaccounted for.

6) It is not only within the context of our treaty relationship with the Crown that we see justification for such accounting and restitution. Canadian and international law is clear on the right of the Haudenosaunee to seek justice on these matters.

7) In any agreements with the Crown concerning land our goal is to promote and protect a viable economy for our people on our land – an economy that will be culturally appropriate, environmentally sustainable, and not injurious to our people and our neighbours.

Our fundamental approach is that Six Nations lands will come under the jurisdiction, management and control of Six Nations people. The federal and provincial governments must not impose jurisdictional, policing, taxation, and/or economic activities as part of the land rights settlement.

Our people, our laws, and our government have survived by being thoughtful, respectful, diligent and practical. In our relations with the Crown, and in any negotiations concerning land and the resolution of land-related issues, we will continue to apply those principles.

**New Years Eve Party**  
**48** Years of the Cuban Revolution  
**8 pm**  
 Our Community Bikes  
 3233 Main St  
 17th @ Main  
 Tickets: \$5-10 sliding scale  
 Co-organized by:  
 Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba-VCSC  
 & The Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver  
 778 882 5223 - cubacommittees@yahooc.ca  
 www.vancouvercubasolidarity.com

**International Day of Action**  
 Marking the 5th Anniversary of the Unjust Trial of the Cuban 5  
**U.S. Terrorism**  
**Against Cuba and the**  
**Freedom Fight of the**  
**5 Cuban Heroes**  
**Tuesday Dec. 12**  
**6:30pm**  
 Film \* Forum \* Poetry \* Discussion  
 SFU Harbour Center  
 515 W Hastings St.  
 Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver  
 www.vancouvercubasolidarity.com/free-the-cuban-5  
 604-719-6947

**80 MORE YEARS!**  
**MINVA FIDEL!**  
 CELEBRATING FIDEL'S BIRTHDAY & THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE LANDING OF THE GRAMMA  
 FREE CULTURAL NIGHT FEATURING FOOD, FILM, MUSIC & DANCING  
**80 MORE YEARS!**  
 Saturday  
 dec 2  
 unitarian church  
 (49th ave. & oak st)  
 6 : 30 pm  
 organized by:  
 the social justice committee of the unitarian church  
 Vancouver communities in solidarity with cuba (vcsc)  
 free the cuban 5 committee - vancouver  
 778-882-5223 | cubacommittees@yahoo.ca

**FREE THE CUBAN 5**  
**POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD IN U.S. JAILS!**  
**PICKET ACTION**  
**at the**  
**U.S CONSULATE**  
 (1075 W. Pender @ Thurlow)  
**TUESDAY - DEC 19**  
**3:00 - 4:00**  
 Organized by:  
 Free the Cuban 5 Committee - Vancouver  
 For more info about the trial of the 5 Cuban men  
 arrested for protesting their protest from American consulates  
 the 604-719-6947  
 E-mail: cuban5.vancouver@yahooc.ca  
 Web: www.vancouvercubasolidarity.com/free-the-cuban-5

# EVENTS and ACTIONS

## VANCOUVER

Saturday Dec 2  
**Stop the Attacks On Gaza!**  
 VIGIL  
 4pm  
 Vancouver Art Gallery

Saturday Dec 2  
**Commemoration of the Montreal Massacre**  
 Speakers, films, panel discussions  
 10am-6pm  
 Vancouver Public Library  
 Org'd by: Rape Relief

Sunday Dec 3  
**Protest war criminal, former Israeli PM Ehud Barak**  
 4pm  
 Schara Tzedek Synagogue, 3476 Oak St.,  
 Org'd by the Canada Palestine Association and the Palestine Community Centre.

Wednesday Dec 6  
**Rally for Women's Rights**  
 6:30pm to 8pm  
 Vancouver Public Library North Side – 350 W Georgia  
 Org'd by: Rape Relief

Sunday Dec 10  
**Homes Now!**

Housing Takeover  
 2PM  
 Pigeon Park (Carrall St @ Hastings St)  
 Org'd by: Anti Poverty Committee

Tuesday Dec 12  
**US Terrorism Against Cuba and the Freedom Fight of the 5 Cuban Heroes**  
 Film, Forum, Poetry  
 6:30PM  
 SFU Harbour Centre (515 W Hastings)  
 Org'd by: Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver

Tuesday Dec 19  
**Free The Cuban 5**  
 Picket Action  
 3:00-4:00pm  
 US Consulate  
 1075 W Pender  
 Org'd by: Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver



Sunday Dec 31  
**Celebrate 48yrs of the Cuban Revolution**  
 New Years Eve Party  
 8pm  
 Our Community Bikes  
 3283 Main St  
 Org'd by: Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba & Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver

## OTTAWA

Saturday Dec 2  
**Solidarity Action with Steelworkers**  
 11am  
 Meet at 11am at the USW office, 2285 St. Laurent Blvd., Ottawa, Ont.

## TORONTO

Saturday Dec 2  
**Demonstration In Solidarity With The People Of Gaza**  
 1:00 pm  
 Israeli Consulate, 180 Bloor Street  
 Org'd by: Toronto Stop the War Coalition

Tuesday Dec 5  
**Voices of Resistance: Muslim Women on War, Faith and Sexuality**  
 6:30pm - 8:30 pm  
 The Centre for Women and Trans People @ U of T  
 563 Spadina Ave., Room 100

Friday Dec 8  
**A Benefit for the War Resisters Support**

**Campaign**  
**An Evening of Original Songs**  
 8pm  
 Renaissance Cafe, 1938 Danforth Ave  
 Org'd by: Toronto Songwriters Association Presents

Friday Dec 8  
**Women, War and Afghanistan: Challenging the myth that the war in Afghanistan is a feminist war.**  
 Public Meeting  
 7:00pm - 9:00pm  
 Concord Cafe 937 Bloor street west.  
 Org'd by: New Socialist Group and the Socialist Project

## WINNIPEG

Saturday Dec 2  
**Join the International Day of Action to Stop the Attacks on Gaza**  
 1:00 pm  
 Manitoba Legislature  
 Org'd by: the Canada-Palestine Support Network-Winnipeg (CanPalNet-Wpg), Peace Alliance Winnipeg (PAW) and Jews for a Just Peace-Winnipeg (JJP-Wpg).

## Distribute Revolutionary Change in Your Area!

For distribution of **Fire This Time** in your area, across BC, and internationally, please contact:

Mike Chimenti  
 Publicity and Distribution Coordinator  
 Phone: (604) 518-5009  
 Email: [distro@firethistime.net](mailto:distro@firethistime.net)



## Also Available from FIRE THIS TIME



For more pamphlets available from Fire This Time Contact:  
 Mike Chimenti (604) 518-5009 [distro@firethistime.net](mailto:distro@firethistime.net)  
 Or view all available titles at [www.firethistime.net](http://www.firethistime.net)

**FRANK PAUL MEMORIAL RALLY**  
**PUBLIC INQUIRY NOW!**

**WED DEC 6 3 PM**

377 E. 2ND AVE. ALLEY BEHIND VANCOUVER DETOX 9:30

**MEET AT MAIN STREET SKYTRAIN**  
 Bring Regalia, Signs, Drums, Rattles, Banners

Ceremonial burning by Vern Bolton, Derek Wilson, Old Hands.

**RALLY FOR FRANK PAUL & ABORIGINALS WHO HAVE BEEN MALTREATED OR WHO HAVE DIED IN POLICE CUSTODY**

Countless people die, are beaten, sexually assaulted, disappear, or are dropped dead, the outskirts of cities, across Canada, as the RCMP and police forces, especially in the north, continue to abuse and mistreat the people, especially the aboriginals. Aboriginal girls and women are sexually abused, raped, and killed. Many are in a position of power. It is murder when indigenous people are killed at the hands of the police such as in the case of Frank Paul.

**STOP POLICE ABUSE OF POWER**  
 INDIGENOUS ACTION MOVEMENT | ANTI-POVERTY COMMITTEE  
 MORE INFO: 604-682-3959 EXT: 7517

fallen warrior being called home home to a safe haven no longer a victim walking with our ancestors home to peace and serenity at last  
 Kat Norris

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 Vancouver BC  
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# 4th ANTIWAR ANNUAL 2006 film festival



Mobilization Against War + Occupation  
**WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG**  
 info@mawovancouver.org | 604 322 1764

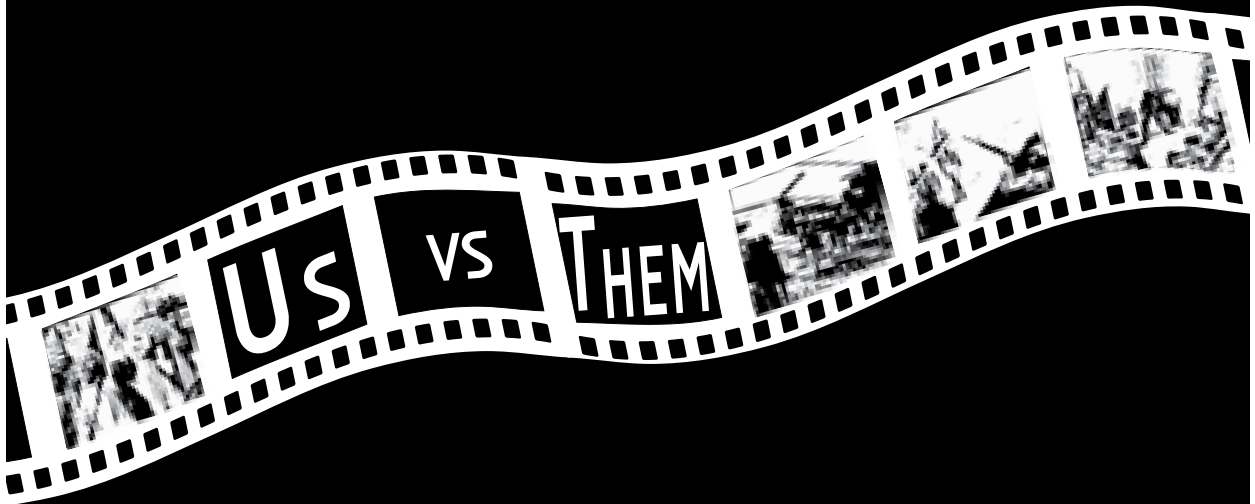
**FREE**

**Saturday**  
**Dec.16th**  
 11am-9pm

**Sunday**  
**Dec.17th**  
 10am-9pm

**Britannia**  
**Comm Ctr**  
**Auditorium**

1608 Napier St.  
 (North West of  
 Commercial Dr.  
 and Napier St.)



Canadian Muslim Alliance | Clayton Heights Secondary School Global Issues Club | Coalition Against War on the People of Iraq and Internationally - CAMOPI UBC-AMS Club | DADABASE Boutique | Douglas Students Against War | Fulloufit | Imagination for International Solidarity - Seoul Korea | Indigenous Independent digital Filmmaking Program - Capilano College | Indigenous Rights and Action Project (IRAP) | Iranian Committee Against War and Occupation | Kila How Eya FM - on Coop Radio | Langara Students United Against War and Occupation | MAWO-SPU Club | No Apologies Necessary - on Coop Radio | Pastors for Peace | Relatives and Friends of Mexican Political Prisoners | START - Student activism club at Delta Secondary School | Students Against War - University of Victoria | UBC Film Society | Unitarian Church Social Justice Committee | Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba | Victoria Goods for Cuba | Victoria Solidarity with Venezuela | Womens Studies Undergraduate Society - UBC