

**Contents**

27. Vancouver, Toronto Meetings Celebrate New Edition of Canadian Bolsheviks.  
Roger Annis
  28. With Fallujah in Ruins, Protests Across Canada Condemn Bush Visit.  
Roger Annis and John Riddell
  29. Socialism: The only "better world".  
Celia Hart
  30. Venezuela, Cuba Strengthen Ties.  
Roger Annis and John Riddell
  31. In Defense of Humanity: The Caracas Declaration.
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Socialist Voice #27, December 3, 2004

## **Vancouver, Toronto Meetings Celebrate New Edition of Canadian Bolsheviks**

**By Roger Annis**

“In the years immediately following World War I, something unprecedented happened in the socialist left in Canada. The multiple quarrelling groups that had comprised the left until then shook themselves up and transformed themselves. The result was a new party that encompassed at least 80% of the members of its predecessor organizations. The Communist Party of Canada quickly became the largest and most influential group on the left everywhere in Canada, far outpacing all existing organizations and dominating militant labour politics in Canada in the 1920s.”

With those words, Ian Angus opened his presentations to two large and successful meetings, in Vancouver and Toronto, celebrating publication of a new edition of his book, *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada*.

Since it was published in 1981, *Canadian Bolsheviks* has been widely accepted as the definitive history of the first decade of the Communist Party of Canada. Unusually, for a book written from a revolutionary Marxist perspective, it is highly regarded by academic historians of the Canadian labour movement and often cited as a key source.

And it has educated countless Canadian radicals about the rich history of revolutionary socialism in this country. Although it has been out of print for several years, used copies continue to be read and re-read by activists seeking to connect with the revolutionary socialist tradition in Canada.

This year the Socialist History Project ([www.socialisthistory.ca](http://www.socialisthistory.ca)) republished *Canadian Bolsheviks*. The initial response the new edition has been even more positive than the first time around.

That was clearly shown by the success of book celebrations held in Vancouver and Toronto in November. It's hard to recall any socialist meetings in recent years that have been supported by

such a broad range of sponsors, or that featured such open and fraternal discussion among groups and individuals representing many divergent opinions on the left.

Forty-eight copies of the book were sold at the two meetings—an impressive tally.

### **Vancouver**

The 70 people who attended the Vancouver meeting on November 17 ranged from long-time socialist veterans to an impressive number of young people whose first political experiences were in the anti-Iraq-war movement. It was sponsored by International Socialists, LeftTurn.ca, New Socialist Group, Rebuilding the Left, *Seven Oaks Magazine*, and *Socialist Voice*.

The chair, well-known author and activist Cynthia Flood, pointed out that the impact of the Russian Revolution on the Canadian left is not well-known to the new generation of radical youth, but the lessons of that tumultuous time are still relevant today. “We need some understanding of ‘then’, so we can face ‘now’,” she said. “That is why the reappearance of Ian Angus’ book is so welcome. It has come out of an expressed wish and desire on the part of many to have the book available again.”

In addition to Ian Angus, speakers included Dale McCartney, an editor of *Seven Oaks* magazine, Joey Hartman, vice-president of the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association, and Mark Leier, director of the Centre for Labour Studies at Simon Fraser University.

Many meetings that are attended by people from a wide range of Marxist groups end in sterile debates on obscure (to most people) points of history and theory. That wasn’t true of the *Canadian Bolsheviks* celebration in Vancouver. A friendly and lively discussion ended the formal meeting on a positive note, and it continued informally for more than an hour in a café down the street.

While in Vancouver, Angus was interviewed by *The Republic*, a local alternative newspaper, and on the Redeye show on Co-Op radio. He also spoke to a History Department seminar at Simon Fraser University, arranged by Mark Leier.

### **Toronto**

More than 60 people attended the Toronto meeting on November 25, sponsored by International Socialists, Marxist Institute, New Socialist Group, Socialist Action, Socialist Alternative, Socialist Project, and *Socialist Voice*. The sponsors and other Marxist groups participated in a literature sale offering a wide variety of socialist books, pamphlets, and periodicals.

The meeting was chaired by *Socialist Voice* editor John Riddell, and was addressed by Carolyn Egan of the International Socialists and Sam Gindin of Socialist Project. Egan, who is president of the Toronto Area Council of the United Steelworkers, described how the first edition of *Canadian Bolsheviks* shaped her own political thinking in the 1980s. Gindin, a long-time Canadian Auto Workers leader who now holds the Packer Chair of Social Justice at York University, described it as important contribution to rebuilding the left in Canada.

Noted labour historian Bryan Palmer was unable to attend, but he sent a statement that was read by John Riddell. Palmer described *Canadian Bolsheviks* as “a book that in its researches and in

its politics charted new approaches to the communist path, approaches that were meant to revitalize the revolutionary Left. When I put it down I knew that I had been educated in the best senses of the word.”

And Palmer expressed the hope that its republication will “galvanize serious scrutiny of the original years of North American communism, when a revolutionary Left made impressive inroads into the wider workers’ movement, establishing a presence in the trade unions and entering the fray of class politics at many levels.”

### **Roots of Revolutionary Socialism**

At both meetings, Ian Angus’s presentations focused on the roots of revolutionary socialism in Canada, explaining how Canada’s existing Marxist organizations were excited and transformed by the Russian Revolution in 1917: “When the Bolsheviks took power in November 1917, suddenly theory became reality – instead of just talking about a workers’ government that would end capitalism, the Russian revolutionaries were actually building it.”

The example of the Russian Bolsheviks, and their own experiences in the great Canadian labour upsurge of 1919, led Canadian Marxists to launch a “party of a new type” that sought to fuse the program of Marxism with the living struggles of workers across Canada, and to participate actively in the worldwide struggle for socialism.

Angus also highlighted some of the achievements of the Communist Party during the 1920s. It helped lead major strikes, fought for the rights of women and immigrant workers, and defended the unity of the working class during elections by working with other working class parties in the Canadian Labor Party.

He concluded: “*Canadian Bolsheviks* is about the birth and death of a revolutionary party. The early Communists didn’t make a revolution, but they did show that a genuine revolutionary party can be built in Canada. Their victories—and their mistakes and defeats—provide powerful lessons for us today.”

For over 80 years, socialists worldwide have looked to the Russian Revolution and the early Communist International for inspiration and insight. By making *Canadian Bolsheviks* generally available again, the Socialist History Project has made an important contribution to building the revolutionary movement in the 21st century.

*The new edition of Canadian Bolsheviks can be purchased online in Canada from Chapters/Indigo or in the U.S. from Amazon.*

*The Vancouver talks were videotaped: they will be televised on December 18 on the WorkingTV program on Shaw Cable Channel 4 in the Vancouver area, and can be viewed on the Internet at the WorkingTV website.*

Socialist Voice #28, December 5, 2004

## **With Fallujah in Ruins, Protests Across Canada Condemn Bush Visit**

**By Roger Annis and John Riddell**

U.S. President George Bush met an angry reception during his state visit to Canada November 30-December 1, as tens of thousands of people took to the streets in many cities to protest Washington's wars.

The largest protest took place in Ottawa on November 30, where close to 20,000 people took part in a day of action to condemn the U.S./British occupation of Iraq and to denounce Bush as a war criminal. The following day, more than 5,000 people marched in Halifax during a 90-minute stopover by Bush.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, two protests took place on November 30, both organized by the Stopwar coalition. A noon march drew 1,000 people, the majority of whom were delegates to the annual B.C. Federation of Labour convention. Five hundred people attended an evening rally.

The city of Ottawa resembled an armed camp for the 24 hours of Bush's visit. Streets were closed, helicopters hovered constantly, police in riot gear were everywhere, and police snipers occupied rooftops. Actions were held throughout the day in an effort to confront Bush as he moved about the city. A rally of 15,000 took place on Parliament Hill in the late afternoon and evening. Buses brought participants to the city from Toronto, Montreal, and other cities across Ontario and Quebec.

### **Bush adjusts schedule**

The prospect of large protests caused several changes in the Bush schedule. He did not speak to the Canadian parliament—normally the custom during a state visit. His handlers worried that some members of parliament might interrupt his speaking and condemn his policies.

The visit to Ottawa was cut short in order to stop in the east-coast city of Halifax for a public relations performance in front of a select gathering of political and military figures. The ostensible purpose of Bush's speech was to thank families in eastern Canada who took stranded airline passengers into their homes in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001. In fact, his speech was a vigorous defense of the U.S. "war on terror" and policy of preemptive aggression. Violating diplomatic protocol, Bush also tossed out a challenge to the Canadian government to join in the "missile defense" program.

Several of the families who offered post-September 11 hospitality spoke out against this show. Speaking to a news conference on November 29 beneath a black banner reading, "He's not welcome," Anne Derrick, a lawyer whose family took in passengers, said, "Mr. Bush has squandered the sympathy earned by the U.S. after September 11. I hope he gets the message during his visit here that we will not be cheerleaders for his administration's brutal foreign policies."

Marchers in Halifax carried signs saying, “Stranded passengers always welcome; preemptive wars are not!” While the main theme of the march was opposition to the Iraq war, marchers also condemned Bush’s opposition to abortion rights for women and his government’s attack on democratic rights at home.

B.C. Federation of Labor President Jim Sinclair was the main speaker at the noon rally in Vancouver. He condemned the U.S. occupation of Iraq and called for withdrawal of occupation troops. He also denounced the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel and the erection of its apartheid wall on Palestinian land.

### **Ottawa rally**

The main rally in Ottawa heard speeches from Jack Layton, head of the New Democratic Party, a spokesperson of the Bloc Quebecois, Denise Veilleux of the Union des forces progressistes (a left-wing party in Quebec), Member of Parliament Carolyn Parrish, several representatives of Arab-Canadian organizations, and others.

Veilleux evoked strong applause from the crowd when she explained that the occupation in Iraq results from an international system of domination and exploitation that must be changed.

Member of Parliament Carolyn Parrish received the strongest applause. She was recently expelled from the ranks of Liberal Party members of parliament by Prime Minister Paul Martin for her outspoken opposition to the war in Iraq and the new anti-ballistic missile program that the U.S. government is pressing Ottawa to sign onto.

Jack Layton spoke on the proposed missile program and concerns about the effects of global warming. He made no comment on the war and occupation in Iraq. Just prior to Bush’s visit, Layton had failed to mention Iraq among the steps he proposed the U.S. government take to “make the world a safer place.”

For more than a year, the NDP leadership has downplayed the party’s opposition to the Iraq war and focused instead on themes of defending Canadian sovereignty. It is from mainly this angle that Layton and other party leaders Jack Layton oppose Washington’s “missile defense” program.

### **Canada’s rulers tighten ties with Washington**

Bush’s visit was first and foremost an initiative by Canada’s ruling elite to strengthen its support for U.S. war policies in Iraq and elsewhere. Unfortunately, speakers in the anti-Bush said little about Ottawa’s complicity in the war drive. It is vital that the antiwar movement in Canada strongly oppose the warmakers here at home—otherwise it will be robbed of its potential political impact.

And the federal government has taken many steps over the past year to increase its active support U.S.-led wars and occupations:

- Canada has announced it will join the U.S.-led effort to arrange a national “election” in Iraq in January. This electoral sham, to be staged under the control and watchful eye of

occupation forces, is a centerpiece of efforts by the U.S. and Britain to divide and demobilize Iraqi resistance to occupation.

- Canada is also an enthusiastic partner in the imperialist occupation in Afghanistan. It committed 3,000 troops there earlier this year, (since reduced to 700) in the name of helping the U.S. and Britain with their occupation in Iraq.
- In February, Canada joined the U.S.-led intervention that overthrew the elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Haiti. Canada's national police force is a part of the ongoing international occupation force there.
- The Canadian government has signaled its interest in signing the proposed ballistic "missile defense" agreement with the U.S. If successful, this armament program would enable the U.S. military to achieve a long-cherished dream: the capacity to launch a devastating nuclear attack on a rival power while absorbing only "tolerable" retaliation on U.S. soil. Obviously, this effort can only escalate the world arms race.
- On the day of Bush's departure from Canada, Ottawa carried out a decisive shift at the United Nations in its support to the imperialist state of Israel. It voted against three resolutions there that recognize the national rights of the Palestinian people. For many years, Canada abstained on such votes at the UN. Only three other countries of significance voted against the resolutions—the United States, Australia, and Israel.

### **Destruction of Fallujah**

Bush arrived in Ottawa in the shadow of the destruction of the city of Fallujah in Iraq by U.S. occupation forces. Details of the gruesome toll of the U.S. assault on the city, launched on November 7, continue to accumulate.

A massive aerial and artillery bombardment preceded the invasion. Bombardments continued during the two-week assault. U.S. forces prevented military-age men from leaving the city, barricading them into what then became a free-fire zone. Anyone in the city after the invasion began was a target of U.S. snipers.

Most dwellings, commercial buildings, and infrastructure have been destroyed or heavily damaged, and the destruction by occupation forces is continuing as they conduct house to house searches for anti-occupation fighters. "The marines try to avoid ambushes," describes a correspondent in the December 1 Independent newspaper in Britain, "by blasting holes in side walls instead of coming in through the front door. They throw grenades into every room before entering."

More ominously, the al-Jazeera news network and the Daily Mirror newspaper of Britain have reported the use of napalm in Fallujah, a chemical weapon banned by international convention in 1980. The Mirror reports that several Labour Party members of the British parliament have denounced the use of napalm and demanded an explanation from Prime Minister Tony Blair.

### **U.S. pays heavy price**

Fallujah was an important material and political base of the opposition to foreign occupation, and it has been lost for the time being. Similar large-scale attacks are underway against other centers of resistance in the country.

The U.S. military claims to have killed 1,200 “insurgents” in Fallujah. The real number is, according to many accounts, considerably less. A Red Cross official in the city estimated 800 civilian deaths. Resistance continues in the city, including in areas supposedly “cleared” by U.S. forces.

The vast majority of anti-occupation fighters in Fallujah succeeded in withdrawing to fight another day. Occupation casualties in dead and wounded were heavy—more than 10%, by U.S. count, of the approximately 6,000 U.S. soldiers thrown into the battle.

Meanwhile, plans to create a compliant and reliable Iraqi army and police service are in tatters. Few Iraqi soldiers were used in Fallujah. In Mosul, the third largest city in the country, an uprising of Iraqi patriots took control of the city in the opening days of the Fallujah assault. The carefully nurtured pro-U.S. police force of 5,000 in that city disappeared—most resigned or joined the patriotic forces.

Each day in Iraq, there are scores of attacks on occupation forces. U.S. combat deaths in November were 135, equaling the previous monthly high, April 2004. Since the invasion, 1,250 U.S. soldiers have died and 9,300 have been wounded. As a result of the worsening attacks, the U.S. is increasing the number of troops by 12,000, to a total of 150,000.

The destruction of Fallujah brought the U.S. no closer to its goal of subduing the Iraqi people. Three hundred thousand people were driven from their homes and their city. A New York Times correspondent wrote December 1 (with probably unconscious irony), “Military officials...face an unusual challenge: how to win back the confidence of the people whose city they have just destroyed. Their task will be made harder by the need to deter returning insurgents, who will try to sabotage the reconstruction with attacks.”

The murders of several injured and unarmed Iraqis that were caught on camera and shown on U.S. television during the battle give a glimpse of the reign of terror that prevails in the city. Those revelations, and those from this past summer earlier this year depicting the torture of Iraqi prisoners in the country’s prisons, underscore the impossibility for the occupation forces to win the “hearts and minds” of the Iraqi people.

### **Occupiers sow divisions among Iraqis**

While the U.S. claims of victory in Fallujah ring hollow, it did achieve a political goal that eluded it in the preceding offensive there in April of this year. At that time, massive protest inside Iraq, including by forces within the Shia community, put a halt to an offensive against Fallujah. This time, important sections of the Shia religious and political hierarchy stood aside as U.S. battle plans unfolded. The Shia establishment is anxious to participate in the election scheduled for January 2005. They expect to win, and to share in the spoils of governing.

In northern Iraq, the U.S. has achieved a measure of support from leaders of the main political parties of the Kurdish population by tolerating—for now—de facto Kurdish regional autonomy.

Washington's stated goal is to end Kurdish sovereignty, but it is unable to act on that goal for the time being. (See *Socialist Voice* #14)

**Massive protests needed**

The U.S. is in Iraq for the long haul. It has built a series of permanent military bases and has no plans to leave unless forced to do so. The generals are prepared to accept substantial casualties among their troops, who, recruited from the poorest layers of U.S. society, are deemed expendable. The U.S. intends to use its overwhelming military power to wear down the will to resist among the Iraqi people. So far, it has made little headway. But Washington hopes that divisions among Iraqi communities to enable it to crush them one by one.

As in Vietnam three decades ago, driving out the occupiers will be primarily a political process, in which Iraqis find the path to unity against the invaders, while working people (including soldiers) in the U.S. and internationally conclude that they, too, are losers from the devastating assault on Iraq and must act to bring it to an end.

Demonstrations like those in Canada during the Bush visit, and the larger and more militant ones that greeted him recently in Chile, are the best help that antiwar activists can provide to the Iraqi people as they struggle to lift the boot of imperialist occupation from their necks and free their country.

*(Socialist Voice thanks Richard Fidler for a report on the Ottawa protests.)*



Socialist Voice #29, December 31, 2004

## **Socialism: The only "better world"**

**By Celia Hart**

*[This translation by W.T. Whitney, Jr., is an edited version of a draft translation by Maria Montelibre. It originally appeared on the [Labor Standard website](#). Labor Standard added editorial notes, which we have placed at the end of the article.]*

(December 12, 2004) Caracas is once again the queen of the left for the entire world. The Congress of Intellectuals in Defense of Humanity [in December 2004] brought hundreds of the world's foremost progressives together to bid hello to December. The representatives of a thousand and one tendencies were on hand trying to come to some agreement on the ethical future of the world. Our job was to see if it's a good time to redirect the compass. I was there, full of expectations, mixed up with my chronic skepticism.

The summits, congresses, and world assemblies with all of their rhetoric have put a damper on my expectations of their usefulness. Perhaps this time we will not be locked into the song and dance of denouncing the world's calamities, the violations of human and divine laws, and the contrariness of our enemies. It's a question now of looking for ways to carry out our struggle and determining the resources we have available to bring about a definitive end to imperialism. If we don't succeed in finding specific answers, if we don't come once and for all out of the shelter of academe, then our descendants will judge this generation of thinkers to be no more than a useless conglomeration of voyeurs.

At the Third International Seminar of Pedagogy recently held in Peru, James Petras remarked: "Social forums used to be positive, good for getting together, discussing, forming networks, and approving a declaration or two. But now they've become almost rituals, like a social gathering, where people rub elbows, invite some important personages, and carry out a march. And then everybody goes on home. I believe now they've lost the sharp edge of rebellion, of real criticism. A retrospective look suggests that they've not had much effect."

I agree. And as is often the case, there's a flag that appears to be missing at world conferences of the left, which is not much talked about because of fear and, what with restrictions imposed by political parties, it's locked out. I mean Socialism. Many sincere comrades are claiming the end of the "isms." It's pathetic, especially because fascism, militarism, and imperialism fill up our lives from dawn to dusk. These tendencies—they are like a "leftist Fukuyama-ism"—quite openly refer to the tragedy of the current left. They oppose political parties and anyone with "isms." We'll have to confine ourselves to prayers, descriptions, and proclamations. I confess that for me the slogan "A better world is possible" seems like resignation. A better world is of course possible, but a worse one is too! The slogan *limits* our possibilities. I dream about some extraterrestrial on the way to construct it, or even worse—as if there were any chance that those tender words might move our enemies on a summer morning, while they sip their orange juice.

Chávez said it, *“It is possible to have a better world...if we ourselves make it possible!”* In fact, it seems ironical that up against a Dantesque scenario of wars, lies, and poverty, we could even talk about a better world.

The Berlin Wall fell over a decade ago, and we haven't been able to get over the psychological trauma caused by “actually existing socialism.” We'll have to bring in all the world's psychoanalysts to see if we can free ourselves from this curse. I hope we don't waste another seventy years doing it. While we were going to the analyst, the enemy would be building wall after twisted wall, all the while smothering us with apocalyptic phrases like “preemptive war,” “axis of evil,” and other idiocies. And as if that weren't enough, that same enemy wins the U.S. elections.

I ask myself, what flag could ever mean more than that of socialism? Now that globalization has descended upon us all over the world, what could be better than to take up socialist ideas again, squeeze them, fiddle with them, mix them up, and then present the enemy with true international solidarity as an alternative to capitalist globalization. *“With all and for the good of all,”* but José Martí of course would have said more. Only with “all” joined together will it be possible to shove wood under the kettle. And “all” ought to be yearning not only for a better world but also for one that is qualitatively different.

There is only one alternative to barbarism. Frederick Engels said it: socialism, that very socialism that in Rosa Luxemburg's words *“is not just a problem of ways and means, but is a cultural movement, and an all-encompassing, powerful world view.”*

Any flag is welcome, as long as it is a real one: Bolívar's, Hidalgo's, those of San Martín and José Martí, and all of the rest, anywhere, flags that fill places of honor in our history. We have to follow, if only out of respect for them.

Julio Antonio Mella brought Martí back to life, because he courageously absorbed him and assimilated the new scientific findings of Karl Marx. And somehow he converted Martí into the founder of the first Communist Party in Cuba. Mella said that “in order to make a revolution in this century, something new is needed, socialist ideas, ideas that one way or another are taking root in every corner of the world.”

Fidel Castro and his comrades came back and saved José Martí from the enemy, because they actually converted him into the intellectual author of a socialist revolution. Enough romanticism! That's why Martí is still alive, because had he talked with Karl Marx—they would have been of one mind from their first cup of coffee—he would have passed on some insights about U.S. issues, the events in Chicago, for example. Martí certainly could have alerted Marx to the emergence of imperialism, having lived as he did in the belly of the beast. [1]

José Carlos Mariategui sought for a vision of socialism and class struggle adapted creatively and heroically to the present situation. Such a vision will enable us to see to it that Bolívar and so many of our predecessors did not work in vain. Our responsibility is enormous. No longer will we be able to blame Stalin and “actually existing socialism” for our failures and prejudices. It's time to take out the sword and pen, conquer and win people's hearts, taking up the only flags that will improve our world and that of our children.

The enemy is certainly in crisis. But if we don't become conscious of that reality, and quickly, then we will be swept away irrevocably.

And really how healthy is socialism? I am bold enough to propose a quite simplified "measuring" stick. The revolution is a process. Natural processes are measured in terms of variations in magnitude over time. Let's try to measure a social process like that.

Let's do it like this: we'll call SOC a magnitude that measures the extent to which a revolution is socialist at any given point in time. Let's take three examples.

First, Cuba's socialist revolution has proven itself to be permanent despite harassment from imperialism. It demonstrated its staying power in the 1990s by surviving the fall of European socialism, while simultaneously having to confront a tightened U.S. blockade. This is a clear fact that attests to the health of our socialist revolution. The SOC factor moves significantly upward.

Without a doubt, legalization of the dollar for trade and commerce and a rapid growth of tourism and joint ventures—functioning under capitalist rules—have become bitter pills for the revolution to swallow, more so even than the special period. Some Cubans are adopting a capitalist mentality. The goals seemed similar to Lenin's as he imposed the New Economic Policy on the young Soviet state, although the Cuban experience was quite dissimilar to the NEP. But based on this measure, our variable takes a dip, just as was the case in the USSR.

Next we look at the so-called battle of ideas that began with the campaign to return Elián González to his homeland. This was the point at which Fidel began to build one impressive revolution inside the other. The education of social workers, young teachers, and paramedic personnel moved forward together with a little known educational revolution by which the student-teacher ratio fell to 20:1 in a two-year period. Not only did the quality of education improve but, more importantly, the revolutionary process took in tens of thousands of students. Most of them had been idle until then, thinking mainly about dollars—legalized for a while—or about emigrating. I understand that a revolution is a tumultuous process, and not everyone will be with the revolution. The ideological battle is part of the process too.

There are now two educational channels that are quite different from the usual channels. Cultural rather than commercial criteria determine the programming, which includes daily roundtables, weekly open forums, and university teaching, open to anybody, on subjects such as the history of philosophy, ballet, or the sciences. Fidel speaks frequently to the people on television, and those appearances have raised the political level of public discourse and contributed to the culture of debate, despite tendencies toward repetition and sloganeering. Overall, these changes do represent a decisive step-up in the SOC factor.

It's not Fidel's job or that of revolutionary Cubans to build socialism, simply because socialism in one country is not in the cards. It is possible, however, to augment the SOC aspect of the socialist revolution, and toward that end forces must be in place to counteract tendencies toward capitalist restoration. We knowingly took on problematic cures in order to survive the 1994 legalization of the dollar. Two forces are at war with each other inside the same revolution. Fidel devotes most of his time and all of his efforts to these struggles, the battle of ideas. This new revolution originated out of specific projects that involve the most revolutionary social strata.

The campaign against the mosquito that carries the yellow fever virus, for example, became a political campaign, because high school students took charge.

Despite the relative worthlessness of our national currency, we avoid layoffs. Sugar workers left without work receive salaries for studying. Despite economic “poverty” Cuba boasts sports programs and indicators of health and education outcome more appropriate to developed nations.

One has to see the expression on Fidel Castro’s face on days when a small battle against pro-capitalist forces is won, when, for example, the dollar was replaced by the convertible peso. More than just changing from one paper to another, a symbolism was working that put a smile on Fidel’s face that would not leave, even with his accident and everything else. No longer would green money graze the hands of young Cubans.

What about internationalism? Tens of thousands of our compatriots are working as doctors, teachers, or technicians in Latin America countries. Once they became involved in the tragedy that is Haiti, international organizations were astounded to learn that for every doctor there on the ground from developed countries, there were a hundred Cuban doctors. Those youngsters carry with them—besides their conscience—a piece of the Cuban revolution. And it’s not cost-free. People helping out in Venezuela are unavailable to care for people in Cuba.

Internationalism has a price. We aren’t giving away surpluses. We provide what is near and dear.

In the same vein, while the Conference of Intellectuals and Artists was going on in Caracas the Eighth Congress of the Union of Communist Youth (UJC) took place in Havana. The UJC has had a leadership role in the battle of ideas, along with Fidel of course. On the last day of the conference, Fidel came out, wearing his traditional green uniform. From his remarks we could breathe in the concept of revolution put into practice. The battle of ideas has cost less than 2% of the national income over five years, but has produced hundreds of thousands of new comrades—a revolutionary cost-effectiveness without precedent.

Fidel was finishing up, and as always he invited us into the struggle. Anyone criticizing the Cuban government as bureaucratic, I ask if they know any president anywhere who talks about electricity consumed by the million or so television sets in Cuban homes, or about school lunches, or about mothers of handicapped children receiving a salary just for taking care of their children. No, nobody speaks about changing everything—with the happy exception of compañero Hugo Chávez.

This shows even more that we are in a revolution. And we will not give it up, no matter how imperiled the world may be. They have taken prisoners of war, our five comrades—internationalist fighters imprisoned in the United States for defending the revolution against imperialism and its Miami hirelings. We know that our socialist revolution is permanent, because those are U.S. prisons that are holding our political prisoners. Fidel concludes with “Socialism forever!” Again and again, he calls it out to the rhythm of the *Internationale*. Thousands of Cubans youngsters sing out “Arise, ye wretched of the earth!” They raise their fists and attest to their faith in this continuity.

The second example is legendary China, where from my point of view exactly the opposite is taking place. The Chinese Party (is it Communist?) says it is building socialism. But not again: socialism in one country. Private property in China is going up, not down. I read that big capitalists head off to China out of choice. The country has become a giant export machine. Total exports there grew eightfold, to more than 380 billion dollars between 1990 and 2003. Five hundred of the planet's biggest multinational corporations have invested and have plants there. And to ease tensions caused by state corporations laying off 45 million workers in the last five years, Beijing has allowed foreigners to put 450 billion dollars into its economy. It looks to me that the socialist market economy adds up to a lot more than just a temporary NEP.

If the economy is so powerful, why do 58,000 workers go out on strike, only to be designated criminals? Why is 23% of the Chinese workforce unemployed, why does privatization rule the lives of 170 million people, and why do low productivity and population growth lead to downsizing of state-owned corporations? Why does the World Health Organization say that seven out of ten of the world's most polluted cities are found in the People's Republic of China? Could it be that the Chinese will end up with the means they rely upon rather than the ends they had intended? Do social indices in China correspond at all to Chinese economic power? And if there is a repeat of the 1989 protests in Tiananmen Square, do we support the Chinese Communist Party just because it has a communist label? I can understand that at this juncture China is counting on a jump from economic efficiency, and I have already explained how Cuba is doing just that, in some sense. But, where is China's antidote? How many Chinese are teaching or taking care of the sick in Asia? What is their position on anti-imperialism? That's the difference. In my country two tendencies are at war with each other, and socialism has the advantage. In China, the Communist Party invites business types to become members. One must recognize that China has switched over to become the model of efficiency in the capitalist world. I have no urge, however, to applaud that achievement. In China the socialist revolution is moribund.

China goes its own way, keeping up tight relations with developed nations (or undeveloped, as I should say). But they are still just trade relations. I trust that history will not be repeating itself in China. Karl Marx said that events happen first as tragedy (we learned that ourselves), and then, later on, as farce.

My third example is Venezuela. Does Venezuela represent a victorious socialist revolution? We'll know in a few years, as the process of revolution is consolidated. These are some of the questions: Has the Venezuelan government moved toward radical positions over time? Yes. Does the government deal with the evil effects of capitalist society by seeking out alternative solutions? Yes. Does the Bolivarian revolution gain stature as it contends with imperialism? Yes. Do "yes" answers make the Venezuelan revolution a socialist one? We still don't know. Time must pass, and obstacles have to be eliminated. This question highlights our yearnings, our hopes, and our doubts. What is important is that with the passage of time, Venezuela is becoming more radical and less capitalist.

Cuba was an avalanche—an abrupt change sketched out in a few years. We live in different eras. A lot of water has gone over the dam since the miraculous 1960s. Chávez and his project live with the bad taste left over from the death of “actually existing socialism.”

There are compensating factors, of course. It's the Cuban socialist revolution that emerges as a model, not the Stalinist USSR. And Bolívar serves as precedent. Bolívar was up against emerging national bourgeoisies, classes now openly allied with the Empire. It's enough for Hugo Chávez to aspire to cover ground worked by the Liberator, for that process to become radicalized. That's what happened in Cuba with José Martí. To be Bolivarian and faithful to the implications of that cause, Chávez will not be able to skip over the teachings of Lenin, Trotsky, Che, and Fidel. It's not possible to leap from the 19th to the 21st century without running into this line of thought.

If this man is truly embarked upon Christian endeavor, he'll have no alternative, but to build up the level of SOC in the Bolivarian Revolution. In that way, we may some day be seeing an authentic socialist revolution with pronounced internationalist characteristics, “without realizing it,” as Che might say.

On the other hand, revolution—as defined by its multiple *misiones* (the *misión Robinson*, *misión Barrio Adentro*, and many more)—has acquired a special likeness to the revolution in my own country. The open struggles against landowners added an anti-bureaucracy element to the October 31 electoral campaign. That hiked up the SOC indicators that we defined earlier.

So there is good news too. We are reckoning with two revolutions taking root and opening new hopes in Latin America. We need many more. Two proven revolutionaries are in charge of them. It's time now to go back to calling things by the right name. We shy away from radical vocabulary. The ones who call for the end of “isms” and “istas” leave it open as to whether or not they are including words like “socialism” or “socialist revolution” or “communist party” in their censorship.

Chávez in his remarks at the Caracas meeting clearly said, “*One is aware of a resurgent force that every day, everywhere is growing, a human, moral, and political force. Things are happening in Argentina, Brazil, Spain, Libya, Moscow, and Iran. They speak Russian, Persian, Spanish, Portuguese, but it's the same sparkle, the same force.*”

What is Commandante Chávez referring to? What is the only force in the world that can be held up as a common denominator among the poor? The Communist Manifesto, the specter that haunted Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries, is taking off now as the only real alternative to humanity's misfortunes.

President Chávez has declared that, in the face of these realities, “*It is the duty of all the revolutionaries of the world to create a network of social and political organizations and shape an international movement that moves onto the offensive.*”

He goes on: “*There are no national solutions. They are trying to inflict upon us that most savage form of globalization, which is neo-liberalism. It is a world problem, and the solution transcends the borders of one country.*”

And calling for an offensive to save humanity, he proposes, *“to organize a network of theorists whose thinking rises to the level of a creative, transforming, and critical force to light the way toward a new world view for humanity.”*

We have then three items: the struggle understood as an end to national borders, left forces (political parties and social movements) endowed with cohesiveness and maturity, and radical thought on the offensive. We move beyond the enemy’s archaic terminology—terrorism, human rights, and democracy—to speak of revolution, socialism, and class struggle. And for the sake of consistency, I dream now about the word “international.” Up against global imperialism, that strong word is essential.

Hugo Chávez has just launched a historic undertaking with this meeting of intellectuals. He is inviting us into the American dream, in fact the real one. In contrast to Bush, who envisions the U.S. as a “homeland” of owners, Chávez is calling for the formation of a Latin American homeland, which will be a homeland for all the workers of the world. A homeland for today, to start working on today. These true goals are the ones we aim for, even if we don’t achieve them. The goals are the Patria (“homeland”) conceived by Simón Bolívar, the *America Nuestra* of José Martí. I tremble when I think of the proverb that says, “The third try is the one that wins.”

Chávez said, *“Out of this century comes our truth. We will have a fatherland, and the fatherland is our America—Caribbean and Latin American. Now is the time to think and to do. The battle is today, not tomorrow. We take advantage of time, not fritter it away. We have been called to invent the fatherland, make it free, and liberate it once and for all, for the sake of our peoples.”*

This commitment asks more of us than reading the history of the Americas and arriving at ways to mobilize our peoples. We need more, a whole army, for example, of thinkers and fighters. Right off we have to appeal to the heritage of socialist thought. And as Armando Hart used to repeat almost endlessly, “Profit comes out of the inventory.” We will allow that, because he and the others were not perfect. But the positive legacy of these men will inspire our “new president” in the final battle for the Americas.

Now, just for today, having come across a recent article by Carlos Alberto Montaner, I am taking the liberty of reminding this tribunal of revolutionary thinkers about Leon Trotsky.

Trotsky takes the prize in the Guinness book of records as the most defamed revolutionary in history. As far as that personage is concerned, many, even communists, inadvertently go along with the enemy. Trotsky has been accused of absolutely everything: being a fascist, an imperialist, an assassin, a sectarian, and putting the brakes on the revolution. The charitable ones maintain that Trotsky’s ideas are unnecessary, because they are obsolete. And now Carlos Alberto Montaner comes along, a well-known enemy of the Cuban revolution. He alleges that in Trotsky’s final days he gave up on socialism and the revolution and embraced the market economy and representative democracy. It’s too much! But the blame is ours for allowing what Trotsky represents to be restricted just to the so-called “Trotskyist parties,” as if he were off the roster of revolutionaries, as if he were not the leading thinker who alerted us to the end of the USSR from a Marxist point of view. More than anyone else, Trotsky analyzed the means by which a revolution and a Communist Party in power can be liquidated.

The fall of “actually existing socialism” can neither be analyzed nor understood without reading Leon Trotsky. And that analysis is by no means old hat; it’s right up to date. With his own flesh he experienced the excesses of a bureaucracy in power in a “socialist” state. He also developed one of the most essential concepts of revolutionary thought, the permanent revolution. Not only is it wrong not to keep him at our side as one of the foremost revolutionaries, but the neglect of Trotsky has led to obvious deficiencies in our revolutionary practice.

Internationalism, permanent revolution, and the impossibility of socialism in one country: these are key revolutionary considerations. As a Marxist, Trotsky has been accused of many things, but never of being a revisionist. If anything, he went the other way. Che and Fidel followed in his path, although they may not have known it. The slogan “create two, three, many Vietnams” epitomizes for Latin America the practice of both permanent revolution and internationalism.

All communists, not just Trotskyists, must give Trotsky his due as a contributor to revolutionary thought. A mention of communism should, with the next breath, evoke the name Leon Trotsky. And Trotskyism is more than just one ramification within Marxism.

James Cannon, one of the founding leaders of the Communist movement in the United States, said in 1942, “Trotskyism is not a new movement, a new doctrine, but the restoration, the revival, of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian revolution and in the early days of the Communist International.” [2]

According to Montaner, “In his last days in Mexico, before he was murdered by Ramón Mercader, that son of a crazy Cuban, Trotsky was beginning to reject the idea of tyranny and discovering the value of economic and political freedom and the importance of formal democracy.”

But in 1932 Trotsky stated: “Only a powerful increase in productive forces and a sound, planned, that is, socialist, organization of production and distribution can assure humanity—all humanity—a decent standard of life and at the same time give it the precious feeling of freedom with respect to its own economy” [3]

So Montaner is referring to a freedom Trotsky had extolled many years before. For the sake of that freedom he had organized the Red Army, worked at Lenin’s side, and ultimately gave his best years and life itself.

But we know that Montaner is referring to “freedom” in the sense of the impunity exercised by exploiters. What sort of injustice have we dealt Leon Trotsky when one of socialism’s worst enemies can go on like this unchallenged? If we allow a thing like this to continue, we are complicit in a deathblow to a revolutionary thinker, one worse than Mercader’s in 1940. And this kind of attack on Trotsky does irreparable harm to the ideas of socialism.

Luckily, Hugo Chávez cheered us up by looking at the other side of the coin. In the closing session of the Caracas conference, he quoted words from a book by Trotsky he had bought in Madrid. “In the *Permanent Revolution*, the Bolshevik revolutionary states that the problems of individual nations are not susceptible to national solutions, but involve all the peoples of the world.”



They say that a lie runs on for 100 years, but the truth can catch up in a day. That's what happens when there is an honest search for the correct road. In fact, all those roads lead to socialism. They have set up a permanent office in Caracas for anti-globalization. This might be the first office of the permanent revolution.

I have to go back once more to the article by Carlos Alberto Montaner, because I believe that again he is barking up the wrong tree. The man also complains because I called him a terrorist. And he may be right. If imperialists say my Palestinian brothers are terrorists, as they struggle for their people's self-determination, then Montaner is no terrorist. If Iraqi fighters in Fallujah are terrorists, for courageously confronting the strongest and most cowardly army in the world, then Montaner is no terrorist. Nor is he a terrorist, if the Cuban revolutionaries are called terrorists, those who fought against a criminal, pro-U.S. dictatorship and who in less than seven years achieved power and established an authentic socialist revolution. But this gentleman is an enemy of the Cuban people. He supposes that after four decades of knowing what dignity is all about, we'll go backwards. We have learned how to behave as free people, and now for the Cuban people to "peacefully" go back to a corrupt so-called republic and to accept imperialism is impossible. His fantasies about my country going back half a century to the days when it was the casino of the U.S. are almost infantile. Fidel speculated that socialism would triumph in the U.S. before counterrevolution takes over in Cuba.

As for myself and my "revisionism," I say this: I don't expect the corrupt, vicious *formal democracy* proposed by Montaner ever to be reinstated in Cuba. But if it were, if the Cuban revolution were to fail, if backward forces were to triumph over the revolutionary battle of ideas, then my course is clear. I'll check the bullets in my magazine and the barrel of my rifle. And the only currents to which we Cubans and communists everywhere will attend are the currents of air blowing anew in the Sierra Maestra. And I can assure Mr. Montaner that marching with me, besides Fidel, Che, Marx, and Lenin, at the head of our column will be the First Soldier, Leon Trotsky.

With great pride I take my place in the ranks of Montaner's "terrorists."

#### *Notes*

[1] José Martí wrote a stirring tribute to the Haymarket martyrs of Chicago at the time when they were "legally" lynched by Corporate America in 1886. See the article about this by W. T. Whitney, Jr., in *Labor Standard*, Vol. 1, No. 3, July-August 1999, page 57.

[2] The quotation is from page 1 of James P. Cannon's *History of American Trotskyism* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1944).

[3] This quotation is from "In Defense of the Russian Revolution," a speech Trotsky gave in Copenhagen, Denmark, in November 1932. We have used the English-language wording that appeared in *Leon Trotsky Speaks*, edited by Sarah Lovell (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), p. 267.

Socialist Voice #30, December 31, 2004

## **Venezuela, Cuba Strengthen Ties**

**By Roger Annis and John Riddell**

### **Leadership Offered to World Anti-Imperialist Forces**

On December 14, Cuban President Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez Frias signed an agreement strengthening cooperation between the peoples of their two countries with the goal of “integration and economic union.”

Venezuela agreed to transfer technology and to finance development projects in Cuba, and it guarantees that Cuba will continue to receive 53,000 barrels of oil per day, the majority of its import requirement. Cuba will continue to provide more than 15,000 medical professionals to take part in Barrio Adentro. This program brings medical care to the poor of Venezuela and trains Venezuelan doctors and specialists. Cuba will also grant 2,000 annual scholarships to Venezuelan students. The two countries will work together with other Latin American countries in large-scale efforts to fight illiteracy.

Cuba also subscribed to the Bolivarian Agreement for the Americas (ALBA), the Venezuelan government’s proposal to unite the peoples of Latin America around “the egalitarian principles of justice and equality that are innate in human beings, the well-being of the most dispossessed sectors of society, and a reinvigorated sense of solidarity toward the underdeveloped countries of the western hemisphere,” advanced as an alternative to the U.S.-sponsored Free Trade Area of the Americas.

“The Cuban revolution and the Bolivarian revolution have demonstrated that a better world is not only possible but also is perfectly attainable,” Chavez said during a celebration of the agreement in Havana December 14. “Bolivarian” is the name taken by the popular movement in Venezuela headed by Chávez. “A different world is essential in order to save life and the planet,” Chávez said.

Visibly moved by the occasion, Castro paid homage to the vision of the Venezuelan leader, who has visited Cuba 11 times in the past 10 years. “When a crisis comes, leaders arise.... So arose Chávez when the dreadful social and human situation in Venezuela and Latin America determined that the time to fight for a second, real independence had come.”

The world crisis “affects everyone,” Castro added. The “imperial system and the economic order it has imposed on the world cannot be sustained. Peoples which have decided to fight ... for their very survival can never be defeated.” (see Text of Castro’s Remarks)

### **Caracas Declaration**

The impact of Cuban-Venezuelan political collaboration was evident at the December 1-5, 2004 World Forum of Intellectuals and Artists, held in Caracas. Sizable delegations from the two countries acted as an informal leadership in this conference, securing the adoption of a declaration that called for “a wall of resistance to confront the attempt to impose worldwide domination.” The conference, attended by 350 delegates from 52 countries, called for the

creation of a “network of networks” of social organizations and institutions around the world to help build “an international movement in defense of humanity.” President Chávez promised that resources would be provided to establish an office in Venezuela for such a movement.

This Venezuelan initiative is reminiscent of efforts by the Cuban revolution over the past 45 years, and by the Soviet Union in Lenin’s time, to lend support to and join forces with revolutionary processes in other countries. For Cuba, Venezuela represents the strongest anti-imperialist ally it has ever had, and the first such ally since the defeat of the Nicaraguan revolution in the 1980s. The Cuba-Venezuela alignment offers working people worldwide a pole of leadership for anti-imperialist struggle.

### **Character of the Venezuelan Process**

The Venezuela-Cuba agreement noted the “political, social, economic and legal asymmetries” between the two countries. Venezuela has not experienced a social revolution of the Cuban type, where the capitalist rulers are dispossessed and driven from their seats of power and working people take command of the state and economy. In Venezuela, a pro-imperialist bourgeoisie still controls the economy and media and most of the state apparatus, and retains influence in the army.

The Bolivarian movement, which Chávez led into government in 1998, aims for far-reaching social reforms. Following the movement’s victory in the 1998 presidential elections, to the horror of Venezuelan capitalists, it began to implement the radical-democratic program approved by the electorate. This act broke the rules of capitalist “democracy,” according to which electoral promises are discarded the day after the vote.

Moreover, confronted by the resistance of governmental ministries, the Chavistas set up new agencies, the “Misiones,” to implement literacy, public health, and other programs. They invited the Venezuelan working people to organize to carry out and defend these measures—with the help of thousands of revolutionary volunteers from Cuba. And when the Venezuelan capitalists and their imperialist backers rose in fury to put an end to this defiance, the Chavistas organized the masses in militant resistance.

The Bolivarian program does not challenge capitalist property relations. Yet all experience proves that so long as the capitalist ruling class retains control of decisive sectors of the state and economy, they will use this power to frustrate, undermine, destabilize, and ultimately overthrow any government committed to serious reform. Where necessary, the local capitalists, in alliance with their imperialist backers, resort to murderous force and war.

And indeed, there have been three offensives mounted by the Venezuelan capitalists—a bosses’ strike, aimed at devastating the economy; a military coup, [organized with the connivance of the CIA](#); and a recall referendum. All three met decisive defeat. Never before, excepting Cuba, has imperialism been so humiliated in Latin America. The people’s successful overturn of the 2002 military coup *in two days* is unprecedented.

### **Rightists in Disarray**

These events fully deserve the description given them by the Bolivarians: *a revolutionary process*, in which the masses of working people forcibly intervene in political life to challenge the power of the ruling class. These victories have disorganized and demobilized the rightist opposition and forced Washington to postpone plans to overthrow the Venezuelan government.

Following the referendum in the summer of 2004, the pro-Bolivarian parties won majorities in 20 of 22 states in regional elections October 31, 2004. The economy is expanding, with a balanced government budget. Yet the counter-revolution is sure to attack again, more fiercely and more murderously. In [an ominous portent of things to come](#), Danilo Anderson, the government prosecutor investigating the 2002 military coup, was assassinated on November 18.

Venezuela's working people can defend their gains and carry through the Bolivarian program only by driving the capitalists out of their seats of power in the state and the economy, following the example of the Cuban revolution after 1959 and the Russian revolution after October 1917. Such an overturn cannot be carried out by governmental decree. Only working people themselves can make such a revolution, when they are convinced through struggle there is no other road that can preserve their gains and save them from devastating defeat.

Leaders of the Venezuelan process are not unaware of this challenge. Chávez has spoken since the referendum of the need for a "revolution within the revolution." In his address to the December Caracas conference, for example, he "noted the need to study the original principles of socialism as well as its errors. The President ... referred to the importance of early twentieth century Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky's ideas, embodied in 'The Permanent Revolution' and how it explains that there are no national solutions to global problems." ([Robin Nieto](#))

### **New Sources of Strength**

Many socialist groups that look to the Russian revolution as a model have found the Venezuelan process puzzling. Few of these groups supported the popular forces in the August referendum struggle. Many have hesitated, or reacted negatively. Indeed, the Venezuelan process does not correspond to the received blueprint. There is no revolutionary party, no Stalinist party, and nothing that much resembles Social Democracy. The main trade unions lined up with the bosses. Chávez came from the officer corps, and his program is not socialist.

But the Venezuelan process has found new and powerful sources of strength. And the weakness of procapitalist workers' leaderships, who have betrayed so many revolutionary uprisings, is an immense plus. As Fidel Castro noted on December 14, referring to the Bolivarians' struggle for power, "It was a good lesson for revolutionaries. There are no dogmas, nor [is there] only one way of doing things. The Cuban Revolution itself was also proof of that."

In responding to a revolutionary advance, the first rule is to get engaged. Today, that means telling the world's peoples the truth about Venezuela, including the international initiatives of Venezuelan and Cuban revolutionists. It means defending Venezuela and Cuba against the inevitable imperialist assaults.

Socialist Voice #31, December 31, 2004

## **In Defense of Humanity: The Caracas Declaration**

**Translation by *Socialist Voice***

*December 31, 2004*

### **Adopted by the World Assembly of Intellectuals and Artists, Caracas, December 1-5, 2004**

Meeting in Caracas, birthplace of the Liberator, Simón Bolívar, intellectuals and artists from 52 countries and many different cultures join in calling for creation of a wall of resistance against the project of global domination being imposed on the world today.

We live in an epoch in which the UN Charter is not respected, international law is violated, and principles such as non-intervention in countries' internal affairs and respect for sovereignty are denied. In the seized territory of Guantanamo and in Iraq, the Geneva conventions regarding prisoners of war and protection of civilian populations are broken, detainees tortured, and prisons established outside of any law. The invasion and devastation of Iraq, the threats against other Mideast nations, the martyrdom of the Palestinian people, the intervention of great powers in Africa all reveal a decision to impose through fire and blood a system based on force.

In large measure, this aggression aims to appropriate resources of the less developed countries—petroleum, minerals, biodiversity, and water. We support the right of peoples to maintain control of these resources and to resist an intervention aimed at their expropriation.

The crimes against the Iraqi people reveal the extremes to which governments that claim to defend human rights will go. The now devastated city of Fallujah stands at this tragic moment of history as a symbol of heroic resistance.

This plan for domination consists in part of the burden of an illegitimate foreign debt and the scheme to annex Latin America and the Caribbean economically through the “Free Trade Area of the Americas” (FTAA) and other projects that infringe on these nations' independence and prospects for development. There is growing danger of new forms of intervention and aggression in response to the wave of social struggles and change throughout the region. Concepts of “preventive war” and “regime change,” announced as official policy by the United States government, pose a threat to any country that does not bow to imperialist dictates or that has strategic importance. This was seen in the recent intervention in Haiti. It is more urgent than ever to mobilize in solidarity with Venezuela, Cuba, and all the popular movements of the continent.

We also express our solidarity with the peoples of Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, and all those who resist imperialist occupation and aggression.

The mobilization of the most conscious sectors of the U.S. population, together with forces in Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere, is a crucial part of the global struggle against imperialist adventures.

While condemning terrorism, we also oppose the way it has been utilized in the so-called “war against terrorism,” together with the fraudulent use of concepts and values such as democracy,

liberty, and human rights. We reject applying the “terrorism” label to popular resistance struggles, and referring to the oppressors’ aggression as a “war against terrorism.”

While uncounted resources are squandered on the military industry, a silent and devastating extermination takes place daily through hunger, social evils, extreme poverty, curable illness, and epidemics. Those who claim to rule the world and who benefit from neocolonial pillage take no account of the suffering caused by their international financial institutions among the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The lack of any programs to provide a genuine solution to these problems is another sign of the dehumanization that characterizes our epoch.

We take our stand with the struggles of workers, farmers, the unemployed, the exploited, the outcast, and those whose existence is precarious; with the women; with the indigenous peoples and those of African origin; with sexual minorities; with outcast children; with victims of the sex trade. We support and we promise to uphold the demands of those defending their rights and identity against neoliberal globalizers’ totalitarian insistence on homogeneity. Deprived of a basic supply of food, medical attention, electricity, housing, and safe water, a large part of humanity is sacrificed for a system that exhausts natural resources, destroys the environment, and whose irrational and wasteful consumerism endangers the survival of life itself.

The vast majority have little access to education and are excluded from the benefits afforded by new information technology and the production of generic medicines. The prevailing economic system generalizes the commodification of most intellectual production, privatizing it and converting it into a tool to perpetuate the concentration of wealth and the dulling-down of awareness. We must prevent the World Trade Organization, through its policy of transforming the world into commodities, from annihilating cultural diversity.

Concentration of mass media ownership makes a lie of freedom of information. The power of the media serves the drive for hegemony by distorting truth, manipulating history, fomenting diverse forms of discrimination, and promoting resignation in face of the status quo, which they present as the only possible state of affairs.

We must go on the offensive through a number of actions. The first of these, decided by this Assembly, is to create a network of information networks, of cultural, artistic, and solidarity actions, of coordination and mobilization centres, which can link intellectuals and artists with the Social Forums and with popular struggles, and guarantees the continuity of these forces and their ties to an international movement “In Defense of Humanity.”

We must counteract the hegemonic centres’ propaganda by spreading the idea of emancipation through every avenue: radio and TV, Internet, alternative press, film, community resources, etc. We must disseminate projects for development, and experiences in participation and popular education, so that they can provide a factual basis for the development of the utopias that drive history forward.

The reality of Venezuela shows that popular mobilization can conquer and maintain power for the people and can promote and defend massive changes in the people’s interest. We are grateful

to the Bolivarian government, the Venezuelan people, and their president, Hugo Chávez, for their commitment to the future of this international movement.

In this hour of great danger we express our conviction that a different world is not only possible but indispensable, and we commit ourselves to struggle for it with greater solidarity, unity, and determination. In defense of humanity, we reaffirm our certainty that the people will have the last word.