

-Mission Statement- **Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba**

On May 6th 2004, US president George W. Bush announced a new set of attacks on the people of Cuba. This culminated in a \$59 million plan over two years, placing new travel restrictions on Cuban-Americans and was ultimately aimed at overthrowing Cuba's independent government. These new attacks caused worldwide outrage and generated increased international momentum in defense of Cuba. In British-Columbia, this new momentum was lead by young people, working people, people of the third world and other oppressed people who came together to defend the gains of the Cuban revolution and Cuba's right to self-determination. This initiative is Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC).

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba is committed to organizing consistently and passionately in support of the Cuban people. We have taken on two main campaigns: First, to lift the cruel US blockade against Cuba. Secondly, to Free the Five Cuban Heroes imprisoned in US jails. We have used these two dynamic campaigns not only to defend Cuba against imperialist attacks, but also to educate young, working and oppressed people in Vancouver about the experience of Cuba.

We discuss and inform people across the Lower Mainland and BC about how the Cuban people have faced the blockade, large-scale terrorism, and all out aggression by the United States for the last 45 years, and have still risen to the #1 position in Latin America in life expectancy, literacy and doctors, and the lowest infant mortality rate. We inform people about Cuba's dedication to the principles and implementation of mass mobilization, voluntary work, and internationalism. And we apply the lessons learned from the leadership of Cuban people to our own fights for dignity and human rights within Canada and around the world.

VCSC calls on all individuals and organizations with an interest in defending Cuba to come together in defense of the Cuban revolution and the gains of the heroic Cuban people to build a movement united with Cuba, with each other, and with all oppressed people worldwide against the United States criminal aggression against Cuba and the Cuban people.



The Blockade **A Failed Coup of Over Forty Years**

In 1959, 90% of telephone and electricity services, over 50% of the railways, and over 70% of the land in Cuba was owned by American institutions. A series of brutal dictators had been imposed by the US government which ensured all resources were funneled off the island at the expense of an increasingly poverty stricken population.



In 1959 the Cuban people overthrew the US imposed dictator Batista and formed a government to represent their interests and right to self-determination. A brief look at the history of United States intervention in Cuba since 1959 clearly shows the

United States objective in Cuba: to overthrow the revolutionary Cuban government. One of the first of such examples was the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 which was organized and funded by the United States. During this battle the Cuban people rose up to defend their revolution and won. The US and remnants of the wealthy Cuban elite fled to Miami to continue to carry out terrorist attacks on Cuba.

Groups, such as Omega 7, Brigada 2506 and Comandos F4, have been funded and trained through the US Government's CIA. They have been directly responsible for the deaths of over 3,500 Cubans since 1959 through continued terrorist campaigns that include bombings, water and livestock contamination, and assassinations.

When it became clear to the U.S. that they would be unable to directly dominate Cuban people any longer, it ceased all diplomatic relations and imposed a full economic blockade around the island. Over the last 45 years the blockade has prevented Cuba from accessing much needed outside sources such as food, medicines and provisions. Under the Torrecelli Act of 1992, ships of any nationality, which have docked in Cuba or are transporting Cuban merchandise are unable to dock in the U.S. for 160 days afterwards. In 1991 Cuban trade with foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies was \$718 million, with 92% of that total being foodstuffs and medicines. This new measure severely limited the basic-necessity trading despite the passing of minor amendments regarding the sale of food and medicine by U.S. companies. Officially named the "Cuban Democracy Act" it does nothing more than limit Cuban peoples access to food and medicines. As well, the Act assumes the right to decide officially and publicly on the affairs of sovereign

attributes of other nations, such as who they chose to trade with.

In 1996, the United States announced the Helms-Burton Act - which not only forbids American companies from trading with Cuba, but also seeks to penalize and criminalize foreign companies who trade with Cuba. These harsh, arbitrary, and domineering measures have failed to dampen the spirits of the Cuban people and have led to a worldwide denunciation of the blockade. In October 2004, the United Nations general assembly voted for the 13th consecutive year to condemn the US blockade against Cuba. The vote was overwhelmingly in Cuba's favor with 179 countries voting to condemn the blockade while only 4 voted against the motion with one country abstaining.

Extradite Posada to Venezuela! **Defend Cuba Against Terrorist Attacks!**

In May 2005, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) took on the campaign to demand the extradition of anti-Cuban terrorist Luis Posada Carriles. Posada is a convicted and self-admitted anti-Cuban terrorist and former CIA agent, who's terrorist resume includes: The 1976 bombing of an Air Cubana flight that killed all 73 people onboard (confirmed by declassified FBI and CIA documents); a string of hotel bombings in 1997 killing an Italian tourist and wounding 11 others (of which Posada boasted to a New York Times journalist); and a planned assassination of Fidel Castro using plastic explosives at a Panamanian university (of which he was convicted and jailed).

Posada escaped from prison in Venezuela while awaiting trial for the 1976 airliner bombing. In April 2005, Posada came to the United States where he was demanding asylum from his terrorist crimes. Protests were organized around the world demanding Posada's extradition to Venezuela to face the charge of the 1976 bombing which killed 73 people. Shortly after, the US administration arrested Posada, but only on immigration charges, not for any of his terrorist crimes. Venezuela has since made a formal extradition request for Posada to the United States, with whom they have an extradition treaty. Cuba has echoed this demand, but the United States is continuing to protect their former CIA agent. Posada's current claim against his extradition is that he could face torture if extradited to Venezuela. This is a baseless and hypocritical claim, especially considering Posada's lengthily career as a terrorist and torturer.

The case of Posada as well as the case of the Cuban Five (see next page) force us to ask the questions: Why is the United States, a leader in the supposed "war against terrorism," protecting a well-known and self-admitted terrorist? Why has the United States imprisoned five Cubans who came to the United States to expose terrorists like Posada?

The answer is basically that the US administration is protecting Posada because they share the same interest. Both are defenders of imperialist interests and are against the gains of the Cuban revolution. The case of Posada and the case of the Cuban Five expose the hypocrisy of the United States supposed "war on terror." We must continue to demand: "Extradite Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela Now!"

Free THE CUBAN HEROES HELD IN US JAILS



Who are the Cuban Five?

They are five Cuban men who are in prison in the US for simply defending their country, Cuba, from terrorist acts by extremist right-wing groups of Cuban exiles in Miami. These five heroes never harmed anyone, yet they are in prison while anti-Cuba extremists whom they tried to stop are being protected by the US administration.

The Five Cubans are: René González, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero and Gerardo Hernández. They were convicted in a US federal court on June 8th 2001 in a politically charged trial. The US government claimed that they were engaged in espionage on US military bases and threatened “national security”. The espionage charges- and related charges – are a complete fabrication, and yet their sentences ranged from 15 years to two life sentences.

The five Cubans were strictly involved in monitoring the actions of terrorist right-wing groups in Miami. For more than 40 years, anti-Cuban right-wing groups in Miami have engaged in countless terrorist activities against Cuba, against Cuban-Americans and anyone who calls for a normalization of relations between Cuba and the U.S. Those organizations were established with the financing, training and backing of the C.I.A., in the early 1960s. Their sole aim was to sow terror and violence against the people of Cuba, after they had successfully ousted hated dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959 and began to build a new society.

Because of the repeated failure — and indeed refusal — of the U.S. government to act against known criminals whose sole aim is to cause death and destruction on the Cuban people, Cuba found it necessary for its self-defense to send in these five brothers to prevent future attacks by monitoring the groups' actions.

Gerardo, René, Antonio, Fernando, and Ramón are innocent and must be free. Their actions required a great deal of sacrifice and personal risk to infiltrate such organizations. They are heroes, not criminals!

For Updates on these Cases and VCSC campaigns please visit our website at: www.vancubasolidarity.com



Defend Cuba! Get Involved!

VCSC calls on all individuals and organizations with an interest in defending Cuba to come together in defense of Cuba to build a movement united with Cuba, with each other and with all oppressed people worldwide against imperialism. We hold bi-weekly meetings open to anyone with an interest in Cuba solidarity work.

***Call or Email for Meeting Times
and Locations:***

778 882 5223

cubacommunities@yahoo.ca

VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM

Vancouver COMMUNITIES IN SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA

VCSC