

stop the war! stop the occupations!

www.mawovancouver.org

MAWO 22

newsletter 2nd Edition

April 2009

mobilization against war & occupation

From Afghanistan to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside: Stop the War at Home and Abroad!

For seven years the government of Canada has been waging a war in Afghanistan. When this war began in October 2001, the US and Canada declared that this was a war to 'liberate' Afghan people and to bring democracy and human rights to Afghanistan.

As of April 2009, what has this war and occupation of Afghanistan by the US, Canada and NATO brought to Afghan people? Certainly not freedom and democracy. Estimates of the death toll of this war are at 50,000 or more – although there are no official counts, since, according to NATO officials themselves, most of the time the "enemy" casualties are not counted - therefore the number is most likely much higher.

The war

people living on welfare or on low wages - have been closed or converted to more expensive housing. Seventy-six units of social housing have also been closed in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, the poorest postal code in Canada.

The number of homeless people in Canada has increased – but not just people thought of as 'high-risk' – people with mental health or addiction problems, for ex-

MONEY FOR HOUSING, NOT FOR WAR
Poverty + Homelessness = War at Home

ample. People from different walks of life and layers of society are now facing homelessness as well. As more low-income housing is closed, there are whole families – often with one or both parents working – sleeping on friends' couches, in shelters, in tents, or on the streets. According to Simon Fraser University research scientist Michelle Patterson, "Families are one of the fastest-growing groups showing up at shelters. The reasons for this include a rise in poverty, changing job markets and a lack of affordable housing. Pressures such as cuts to social programs and an ever-tightening rental market also put many families at risk." (Report: The Faces of Homelessness Across BC)

Today, Canada's homelessness crisis is worse than it was even during the Great Depression of the 1930s. As the worldwide economic crisis deepens, it is going to get even worse. In the last four months, over 400,000 people in Canada have lost their jobs, with no end to the layoffs in sight. This will no doubt put hundreds or thousands more on the streets.

This is the 'liberation' which Canada has brought to Afghanistan.

But should this really surprise us? After all, the government of Canada has not even succeeded in establishing human rights in within its own border - how could Canada claim to solve problems of any other country? The growing poverty and homelessness crisis in this country is the best proof of that.

War at Home

Across every province and through every town, there are increasing numbers of people living without the basic human right to shelter. It is estimated that 200,000 to 300,000 people in Canada spent this winter without a home – a number so huge that emergency shelters certainly cannot keep up.

Across Canada, Vancouver is the city most known for its homelessness crisis – and with good reason. Homelessness in Vancouver has more than tripled since 2002, and while the Metro Vancouver annual homeless count puts the number of homeless people in the Vancouver area at 2,500, homeless count volunteers report that the number could be more accurately placed at 8,000.

And yet nothing is being done to curb this humanitarian crisis. On the contrary, over the last four months 174 single-room occupancies (SROs – low budget, typically poorly maintained 10'x10' hotel rooms), often the only housing available to

people living on welfare or on low wages - have been closed or converted to more expensive housing. Seventy-six units of social housing have also been closed in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, the poorest postal code in Canada.

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Money for Housing, Not for War!

While the government of Canada is waging a war abroad against poor and working people in Afghanistan, they are also waging a war at home against poor and working people in this country, through cuts to social housing, welfare, and other vital social programs. More than \$11 billion taxpayer dollars have already been spent on the war in Afghanistan. This number is projected to reach \$22 billion – or \$1500 per family in Canada – by 2011. How many people in Canada could be housed with that money? How many could be kept employed? It is not only hypocrisy that Canada is claiming to bring 'democracy and human rights' to Afghanistan while they have not accomplished this task here; it is an outright lie that this war in Afghanistan benefits people here or in Afghanistan.

As peace and justice loving people in this country, we must fight for a dignified life for people here in Canada and in Afghanistan. We must mobilize now to demand funding for housing, jobs, and social programs in this country and end to the illegal, brutal and unjust war in Afghanistan. However, our tasks and human and political obligation cannot end just with a show of protest. Ongoing public education, ongoing public mobilization – all with a coherent and unified method – is required in order to achieve an effective result.

MONEY FOR HOUSING, NOT FOR WAR!
STOP THE WAR AT HOME AND ABROAD!

Canada Must Embrace U.S. War Resisters

The defense of American War Resisters, soldiers who refuse to fight in Iraq and come to Canada demanding refugee status, is an important struggle for the antiwar movement and for poor and working people here in Canada, the U.S. and all over the world. When Jeremy Hinzman became the first U.S. soldier to cross the border in 2004 he immediately became a part of the anti-war movement in Canada. He spoke at rallies and forums and made his claim public, highlighting the violation of his rights as a soldier and the gross reality of the U.S.' war and occupation of Iraq.

Most importantly, Hinzman did not stand alone for long, as many others have joined him. In February 2005 the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) denied Hinzman refugee status, but this has not intercepted the flow of U.S. War Resisters into Canada. Since the war on Iraq began, the Pentagon admits that 15,000 soldiers have gone AWOL (Absent Without Leave). Countless numbers (with estimates of between 300 to more than 600) of these soldiers are underground in cities all across Canada or waiting around the border. Approximately 40 to 50 have come forward to file for asylum. It is important that soldiers who refuse to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan be given the space to speak out against these wars. We must defend these soldiers of humanity and fight against their deportations in order to prevent them to be persecuted for their conscientious objection to the war.



U.S. War Resisters at press conference in Toronto, Ontario, 2007.

U.S. War Resisters in Canada are not silent, but powerful opponents to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As U.S. soldiers, they have a perspective and voice that no one else can provide; many have fought on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan and have seen destruction, death and the everyday life of people living under occupation. These soldiers' words are deeply human and come directly from poor and working people in the U.S. - people who face intensifying recruitment tactics and monetary incentives as the Army struggles to meet enlistment quotas. Their words come amidst the quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan; as people who were forced to join the military as the only means to an educa-

tion and a viable future.

Darrell Anderson, a soldier who spent seven months in Iraq before returning home on a short leave and seeking refuge in Canada, has participated in numerous anti-war events all over Eastern Canada. He returned to the U.S. in September 2006. "The First steps you take in Baghdad, you realize that there's death and destruction all over the place. No weapons of mass destruction in sight. We're fighting people that we're supposed to help, but in fact they hate you and every time you walk down the street they shoot at you because you occupy their country. You're asked to get in their houses, in their businesses, block the roads, but you're an occupying power, you're messing up their daily life. You're not a liberator."

Although 64 percent of Canadians are in favour of granting permanent residency to U.S. War Resisters, the Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper has so far rejected all of the deserters' requests. The soldiers, referred to as "War Resisters" by their supporters, are awaiting review from the country's federal courts to determine their fate.

American War Resisters in Canada not only weaken the occupation forces in Iraq and Afghanistan by refusing to fight, but also provide a strong and necessary voice to the anti-war movement.

Youth and students, and poor and working people in Canada must demand full refugee status for War Resisters!

Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), a Vancouver anti-war coalition, has been active in defending U. S. War Resisters for years now. Please visit www.mawovancouver.org to sign the petition. MAWO also supports the War Resister Support Campaign in Canada. To get involved please visit <http://www.resisters.ca/>

WE DEMAND REFUGEE STATUS FOR US WAR RESISTERS IN CANADA NOW!
SUPPORT AND DEFEND WAR RESISTERS!
END THE OCCUPATIONS OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN!

Mobilization Against War and Occupation Statement in Support of Anti-War MP George Galloway, BANNED FROM CANADA

Grant Visa to George Galloway!

Stop Harassing Political Activists!

April 1, 2009

On Tuesday March 24th, supporters of the recently banned British MP George Galloway packed the Federal Court demanding that he be allowed into Canada. Once again the courts and hearing rooms in Canada have been filled with people defending the basic right to speak out against war and occupation.

Mobilization Against War and Occupation –MAWO, stands in solidarity with George Galloway in his struggle against the Government of Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency responsible for this unjustifiable banning.

The banning of George Galloway is further indication of the undemocratic nature of the government of Canada. When, in September 2007, MAWO Co-chair Alison Bodine was politically targeted as an antiwar and social justice activist

and harassed when crossing the border into Canada, this undemocratic nature was also clearly revealed. (Alison is currently banned from Canada for two years). Not long after, Code Pink Women for Peace co-founder Medea Benjamin and well-known social justice activist Ann Wright were both denied entry to Canada after being turned away from the border for having "criminal records" because they had dared to deliver a petition in defense of women's rights to the UN! Ann Wright was later banned from Canada for one year.

Further revealed was the apprehension the government of Canada felt when it came to opposition to the Canadian occupation of Afghanistan and immigrants, refugees and all people in Canada taking a stand for their human and democratic rights.

George Galloway was banned from Canada less than two weeks after the CBSA and the government of Canada rolled out the red carpet for former president of the United States, the criminal George W. Bush. When



Saturday April 25
2pm
Vancouver Art Gallery
(Robson St. Side)

TO GET INVOLVED IN ORGANIZING AROUND POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS IN VANCOUVER, CONTACT:

Citywide Housing Coalition (CHC)

www.citywidehousingcoalition.org
info@citywidehousingcoalition.org



Statements by Cuba, Venezuela, and Bolivia

Three Latin American Governments Condemn Israel's Attack on Gaza

The Revolutionary Government of Cuba has not had diplomatic relations with Israel since 1973, when it broke all ties prior to Israel's brutal invasion of the Golan Heights. It has continued its strong support of the Palestinian people, issuing a statement condemning Israel's siege on Gaza as "the bloodiest attack Israel has ever launched against the Palestinian people," and reiterating "its unswerving solidarity and support for the heroic and long-suffering Palestinian people."

Venezuela followed this important example, expelling its Israeli Ambassador on January 6th and cutting all diplomatic relations with Israel on January 14th. The Venezuelan government also issued a statement emphasizing, "In this tragic and outrageous time, the people of Venezuela express their unequivocal solidarity with the Palestinian people...and affirm that the Venezuelan government will not rest until it sees punishment falling on those responsible for these atrocious crimes."

Bolivia has promised to take Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, to the International Criminal Court for "genocide", after also breaking all diplomatic relations with Israel on January 14th. President Evo Morales stated, "The international community cannot allow this genocide in Palestine to go on," and the Bolivian government pledged to work with Venezuela to send food aid to the Gaza Strip.

Venezuela's first aid shipment, containing 12.5 tons of medicine, has already arrived in Egypt.

Astonishing Victory for Palestinians! Israel's Crushing Defeat in Gaza mawo 2nd statement - january 22 2009

On December 27, 2008, the government of Israel opened a new era of the genocide of Palestinian people in Gaza. The bloodshed and destruction in Gaza conducted by the Israeli army resulted in the killing of hundreds, the injuring of thousands, and the destruction of thousands of homes, schools, roads and mosques, as well as UN centers where thousands of civilians, including mothers and children, were sheltered. It has now been established all around the world that decades of the indiscriminate, racist killing of innocent Palestinians by the Israeli and United States' ruling elites have caused the Palestinian Holocaust.

Israel has established in Gaza an astonishing and crushing defeat. The simple proof of this is that NONE of the declared goals of Israel's Olmert-Barak-Livni government have been achieved. The Israeli army reached the Mediterranean shore of Gaza only to destroy everything in its path. While the Israeli Zionist regime was busy slaughtering Palestinians, the whole world strongly condemned Israel for this savage aggression. The Israeli government was criticized or condemned by dozens of countries for its cruelty and lack of humanity. The governments of Venezuela and Bolivia expelled the Israeli ambassadors from their countries. The Turkish foreign minister announced before the ceasefire that Israel's foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, was not welcomed in Turkey. Israel has never been so isolated and so abhorrent in the minds of the people of the

Israeli army killed a family of four Palestinians.

Israel did not have to kill 1,330 people, half of whom are children and their mothers. They did not have to wound more than 5,000 and destroy 5,000 homes, schools and mosques. They did not have to poison the living conditions of Palestinians with depleted uranium (DU) and white phosphorus bombs to stop Hamas rockets. Israel did this after they found that all their measures of intimidation and repression against Hamas and the Palestinians could not affect the Palestinian will of resistance and struggle. In fact, 22 days of ongoing killings and the demolition of Gaza was basically a collective punishment of Palestinians. All the atrocities that the Israeli army



Women carry Venezuelan and Palestinian flags in a protest against Israeli attack on Gaza. Nablus, West Bank, January 11 2009

committed Gaza were under the leadership of Israeli leaders such as Ehud Olmert, Ehud Barak and Tzipi Livni. They certainly undermined the Geneva Human Rights Convention and committed crimes against humanity.

We need to tell the truth about the so-called ceasefire currently in Gaza, because practically there is no real ceasefire. The Israeli army is still shelling Gaza, the border crossings are still closed, combat airplanes are still flying close to earth to create panic and fear, and the blockade of Gaza is still strongly maintained. There are severe shortages of everything: bread, sugar, basic foods, medicine. There is truly a human crisis in Gaza. These are all acts of war. The Israeli government never truly abandoned war on the Gazan population; they are just continuing it in different ways and forms. It is a huge responsibility for the antiwar movement to address this issue by educating, organizing and mobilizing all people against this injustice. Our response must not be just reactive to the events in Gaza or in all of Palestine;



Israeli bombing of the UN-run primary school in Beit Lahiya, Gaza with deadly toxin white phosphorus. January 17, 2009.

rather it must be an ongoing campaign against the Zionist, apartheid regime of Israel. It is easy to here and there pass resolutions to condemn Israel, but the point is to create a mechanism in which millions of people can participate actively to isolate the racist Israeli government. Since the Israeli government has advanced itself to an apartheid-holocaust regime, it must be boycotted. The labour movement and labour unions must refuse to do any service related to Israel. People of the world have a human obligation to stop Israel's madness against the innocent people of Palestine. This holocaust must be ended. This moral cancer must be cured. Long live Palestine!

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PALESTINE!
RIGHT OF RETURN FOR PALESTINIANS!
STOP GENOCIDE IN PALESTINE!
LIFT THE BLOCKADE ON GAZA!

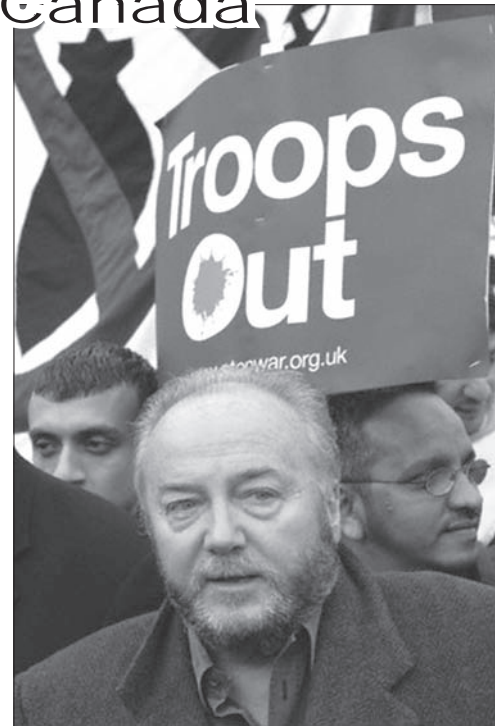
Anti-war MP George Galloway Banned from Canada

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the government of Canada attempts to silence anti-war and social justice voices, but welcomes a person who for eight years was the head of a government responsible for countless murders and crimes against humanity, it is a clear message not only to people in Canada, but also people all over the world that whom the government of Canada sides with. No doubt, the government of Canada supports the war criminals and silences those that work for basic human rights and are opposed to imperialist war and occupation.

Without a doubt the Immigration Minister of Canada, Jason Kenney, could at any moment lift the ban against George Galloway so that he could share his experiences and his knowledge with students, workers, anti war and social justice organizers all over Canada. We demand Jason Kenney lift the ban immediately, regardless of the many successful appearances of George Galloway via video in meetings across Canada this week. People in Canada have the right to hear his important voice in person!

During the three months of the campaign from September to November 2007 to drop all charges against Alison Bodine, and the continuing 10,000 signature campaign to Lift the Ban! what we have learned through the Alison Bodine Defence Committee is not only the hypocrisy and injustice of the Canadian border policy, but also the necessity that we stand up and fight back united! George Galloway has vowed to continue his fight against his unjustified banning, and we will continue to stand by him.



We also will continue to stand by all people in Canada fighting for their basic human rights to organize against war and occupation and defend our human and democratic rights!

LET GEORGE GALLOWAY INTO CANADA!
THE CBSA WILL NOT SILENCE US!
LIFT THE BAN ON ALISON BODINE!
DEFEND THE BASIC RIGHTS OF EVERYONE IN CANADA TO STAND UP AND SPEAK OUT AGAINST WAR AND OCCUPATION!




Protest against Israel's attack on Gaza. Hebron, West Bank, January 9, 2009.

world as it is today. This is a huge defeat for Israel, which suffered a blow in turning public opinion to its disadvantage, not to mention their political and military defeat.

But the recent ceasefire in Gaza did not bring a favourable situation for Palestinians. Israel still holds part of their army in Gaza, the border crossings are just partially open and only a few goods are permitted through. The Israeli government is continuing the complete blockade of Gaza and is refusing entry to independent shipments of aid to Gaza from sea, air and land. Israeli gunboats and artillery are still shelling Gaza randomly, and since the so-called ceasefire they have killed people and damaged dozens of homes. They even refuse to allow medical teams and medicine to regularly get in to Gaza. Enough is enough! The world must take action and demand that the blockade of Gaza be lifted completely and immediately. This blockade, this crime against humanity, will not defeat Palestinians.

Israel attacked Gaza not because Hamas sent rockets to Israel. In fact, Hamas did not renew the six-month ceasefire, which started at the beginning of summer 2008, because from Hamas' point of view, it never existed. The government of Israel did not act upon their commitment to the agreement between themselves and Hamas during the six-month ceasefire. During this time, the Israeli army repeatedly broke the so-called ceasefire by shelling Palestinian homes and infrastructure, killing 17 people and continuing the blockade, even reinforcing it in Gaza. Hamas started sending low-range rockets to Israel and refusing to renew the ceasefire only after the

CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN NOW!




FREE PUBLIC FORUM
multimedia • speakers • discussion

Wednesday
May 6
6:30pm
Joe's Cafe
(1150 Commercial Dr)

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION:

- >> the deepening social, economic, and political crisis in afghanistan
- >> president obama's escalation of war in afghanistan
- >> expansion of war in afghanistan to pakistan
- >> canada's deepening quagmire in afghanistan
- >> what next?



organized by **mobilization against war & occupation (mawo)**
WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG

Get involved



Meetings
Wednesdays - 6:30PM
For location, please visit our website:
mawovancouver.org
e. info@mawovancouver.org
t. 604-322-1764
f. 604-322-1763

with MAWO!