As the world enters a new decade, one thing above all is clear: this will be a decade of war and occupation—the bloodiest decade ever. The last decade opened with a new era of war and occupation launched by the United States. The attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001 were used to justify the invasions and occupations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Lebanon, Sudan, Somalia and Pakistan. The new decade has already opened with new attacks on oppressed peoples and on independent and sovereign nations around the world.

The news continues almost uninterrupted for hours. There were no images available and it was said that many stouter constructions like public buildings, hospitals, schools and other facilities had also collapsed. I have read that a 7.3 earthquake equals the energy released by the explosion of 400,000 tons of TNT. The descriptions were dramatic. In the streets, the wounded cried for medical help surrounded by ruins and the families cried under the debris. But, for many hours no one could broadcast any image. The news took us all by surprise. Rather often we heard news of hurricanes and last winter's record snowfall in Haiti but we did not know that our neighbor was threatened by a major earthquake. It surfaced now that the city of Port-au-Prince, a major earthquake had hit that city, which at the time was certainly inhabited by a few thousand people. At midnight there was still no estimate of the number of victims. Senior UN officials and various Heads of Government spoke of the impressive event and announced that they would be sending rescue teams and aid. Since MINUSTAH-- UN international forces-- are deployed there some Defense ministers spoke of the vulnerability of casualties among their personnel.

Actually, it was yesterday morning that sad news started flowing in on the high number of human casualties in the population and even such institutions as the United Nations reported that some of their buildings in that country had collapsed; a word that usually does not say much but that could mean a lot under the circumstances. For hours increasingly dramatic news of the situation in that country continued to flow uninterrupted with reports of different numbers of dead bodies that depending on which version fluctuated between 30 thousand and 100 thousand. Some images are appalling. Obviously, the catastrophic event has been widely reported all over the world and many governments, sincerely moved, are extending their efforts to cooperate to the extent of their capabilities. A lot of people are sincerely touched by the tragedy, especially natural unassum- ing people but perhaps few stop to think why Haiti is such a poor country and why it is so well known that its population depends of family remittances. And in this context, would it not be proper to analyze the reality leading to the current situation of Haiti and its huge suffering?

It is amazing that no one says a word on the fact that Haiti was the first country where 400 thousand Africans, enslaved and brought to this land by European slave traders, rebelled against 30 thousand white owners of sugar plantations and succeeded in making the first real revolution in the history of the world. Pages of insurmountable glory were then written there where Napoleon's most outstanding general tasted defeat. Haiti is the complete product of colonialism and imperialism, of more than a century of using its human resources in the hardest labor, of military interventions and the extraction of its wealth. Such a historic oblivion would not be so grave if it were not because Haiti is an embarrassment in our times, in a world where the exploitation and plundering of the overwhelming majority of people on the planet prevails.

Billions of people in Latin America, Africa and Asia endure similar privation although probably not suffered in such high proportion as Haiti. No place on earth should be affected by such situations, even though there are tens of thousands of towns and villages in similar and sometimes worse conditions resulting from an unfair economic and political international order imposed worldwide. The world population is not only threatened by natural catastrophes like that of Haiti that is but a pale example of what can happen to the functioning of the whole of humanity because of the climate change; an issue that was the target of the Kyoto treaty and subsequent processes. It is fair to say that people and institutional leaders are neglecting the catastrophe in Haiti and Haiti's lesson is that there is no avoidance of disaster and no increase in military interventions and occupation for the sake of the lives of people of the world.
Haiti’s Lesson continued from front page

In Haiti, the US and Canada are taking advantage of the massive humanitarian crisis to reinforce and consolidate their occupation of the country. The illegal military occupation of Haiti which ousted elected President Jean Berard Aristide in 2004 has only kept the country in absolute poverty and social distribution. Today Haiti is the poorest country in the Western hemisphere.

The UN occupation troops as well as US/Canada/France soldiers and advisors have killed and injured thousands of civilians in the name of bringing freedom and democracy to the country. In the wake of the terrible earthquake, Canada is sending 800 troops and the US is sending 10,000 troops to Haiti not for humanitarian assistance, but to control the country and suppress any potential opposition to the occupation and to the lack of basic good medical care especially after the tragic earthquake. This will not help the Haitian people recover from this disaster. What is needed urgently right now is doctors and humanitarian aid, not occupation troops.

The onslaught of new attacks on oppressed people around the world must be met with a campaign against war and occupation and for peace, justice and self-determination. From the Middle East to Africa to Asia, from Latin America and the Caribbean to North America and Europe, we must unite in the demands:

ALL FOREIGN TROOPS OUT OF HAITI NOW!
SEND DOCTORS, NOT TROOPS TO HAITI NOW!
RETURN PRESIDENT ARISTIDE TO HAITI!
END THE OCCUPATIONS OF IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, PALESTINE, AND HAITI!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR INDIGENOUS NATIONS, TAMILS AND ALL OPPRESSED NATIONS!
US HANDS OFF PAKISTAN, IRAN AND YEMEN!
STOP ATTACKS ON MUSLIMS!

MAWO STATEMENT ON NEW ATTACKS ON MUSLIMS AND MUSLIM FRAUD IN HAITI continued from the front page

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Haiti after the Earthquake: Why are there more foreign Troops than Doctors?

Wednesday February 10th 6:30PM

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www.mawovancouver.org

Meetings

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Cuban Consulate, 401 Commercial Drive

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HAITI'S LESSON continued from front page

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