

## Report Back from Repeal Bill C-51 Conference Feb. 28, 2016

SFU Harbour Centre (Vancouver, Canada)

### No to all Forms of Terrorism! No to Racism! No to Islamophobia! Our Security Lies in Defending the Rights of All!



The "Repeal Bill C-51!" 2016 Conference in Vancouver was a huge success! Over 70 people came together to discuss how best to move forward to build the movement to repeal this anti-human, anti-democratic law. Over 3 months after the election of Justin Trudeau and the Liberals the hated Bill C-51 continues to be law. Canada's spy agency CSIS has already admitted to using its secretive new measures, while the Liberals continue to make vague promises of possible amendments and consultations. The conference was an important opportunity to discuss how to move forward in this new context to defend our human and democratic rights.

The Conference was organized by the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51, which is nearing one year of consecutive weekly actions against Bill C-51. These actions have become well known across Canada, and have served as an important tool for continuing the public campaign to Repeal Bill C-51.

The diverse movement against Bill C-51 was well represented by the six speakers in the two conference panels: "What is the State of Bill C-51 Today?" and "Building the Movement to Repeal Bill C-51. Audrey Siegl also opened the conference with an official Musqueam Welcome.

Micheal Vonn of the BC Civil Liberties Association, Dr. Samir Gandesha, Director of SFU Institute for the Humanities and Charles Boylan, the Coordinator of the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 formed the first panel. Together they gave a detailed analysis of the origins of Bill C-51, the international crackdown on dissent, and the challenges posed by the the new government of Canada which has promised, "Real Change Now" but definitely has not delivered this on Bill C-51.

The first workshop was chaired by Jean Ardila of the Human Rights & International Solidarity Committee of the Education & Training Employee Association and the second workshop by Bowinn Ma of Stop

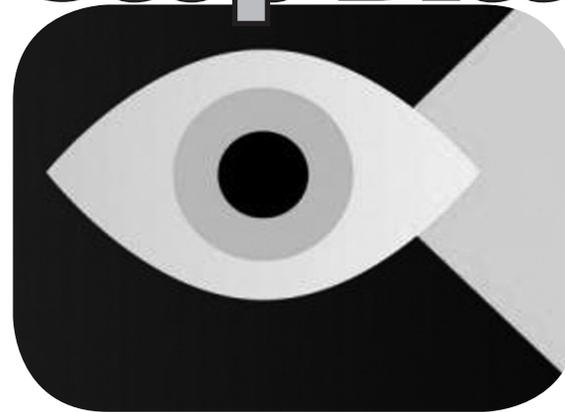
Bill C-51 and United We Stand.

During the second panel, Chief Bob Chamberlin, Vice President of Union of BC Indian Chiefs, George Davison, President of the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators and Thomas Davies of the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 discussed how best to move forward to organize to repeal Bill C-51. The common sentiment was that Bill C-51 is an attack on so many sectors of society, it therefore opens massive possibilities for unity and coordination as the demand to Repeal Bill C-51 is in all of our interests.

Over half the conference was devoted to discussion between all of the participants. There was never a lull in discussion, as people asked questions of the presenters, and also shared their own analysis and ideas on how to move forward.

The conference closed with an open invitation by that the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 is to join its 51st picket action in 51 weeks against Bill C-51. The conference reaffirmed the necessity to continue to educate, organize and mobilize to demand that Justin Trudeau and the government of Canada, "REPEAL BILL C-51!" They must constantly be reminded that not only do people across Canada want this law repealed, but they are also willing to organize against it.

# Stop Bill C-51!



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## REPEAL "POLICE STATE" ACT BILL C-51!

### Statement of the Working Group to Stop "Police State Act" Bill C-51

#### What is Bill C-51?

Bill C-51 is the name of a new bill which became law in Canada on June 18, 2015. It gives huge new powers to the RCMP and Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to violate important human rights such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and the right to privacy. It also greatly lowers the requirement of evidence before arrest and allows for increased secrecy in court proceeding.

The Harper Conservative government backed by Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party tried to justify these massive changes as part of the "War on Terrorism" while major organizations such as the Canadian Bar Association, Amnesty

International, and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association have all spoken out against Bill C-51 as dangerous and unnecessary. A recent United Nations review of Canada's adherence to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights declared that the law should be re-written because it, "imposes undue restrictions on the exercise of rights under the Covenant."

*"The scale of information sharing being proposed is unprecedented, the scope of the new powers conferred by the act is excessive, particularly as these powers affect ordinary Canadians, and the safeguards protecting against unreasonable loss of privacy are seriously deficient."* - Daniel Therrien, Privacy Commissioner of Canada *next page*



**Working Group to Stop Bill C-51**  
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### **How Does Bill C-51 Work? Some of the Most Important Points**

- Bill C-51 allows the government to arrest, interrogate, prosecute, imprison, even perform torture techniques similar those used at the infamous US Guantanamo Bay Detention Centre, against those accused of speech “promoting” and “advocating” “terrorism in general”, while purposely not defining what these terms mean.
- It also expands the meaning of “Terrorism” to include unclear and broad formulations such as, “interference” with “various aspects of public life”, “the economic or financial stability of Canada” or “critical infrastructure”
- It allows the arrest of someone who “may” commit a terrorist attack instead of the previous standard of “will”. Law enforcement agencies can now act on speculation instead of real evidence.
- CSIS is now explicitly granted the ability to break laws and violate individual rights recognized in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms - if they can find one judge to allow it. CSIS, which was previously limited only to investigative powers, now also has the ability to “disrupt” suspected terror activity. What “disruption” means is not explained.

- Finally, Bill C-51 also allows 17 federal departments and agencies the ability to share all personal information they may hold on anyone and everyone. Previously this information would have been confidential.

### **How Does Bill C-51 Affect You?**

The big changes made by Bill C-51 are so broad and so undefined that everyone is now open to be spied on, “disrupted” or detained. Bill C-51 criminalizes speech, and is obviously open to abuse by the



### **What Can I Do?**

Despite 6 months of growing protests and polls showing a clear majority of people in Canada opposed to Bill C-51, the government still forced Bill C-51 into law. However, the good news is that the fight is not over! Groups across Canada continue to organize against Bill C-51.

Although the law was passed during the Conservative Party’s rule, newly elected Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau along side every Liberal MP voted in favor of Bill C-51.

A change in government has not reversed this unjust law.

The best thing we can all do is get informed and get active! The repeal of Bill C-51 is achievable and will be an important step against a whole trend of legislation which purports to be opposing terrorism, but in effect further disempowers the Canadian people and divides our society on a racist and religious basis. In Vancouver, the Working Group to Oppose Bill C-51 is always looking for more people to get involved. Five

### **Get involved in weekly actions to repeal Bill C-51!**

Picket Action  
**Monday February 29**  
**4PM**  
 City Centre Station  
 Broadway @ Cambie  
 Vancouver

**BANNER DROP**  
**Monday March 7**  
**4PM**  
 call or email for location

simple things you can do are:

- 1) Sign our petition demanding Parliament repeal Bill C-51
- 2) Join our consecutive weekly pickets against Bill C-51
- 3) Talk to you friends and family! Get them involved too
- 4) Send letters to your Members of Parliament voicing your opposition to Bill C-51
- 5) Continue to take public actions to voice your opinions. Let them know we will not be silent!

### **Working Group to Stop Bill C-51**

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government against organizations and individuals critical of its policies. This means if you protest against a pipeline being built through your neighbourhood, such as recent community actions against Kinder Morgan’s pipeline expansion on Burnaby Mountain, you could be targeted. If you support the rights of indigenous communities to decide which resource extraction projects take place on their lands, you could be targeted. If you support the rights of workers to refuse to perform unsafe work or to demand living wages, you could be targeted. All of these could easily fall within the new definition of “Terrorism” under Bill C-51.