

FIRE THIS TIME



The Newspaper of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice

Issue 10/11 - December 2003/January 2004 Issue

www.fire-this-time.org

FREE

NO TO US/UK OCCUPATION NO TO UN OCCUPATION HANDS OFF IRAQ!

By Ali Yerevani

'If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?'

- The Merchant of Venice, William Shakespeare

Iraq is an occupied land. It is occupied by more than 160,000 mainly US troops with the help of 20,000 British troops and a couple of thousand smaller and less significant so-called US allies. The occupation forces, in order to maintain their colonial occupation, are using tanks, bombs, jets, helicopters, land and sea mines, all kinds of guns, sophisticated surveillance devices, imprisonment, interrogation, torture, assassination and execution.

The occupation forces were not invited by the Iraqi people or any Iraqi state authority or even by any political opposition established prior to Saddam Hussein and prior to the occupation.

Iraq is occupied by use of force and use of methods like brutality, killing, suppression and terror. The simple proof is this: If occupation forces stopped using military means to stay in Iraq, would they survive even one hour in Iraq? This is as far as their popularity could go. The occupation forces are not welcome, have never been demanded or wanted and since March 2003 have been considered by Iraqis to be colonial military forces. The Iraqi people's right to sovereignty and right to self determination have been denied and violated by US and UK troops and by the US proxy administration in Iraq.

Illegal Occupation

The forceful occupation of Iraq by the US/UK, by all accounts and international laws, is illegal and violates all international laws and treaties and, of course, even their own UN charter and constitution. Since the occupation of Iraq in March 2003, the basic democratic rights, basic human rights and all civil liberties of the Iraqi people have been violated and denied by the US/UK occupation. Their dignity has been destroyed and they have



US soldiers and Iraqi children in Baghdad, January 11th 2004.

been insulted and intimidated continuously, and they have been the subject of the worst humiliation. The normal lives of these proud and great people, who have a history of more than 6,000 years of civilization, have been disrupted and destroyed by lies, deception and terror. Iraqi people understand perfectly

that issues like Saddam Hussein, weapons of mass destruction, and bringing democracy are all justifications for plundering their country's wealth, and that their country is indeed part of a bigger and more ambitious plan for advancing colonial rule and imperialist

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The Rise of Poverty in Canada: Who's Responsible?

By Shannon Bundock

'Something Has to Give,' the annual report of the Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB), contains documentation of an alarming growth of food

bank use in Canada over the past 15 years. The report, released in October 2003, shows that the number of people who are reliant on food banks has more than doubled since 1989 and has risen 5.5% in the past year. The report estimates that every month nearly

800,000 people or about 2.5% of Canada's population are forced to turn to food banks for assistance.

CAFB's report shows findings that seniors, along with university and college students, make up a significant proportion of food bank users. As well, the report shows that 50% of all food bank users are poor and working families and that an alarming number of children make up those who rely on the food bank for survival: over 40% in Canada. By province, the greatest number of children assisted by food banks live in Ontario at 42.5%.

The CAFB report declares, 'In every region, food banks report that inadequate minimum wage and social assistance rates, followed closely by high rents, are among the primary reasons for the growing demand for emergency food assistance.'

All across the country poor and working people are facing detrimental economic conditions as a result of the implementation of neo-liberal policies, which include both provincial and federal attacks on social services by the Liberal governments of Gordon Campbell and Jean Chretien.

British Columbia

'With the election of the [BC] Liberal government in 2001 came several key policy changes to social assistance. While new restrictions had already been introduced in 1995/1996 under the previous NDP government, Premier Campbell's government went further still, announcing budget savings in January 2002 through a combination of more cuts to welfare benefits and further tightening of eligibility, as well as reducing the public service and 30% of the Ministry of Human Resources over three years. Combined with an unprecedented new two-year 'time limit' rule (within a five year period) and a two-year 'independence test' (requiring new recipients to prove financial independence for two prior consecutive years) these changes indicate a major threat to a basic human right. Food banks have been left to address the shortfall created when people cannot purchase their own food due to insufficient income. According to one recent study, even prior to these changes, families who were working but earning minimum wage were paying a disproportionate share of their income for shelter and food compared to other Canadians.'

– Something Has to Give,' annual report of the Canadian Association of Food Banks

As well, the attacks on women's services, the cuts to disability benefits, the elimination of universal childcare, the ending of many school lunch programs and the lowering of the minimum wage have served to push many women, seniors, disabled people, young and working people further and further below the poverty line. Those being most severely affected by this provincial legislation are the same people being forced to access assistance from private charities, the food bank and other emergency aid.

In addition to current and upcoming attacks on people receiving income and disability assistance, the unemployment rate in BC continues to climb – up 16.3% in June 2003 from the previous year. Finding employment, however, is not the end of the struggle for many poor people across the country, as the minimum wage remains low across Canada – bottoming out at \$6 per hour in BC – and rents remain high. In the Lower Mainland, for example, with major numbers of working people

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No to Occupation

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hegemony with a strong base in Iraq, to move beyond Iraq and the Middle East to Central and South Asia, Asia and Africa.

The Right of Resistance

In past issues of *Fire This Time*, we have explained that occupation is not simply pouring some hundreds of thousands of troops into a foreign land to take over. Occupation has to be accompanied by terror and by crushing the will of the people of the occupied land to resist. We further explained that 'improving people's lives,' 'restoring normal life,' 'restoring the rule of law,' 'democracy' and 'human rights' are all used to create and generate the illusion in the general occupied population, in order to buy time for the occupation forces to silence and crack down on opposition. Needless to say, in an occupied land with a massive amount of deployed troops, all daily affairs of the occupied country are ultimately determined only by military rule. And military rule is obviously intact because other means, especially civilian and civil institutions, are not useful or useable. In an occupied land, survival and resistance are inseparable processes.

Resistance and Hostility Intensify

We explained back then in March 2003 that the US, the UK and Paul Bremer's 'civil' administration have to turn Iraq into a military base. We explained then in April that classic war is over, but war on all other aspects of the occupied population will be intensified. Today, as Iraqi resistance to occupation intensifies it has become more a mass-based movement, it has become more technically advanced and consequently, it has become deadlier for American troops. The magnitude, dimensions, precision and sophistication of the planning and execution of attacks are the best proof of a highly political, intelligent, skilled and committed resistance movement. The further development of resistance, or better to say in the case of Iraq a popular resistance, will be enforced even more with the collapse of the US client administration in Iraq. This administration has effectively failed in developing the most basic improvements for the Iraqi population. In fact, life is harder than ever in Iraq: lack of basic services, unemployment, insecurity, massive poverty and misery, and lack of health care and proper routine education are all motivation for any protest or resistance movement.

Antiwar, Anti-Occupation Movement

The resistance movement in Iraq is varied and fundamentally it is not motivated by the return of Saddam Hussein's rule. Liberty and freedom,

Mobilization Against War and Occupation Statement on the Capture of Saddam Hussein

December 16, 2003

Despite the Dec 13th/2003 capture of Saddam Hussein the most significant question in Iraq still remains the same. This question, for over a year, has been one of imperialist war and occupation through which they have been exercising brutality, humiliation and repression against the Iraqi people. Now, after the capture of Saddam the question is if this development changes the relationship between the US-occupier and the occupied people of Iraq, and, more importantly, does this change anything at all in Iraq?

What has become most clear, after the capture, is that for the past months Saddam has been in no position to be leading the Iraqi resistance. The resistance will not stop or slow down as a result of the capture of Saddam Hussein. The course of the events in the last few days is proof of this with the result of three US soldiers seriously injured and one soldier killed.

As the resistance by Iraqi people escalated in the last couple of months it has been always a characterized by imperialists occupation forces as pro-Saddam, when in fact the resistance movement has clear demands: No to Occupation! US-UK Out! The capture of Saddam Hussein by the US forces and the propaganda war around this issue - that is claiming this is a big victory for US government and a victory for Iraqi people - is nothing but a hoax

for distracting people around the world from the quagmire the US and all imperialist forces have sunk into. This is a desperate move that serves only to provide a short-term cover for their total failure.

Sustained unemployment, continued killing of Iraqis, a destitute infrastructure and the desperate situation that Iraqi women and children are in, all in all are proof of the unstable and shaky position of the US and UK forces in Iraq. As resistance continues and surges daily, it has become more apparent to people across the globe that this will, in fact, be a long, drawn out war and occupation.

The question of who will put Saddam on trial exposes the United States government and its hypocrisy. The United States has no moral authority to lead and facilitate any legal process against Saddam Hussein. The people of Iraq are the only body with the authority to run this trial and they cannot be denied that right. To achieve this end the first step is USUK and all occupying forces out of Iraq. As well, as a result of over a decade of war, sanctions and occupation, the poor and working people of Iraq also have the authority demand the right to charge and try the presidents of the United States from George Bush Sr., to Bill Clinton, to George W. Bush, for their mass killing of more than 1.5 million Iraqis, devastation, illegal sanctions, illegal war and illegal occupation of Iraq.

The role of the global antiwar movement, regardless of the capture of Saddam, must be to mount pressure on the US-led forces to leave Iraq to the Iraqis. Consequently, Vancouver's antiwar coalition, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), is obligated to continue to organize and build momentum against war and occupation. As a result, MAWO will be building actions and events through the next 3 months and beyond. This includes a free day-long Antiwar Film Festival on Dec 20th 2003 at Britannia Auditorium; a major mobilization on January 24th 2004 at the Vancouver Art Gallery at 12noon to demand: Occupation IS Occupation! Hands off Iraq! No to US Occupation, No to UK Occupation, No to UN Occupation! Self-Determination for Iraqis, Palestinians, Afghans and Indigenous People in Canada! As well, MAWO is planning a major conference for Feb. 21st 2004 and finally, we will be joining in the global day of action on March 20, 2004 with a Rally and March at 1PM at the Vancouver Art Gallery to demand: The War is Not Over! Bring All Troops Home Now! End The Occupation! Canada Out of Afghanistan! US-UK Out of Iraq!

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dignity, resentment of being controlled by a colonial power, and running their own affairs by themselves are the main driving forces of this growing resistance movement. The resistance movement in Iraq has a vital importance for the antiwar, anti-occupation movement around the world. Above all, the existence and development of this movement has exposed the lies and manipulation of the media about the overall stability in Iraq and about the progress of the imperialists' work in Iraq, in light of the growing casualties, the increasing number of attacks on US and UK troops, and, more importantly, the daily demonstrations, sit-ins, building occupations, and strikes against the brutal conditions of occupation. In other words, the resistance movement in Iraq has become and must become the main cause for renewal of the antiwar, anti-occupation movement around the world. To understand the motivation of the Iraqi people to resist is instrumental to building an antiwar, anti-occupation movement. We need to learn from the past. Prior to the military aggression and invasion of Iraq, millions of people demonstrated in the streets of the world against war. However, after the bombing started and the US and UK established themselves as occupation forces, the overall leadership of the movement failed to recognize it in advance and to prepare the movement to go from antiwar to anti-occupation. By the time the movement adopted seriously anti-occupation slogans, it was already too late since it was two months after the occupation of Iraq. This failure cost the movement the high price of cooling off the movement and massive demoralization of antiwar activists and participants and, in a smaller scale, organizers. Paying attention to the resistance movement and its demands and issues is the way forward for building any viable and effective antiwar, anti-occupation movement.

No to UN Occupation

Every social change in general, and especially every social crisis in particular, is marked by the relationship of social, and consequently, political forces, whether it is a militant strike of 35 steelworkers at Modern Auto Plating in Vancouver, or the MST landless peasant movement in Brazil who expropriate and distribute land for poor peasants. Our strategic approach in the antiwar, anti-occupation movement is to change this relationship as much as we can in favour of oppressed people, if not decisively but partially. Twenty-five years of Saddam Hussein's rule was not, as some experts want us to believe, just based on tyranny and Saddam's brutality; but his reign of terror was the production of the relationship of social and political forces in Iraq particularly and in the world political situation generally. The US war on the people of Iraq and then the occupation of Iraq follows the same rule. The US has to change the relationship of forces more and more in its favour in this madness war of rivalry with other imperialists over resources and markets. Afghanistan and Iraq are all attempts in this direction. Although the US enjoyed favourable situations when invading Iraq, very soon it became clear that the US, the strongest imperialist in the world, has not just huge, but tremendously huge problems in changing the relationship of forces in Iraq effectively in her favour. The UN factor in the occupation of Iraq is just a helping tool for making this rough process smoother, with a human face and with a soft imperialist approach. The troops will be the same, the generals will be the same, the repression and terror will be the same. The UN is just new make-up for the imperialist face in Iraq.

There is nothing human or progressive about a UN occupation of Iraq. This is what the role of the UN has been for a long time: an imperialist tool, especially for imperial USA. The antiwar, anti-occupation movement should not give the opportunity to imperialists to re-organize and re-manage the war and occupation affair in Iraq; the movement should emphasize against all occupations and for the right of oppressed nations for self-determination, whether it is Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq or Indigenous land in the American continent and particularly in Canada. Hands off Iraq. No to US/UK occupation of Iraq. No to UN occupation of Iraq. Canada out of Afghanistan. Self-determination for Indigenous people. Bring the troops home now. ■

MAWO چیست؟

MAWO مخفف ائتلاف بسیج علیه جنگ و اشغال نظامی
Mobilization Against War and Occupation
در ونکوور است. امروزه چالشی که در مقابل جنبش ضد جنگ قرار دارد این است که چگونه بتوان در این عصر جنگها و دخالت‌های نظامی امپریالیستی در کشورهای جهان سوم، به بهترین و موثرترین وجهی به بسیج و تهييج در مخالفت با تهاجم علیه کشورهای در حال توسعه و فقير و با مستقل دست زد. این کوشش از اهمیت فراوانی برخوردار است. چرا که تهاجمات امپریالیستی برای طبقات حاکم این کشورها نیز فرصتی مفتاح ایجاد کرده که حملات داخلی در کشورشان را علیه مهاجرین و پناهندگان، و بخصوص رنگین پوستان، مسلمانان، اعراب، و بطور کلی مردم خاورمیانه و جنوب آسیا، و بومیان کانادا، و علاوه جواتان و دانشجویان غیر کانادایی را تشدید کرده تا از این طریق حقوق دمکراتیک آنان را محدود نمایند. ما در ائتلاف ضد جنگ و اشغال نظامی در ونکوور متعهد هستیم که بر خلاف پارهای ائتلافات از این نوع، بتواتیم فعالین سیاسی و اجتماعی بخش‌های تحت ستم را در همه جوانب سازماندهی، و بخصوص در سطوح سازماندهی و رهبری کننده اقدام نمائیم. ما از شما با انوشی باز و صمیمانه دعوت می‌کنیم که با پیوستن به صفوف ما هر چه وسیعتر با اتحاد و قاطعیت خواهان مراجعت ارتش‌های کانادا، ایالات متحده، و انگلستان از خاورمیانه بوده، و برای پایان بخشیدن به اشغال نظامی عراق، افغانستان و فلسطین توسط این نیروهای افریسی، زور و تجاوز تلاش نمائیم.

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The opinions expressed in this newspaper are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of Fire This Time.

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Canada Out of Afghanistan! Bring the Troops Home Now!

By Shannon Bundock

The UN Security Council in mid-October authorized the NATO-led forces in Afghanistan to send troops anywhere in the country rather than keep them confined to the capital, Kabul. As the biggest troop contributor to the *International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)*, Canada was part of the planning process to extend the NATO-led troops' reach beyond Kabul. In addition, Canadian troops are set to take on the leadership of the occupation forces in Afghanistan beginning in 2004.

According to Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan Chris Alexander, 'Paul Martin, in his [Liberal leadership] acceptance speech, made quite a big emphasis on looking hard at our foreign and defence policies and how they might

and the role of the entire ISAF is broadened, it is essential that we, as part of the antiwar movement, respond. It is clear from the developments outlined above that Canada is shifting into a stage where the occupation of Afghanistan gains priority and significance.

In response, in January 2004, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) will be launching a major petition campaign against Canada's continued occupation of Afghanistan. This campaign, entitled 'CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN! BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!' highlights the illegal, immoral and devastating role that Canadian troops are playing in Afghanistan. As Canada's role shifts, we will see more killings of Afghans and more destruction in Afghanistan. As the people of Afghanistan are demanding self-



Soldier frisking four-year old child in Afghanistan.

JOIN THE NEW MAWO PETITION CAMPAIGN !

be adjusted to meet the challenges of the current world.' Alexander went on to say that he hopes this means an even bigger role for Canada in Afghanistan.

Alexander's sentiments were soon backed up by Defense Minister John McCallum, who said in reference to Afghanistan in early December, 'We are about to have a new Prime Minister who is determined that Canada play a bigger role on the world stage.'

Resistance

The response in Afghanistan is quite different from that of McCallum and Alexander however. The expansion of occupation forces in Afghanistan is being met with major resistance from across the country. The alleged intention, when the US-led imperialist invasion began in 2001, was to liberate Afghanistan from the Taliban and seek out al-Qaeda. As it stands today, two years later, the only real results have been that Afghanistan is now being controlled by external occupation forces. Under this occupation, women are not in a better position, the Afghan people are faced with death and destruction daily and they still have no level of control over their lives. Resistance to the occupation, which has been on the continual increase since August, comes with the message: 'Occupiers Out!'

Fighting the War Abroad at Home

In order to fight the NATO-led occupation of Afghanistan from here in Vancouver, we must listen to the demand 'Occupiers Out!' We must adopt this demand and say concretely: 'Canada Out of Afghanistan! Bring the Troops Home Now!'

As the role of Canada expands

determination, it is our role to stand alongside them and demand 'CANADA OUT!'

MAWO's petition campaign will not only serve to put pressure on the Canadian government, it is also an awareness and education campaign. As well, through petitioning and speaking with people on the street, MAWO will be able to connect with and involve people in a concrete way.

All arms of the antiwar movement in Canada must demand that Canada get out of Afghanistan. Through effective organizing across the country we can build momentum that will truly shake the Canadian government and send a message to all potential leaders in Ottawa; this message being that poor and working people in Canada will fight in defense of Afghans, and all oppressed people attacked by our imperialist government. It is through this solidarity with oppressed people that we will build the power to effectively fight imperialism and it is through this solidarity that we will win. ■

CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN! BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

Canada Prime Minister Paul Martin, Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham: Canada is currently increasing the size and scope of its role in the occupation of Afghanistan, and as the killing, destruction and oppression of the people of Afghanistan also increases, the Afghan people are still fighting for self-determination and against foreign control of their country.

In response, we, the undersigned, demand that Canada immediately remove all troops from Afghanistan and cease any intervention in Afghanistan. We insist that the demands of the Afghan people for sovereignty be met and that all occupying forces are removed.

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Mobilization Against War and Occupation: MAWO

By Shannon Bundock

Since the fall of 2002, months prior to the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, people around the world have been organizing against imperialist war and intervention. Through efforts all across the globe, the largest antiwar movement in history developed in response to the new emerging era of imperialist war. At the forefront of this era there has been increased aggression, intervention and military assault against oppressed nations, by imperialists, especially the US government. In the coming decades we will see increases in the number of direct military occupations of oppressed nations and we will witness the struggle between imperialist superpowers in their competition for global hegemony and domination. In order to respond, we as oppressed people must organize, mobilize and fight back to defend our lives, our communities and all poor and working people globally.

For the past year the antiwar movement in Vancouver, along with the global movement, has gone through many stages of development directly related to the moves of imperialism and the resistance of the Iraqi people. When major combat was declared over in May of 2003, the antiwar movement experienced the demand to shift direction. Organizers were faced with the necessity of quickly and effectively moving from a campaign against war to a campaign against occupation. Similar to the movement in other cities and countries across the globe, a lack of strategic political focus led to a failure to make this shift effectively in Vancouver.



Antiwar rally in Vancouver organized by Mobilization Against War and Occupation, November 22nd 2003.

Encouragingly, however, the fall of 2003 in Vancouver saw the rejuvenation of the antiwar movement – at the root of which was the escalating Iraqi resistance. Across the Lower Mainland the Student Youth Committee Against War (SYCAW) was organizing on college, university and high-school campuses, beginning with the September 15th-20th Student Week Against War. Antiwar activities were greeted by increased momentum and consciousness about war and occupation. The failures in the spring to build a movement that expanded politically to organize against occupation, were now being addressed through these organizing efforts with young people across the Lower Mainland.

The important organizing that the SYCAW was doing in mobilizing young people on at least ten campuses across the Lower Mainland was not supported by the major antiwar coalition in the city, Stopwar.ca.

The SYCAW, which was initiated as a Stopwar.ca subcommittee and was composed of nearly all the young members of the coalition (including Youth-3rd

World Alliance and Fire This Time), was ignored and labeled illegitimate by a large tendency in the coalition.

It became increasingly apparent

that the political differences that had been deepening in Stopwar.ca and the push by the antiwar movement to continue organizing were not being responded to by the aforementioned tendency. After the Stopwar.ca expulsion and split (see pages 14-17 in this issue of FTT) and after the October 25th rally which followed, the SYCAW recognized that it was necessary to begin mobilizing the people of Vancouver not only against war, but against occupation and for self-determination.

The SYCAW recognized that the level of education, action and mobilization that was possible in Vancouver wasn't being exploited to its fullest, and as a result the Vancouver antiwar movement was not responding to global imperialism as effectively as was necessary. During this

Continued on page 5

Que es MAWO? Contra la guerra y la ocupación

El reto del movimiento contra la guerra es realizar una efectiva tarea para educar, organizar y movilizar a la gente contra esta época de guerra y ocupación. Esta tarea es especialmente importante en comunidades de gente de color, con musulmanes, inmigrantes, refugiados, jóvenes, estudiantes y comunidades indígenas: la gente mas profundamente afectada por la guerra y la ocupación.

MAWO es una organización que esta construyendo un movimiento contra la guerra y la ocupación con la iniciativa del pueblo oprimido. Estamos organizando una serie de eventos desde noviembre, destacando la movilización internacional del 20 de Marzo en la construcción del movimiento.

Mientras esta era de guerra y ocupación continúe, MAWO continuará organizando,

educando y movilizándose contra ellos. Te damos la bienvenida para unirte, pelear y hacer retroceder la maquina de guerra estadounidense, por el retorno de las tropas de Canada y por el FIN DE LA OCUPACION EN IRAK, PALESTINA Y AFGANISTAN!

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Join Youth-Third World Alliance! Organize - Educate - Mobilize



By Kira Koshelanyk

While the resistance of people in Iraq continues, making the occupation of their country increasingly uncomfortable for the US and UK, Youth-Third World Alliance, a Vancouver-based antiwar group, has also stepped up their activities against war and occupation.

In October, Youth-Third World Alliance (Y3WA) held three forums titled 'Why Israel is an Oppressive Apartheid State' on campus at UBC, Langara College and Kwantlen College in Surrey. All forums in this series were successful with the Zionist presence at Langara being particularly strong. Zionists on campus responded by condemning the Langara Student's Union for allowing the forum to take place while denying space for an ex-member of the Israeli Defense Force to speak. The agitation on this campus with regards to this

issue is a priceless tool in educating to mobilize. Students at Langara have become polarized on the issue with many being forced to take an active stance based on the tense situation. When education is combined with the necessity of the situation, as in this case, people are put in a position of being challenged and challenging others on politics and from here stems the passion and energy to take the issue from campus discussion to the streets.

Youth-Third World Alliance is also an endorsing group of the Student-Youth Committee Against War (SYCAW). The SYCAW is an exciting new group of students and young people who recently hosted a major conference, Youth Against Occupation, on September 29th. With over 60 people in attendance throughout the day, the conference built concrete connections among students and youth in the region to facilitate their involvement in the antiwar movement and provided

them with a strong anti-imperialist political base. This event brought together students and youth from across the Lower Mainland whose energy and vision will emerge as a leading force in the future of the Vancouver antiwar movement. Y3WA's involvement in this initiative is another huge step forward in broadening participation and establishing effective antiwar organizing.

In this dynamic period of antiwar organizing in Vancouver, with new groups and committees being formed constantly, Y3WA is also taking part in another very important initiative of the SYCAW: the creation of the Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO). This is a coalition of student and youth groups, Indigenous groups, and Third World Groups, as well as independent activists, organizing against imperialist war and occupation. In endorsing MAWO and its activities, Y3WA was involved in organizing

the November 22nd mobilization when over 300 people came to the streets against the occupations of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan. Y3WA is supporting and building a march and rally on January 24th 2004 at the Vancouver Art Gallery at 12 noon to demand: Occupation Is Occupation! Hands off Iraq! No to US Occupation, No to UK Occupation, No to UN Occupation! Self-Determination for Iraqis, Palestinians, Afghans and Indigenous People in Canada!. Y3WA is also supporting and building a major antiwar, anti-occupation conference for Feb. 21st 2004, and finally, we will be joining in the global day of action on March 20th, 2004 with a Rally and March at 1PM at the Vancouver Art Gallery to demand: The War is Not Over! Bring All Troops Home Now! End The Occupation! Canada Out of Afghanistan! US-UK Out of Iraq! Y3WA works with this coalition because of the solid political base of its participants and the group's

vision for effectively challenging imperialism through concrete long-term strategy to expand the antiwar movement more effectively.

Y3WA continues to organize on the solid base of the right of oppressed nations to self-determination and the understanding that imperialism and its attacks are a direct violation of this. This work is also based on the necessity of the inclusion and participation of a broader scope of people and the momentum created by mobilizing them through education. Y3WA continues to unite young people and people of the Third World based on the dynamic combination of energy and experience. It is through this unity that we will effectively challenge the forces that marginalize our voices and deny our rights as people. **Join us in this effort!** ■

Kira Koshelanyk is the coordinator for the Youth-3rd World Alliance.

All Power to Youth!

The Student and Youth Committee Against War



By Nicole Burton

As a result of September's Student Week Against War, when ten Vancouver campuses were visited in an effort to educate and organize around the ongoing realities of occupation, the Student Youth Committee was formed under the mandate of promoting a voice to young people in the antiwar movement. In a recent article from Langara's student newspaper, *The Gleaner*, feature writer Ian Rolls explains, 'The SYC distinguish themselves... by their aim to give voice to youth -- disproportionately the victims of war and occupation -- ...and to show youth that they can in fact make a difference and play decisive roles within broader organizations.'

Since its first meeting in September, the growing Student Youth Committee Against War has become a diligent force in organizing, educating, and involving students and youth from UBC to Kwantlen Surrey, and everywhere in between. The SYCAW has also made its



Students march against war at University of Maryland, September 29th 2002.

name known within a number of Greater Vancouver high schools, working with high school students and student groups to give presentations and recently holding the highly successful Youth Against Occupation conference, a project of the SYCAW.

High Schools

Resistance movements, particularly those of Iraq and

Palestine currently, are composed of young people who, at the very forefront in the fight for self-determination, are energetic, intelligent, and above all, passionate for change. And just as overlooked as these youth are the young minds in Vancouver, and everywhere across Canada. Even college and university

organizations, groups defining what it means to be a student organizer in North America, rarely work with a major portion of the student population: high school students.

The Student Youth Committee is working to bridge this gap in the anti-war movement by building an organization that involves not only college and university students, but high school students and non-student youth as well. As with all organizing, education and discussion are key. Recently, presentations have been made at Vancouver Technical High and Moscrop High, with plans to follow through on invitations coming in from all over the Lower Mainland, including Vancouver Island. All events organized in these high schools have been the initiative of their students, a number of whom made contacts with SYCAW members at the Take Action fair in Port Moody on Tuesday, November 11th. SYCAW currently is involved in the organizing of a march and rally

on January 24th against war and occupation, a major educational conference on February 21st and an international-called march and rally on March 20th, in Vancouver. SYCAW's responsibility now is answering to this activity with events that include these young people in other antiwar work, to create space where students' leadership and determination is recognized, and to unite young people with all marginalized and oppressed people in voicing: End the occupations! Self-Determination! End the war on Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine!

Nicole Burton is a member of the Student-Youth Committee Against War, Youth-3rd World Alliance, and Mobilization Against War and Occupation.

Youth Against Occupation

See page 24 for coverage of the Student-Youth Committee Against War Antiwar conference from November 29th.

MAWO Demands an End to the War at Home and Abroad

From page 4

time Stopwar.ca gradually moved away from focusing on war and occupation issues and developed its politics more deeply in favor of a 'low-pressure movement.' This political focus and way of organizing served to support certain domestic policies of social democratic politics in light of the coming BC and federal elections. Despite this shift, it remained necessary, in order that Stopwar.ca maintain its image as an 'antiwar/peace' coalition, that they call for some sort of action or event once in a while. At this same time another trend in Vancouver, which was young and growing, began developing strong anti-occupation politics. This trend was demanding mobilization in solidarity with the people of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan as the central focus of antiwar work in Vancouver.

This demand that was being made throughout the Lower Mainland, on college, university and highschool campuses, and among indigenous and third world people, led the SYCAW to initiate the formation of an antiwar coalition in Vancouver named Mobilization Against War and Occupation. This coalition began immediately to organize a demonstration for November 22nd 2003, against war and against occupation. The coalition, from its inception, was made up predominantly of young people, people of color, indigenous people, people from the third world and other oppressed groups. The political approach and direction of the coalition was established during the build up to and at the November 22nd demonstration.

This coalition, which represents oppressed people at all levels, organizationally and in the broader movement, was established on the basis of representing oppressed people politically.

As a result the coalition focuses on taking necessarily frequent and dynamic actions that focus on the axis of imperialist aggression while highlighting related issues that can be seen through the axis. In a press release for the November 22nd day of action, MAWO co-chair and Youth-Third World Alliance Coordinator Kira Koshelanyk said 'The coming decades will involve more and more war and occupations abroad, the slashing of immigrant and refugee rights at home, and a clamping down on civil liberties. Local manifestations of this war here in Canada include heightened oppressive policies locally, increased racial profiling and targeting of local communities of colour and attacks on Indigenous peoples.' MAWO demands Stop the War At Home and Abroad, which means that we call for the end of the occupations of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan and we call for an end to attacks on immigrants and refugees and we call for self-determination for indigenous nations within Canada.

Within three weeks of its inception, MAWO was endorsed by over 40 labour unions, student unions, community groups, third world organizations and indigenous organizations. This broad support is indicative of the demands that people across the Lower Mainland are making for

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High Schools Against War and Occupation

By Tamara Hansen

One of the most commonly overlooked age groups by political organizers is high schools. In my experience, however, I have found that working with high school students has been one of my most positive and politically motivating experiences.

The Student-Youth Committee Against War (SYCAW) has been trying to break the barriers between high school and community organizing by bringing our antiwar politics into high schools and helping various global issues groups in the Lower Mainland develop forums and presentations to educate their peers about war, occupation and struggle.

Many students want to make a difference but don't know how, or feel like they are the only ones in their school or age group who understand the awful things that happen in our world. Taking on humanitarian issues can be motivating and positive for many students; however, it can also be overwhelming, as there is a never-ending number of causes and problems in the world that need to be solved. By fostering education about the antiwar movement and politics in high schools SYCAW has been trying to give students a new way of dealing with the problems that they see happening around the world everyday.

My own experience in high school with a gay/straight alliance group was that we were told that we could organize only within the school and we were strongly 'advised' to



Student march against war in Ashland Oregon, March 2003.

keep politics out of our club. When we were invited onto a local television program to encourage other students in our area to start their own clubs, the administration was so worried about backlash that they wouldn't allow us to participate. Although they were ready to let us organize within the school, they were not willing to fight openly with us against homophobia in the community. To me this is a powerful demonstration of the kinds of problems youth are encountering when trying to organize politically at their schools.

With the hopes of bringing high school students out to learn about the politics surrounding occupation SYCAW recently held a day-long conference entitled 'Youth Against Occupation' at UBC Robson Square. Speakers and participants were mainly youth and students as the conference was centred around opening the doors between Lower Mainland youth and student activist communities, in the hopes of introducing young people to the concepts of war, occupation and mobilization.

With the overwhelming bureaucracies in many high schools, students can easily be crushed, and forced to hide their politics. This happens when the schools convince them that seeking community support will only cause further disruptions to their organizing.

The students however, are not easily demoralized. They know that building a more positive future is up to people like them. However it is easy to get lost in the policies and stigma they encounter daily while trying to organize in their schools. It is the job of people in the anti-war movement and any other type of organizing to support high school students with their projects and to help them educate themselves. In this we hope to help students realize that they are not the only ones working towards a more inspiring future, and that there are pockets of mainstream resistance at every high school across Canada and around the world.

Tamara Hansen is a member of the Student-Youth Committee Against War, Youth-3rd World Alliance, and Mobilization Against War and Occupation.

Iraq, Quagmire for US: From Vietnam Syndrome to Iraq Syndrome

By Mike Krebs

- 'How long do you think we'll have occupation forces in Iraq?'

- 'Let's see, we still have forces in Germany and Korea, don't we?' - John Alterman, Director of Middle East Program of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, responding to a question on Washingtonpost.com live discussion

Despite the false claim made by George W. Bush and other members of his administration that the occupation of Iraq will be 'ending' by the end of next year, the truth is that the US has no intention of ending its military occupation of Iraq any time soon.

The 'quick' change of the US strategy in Iraq by speeding up the transfer of power in Iraq from the Civilian Provisional Authority to the Governing Council, though clearly showing the increasing level of crisis that the US is facing in Iraq, is only a change on the surface, and does not represent any significant change in the murderous role that the US and its junior imperialist powers are

playing in Iraq. It is intended to change the face of occupation to a slightly more Iraqi one as a way to increase the legitimacy of the occupation in the eyes of those all around the world who oppose the occupation, especially amongst the Iraqi people, who are at the forefront of the movement against the occupation of Iraq by showing increasing defiance and resistance to the brutal occupation of their country. This move is not likely to fool anybody, especially the Iraqi people, and will mark another failure of the US imperialist strategy to secure Iraq for the purposes of helping the US out of the capitalist crisis it currently faces.

More Troops, More Attacks on the People of Iraq

When this new timetable for establishing 'sovereignty' in Iraq was announced by the US government in the middle of November, defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld made it clear that this transfer of power to the US-appointed Governing Council does not affect the presence of occupying troops. 'This (timetable) has nothing to do with

US troops and coalition troops in Iraq,' he said in a press conference on November 17th.

Aside from continuing its military occupation, the US is also stepping up its attacks on the people of Iraq. Through its newly-launched 'Operation Iron Hammer' and 'Operation Ivy Cyclone,' the US has resumed its bombing campaign on the people of Iraq, which it kicked off on November 8th with a massive bombing raid on the town of Tikrit.

With the leveling of entire neighborhoods, launching attacks with helicopter gunships, carrying out raids of 'suspected terrorist' hideouts, and military checkpoints set up by UK forces in southern Iraq, Iraq is resembling occupied Palestine more and more every day. The same false premise of 'rooting out suspected terrorists' is also at play, and with the supposed 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' still nowhere to be found, who is going to believe the US military's stated motivations for blowing up buildings as well as arresting and killing Iraqis virtually every day?

The UK Foreign Minister Jack



American GIs perform house to house searches in Tikrit, November 20th 2003.

Straw has also recently announced the British government's intention to send more troops to Iraq, enforcing that neither the US or the UK intend to pull their troops out of the occupied country.

The 'Transfer of Power' to The Governing Council

'It was a document that looked like some treaty between the United States and the Indians in 1882. To think they put this thing together in a couple of Whitehouse meetings with everyone in panic mode... it's just humiliating.' - Rami G. Khouri, executive director of the Daily Star, a Beirut-based newspaper, on the new timeline

The 'change in strategy' that the US is pursuing involves developing a timeline for the transfer of power from the US-run Civilian Administration Authority to the US-picked Iraqi Governing Council. Under the timeline, the US-led coalition will hand 'power' over to a transitional government by June of 2004, which is to supposedly result in a fully sovereign, elected government by 2005. The other change is that, instead of having a constitution written before the new government is set up, it will now be written after.

The US was forced to make these surface changes because of the increasing resistance it is facing from the Iraqi people, as well as growing pressure from within the US. Voices from virtually every layer of American society, from the poor and oppressed people living in the US opposed to the war, right on up to key representatives of the US ruling class who are having tactical differences over the current course, are getting louder and louder.

Not only will this plan fail, it will not involve any real transfer of power at all. In a New York Times editorial from November 16th, a senior Whitehouse Official is quoted as saying that after the handing over of Iraqi 'sovereignty,' the US 'will have more levers than you think, and maybe more than the Iraqis think.'

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Canada's Involvement in War, Occupation of Iraq

By Mike Krebs

'Ironically, the Canadians indirectly provide more support for us in Iraq than most of those 46 countries that are fully supporting us. It's kind of an odd situation.'

- Paul Celluci, US Ambassador to Canada, March 27th 2003

'I made it very clear that we were a major participant in... the reconstruction of Iraq.'

- Paul Martin commenting on his first talk with George W. Bush, December 15th 2003.

Canada's approach to the US-led war on Iraq last spring, of not being officially involved while still supporting the imperialist war drive, continues with the current occupation of Iraq.

A *Globe and Mail* article from November 13th reports that Canadian officers are to help train members of a reconstituted Iraqi police force at an academy in Jordan as part of Ottawa's contribution to the reconstruction of Iraq. Members of the RCMP and other Canadian police forces will begin serving as training officers by the end of 2003. This academy in Jordan involves several other countries, and intends to turn out about 35,000 police officers by the end of 2005.

The estimated cost of this project is \$10 million. This is only part of the \$300 million that Canada has pledged for the reconstruction of imperialism in Iraq.

The Canadian government is also committing one of its generals to a leading role in the US-led occupation of Iraq. According to a CBC News report from November 21st, 'Canadian Brig.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk, deputy commander of the US

Army's Three Corps, will be serving with US forces in Iraq as part of an officer exchange program. The unit will deploy to Iraq early next year and take command of all ground forces. Natynczyk will be one of the top officers, even though Canada technically isn't involved in Iraq.'

Canada, like the other major imperialist countries, is squabbling with the US for a piece of the profits to be made from the pillaging of Iraq. It is hoping that through committing troops and funds to the occupation, it will put Canadian multinational corporations in a better position to bid on the \$18.6 billion worth of contracts for the 'rebuilding' in Iraq. Though Canada is officially barred based on the announcement by Paul Wolfowitz in early December that those contracts would only go to 'firms from the United States, Iraq, coalition partners and force contributing nations,' Paul Martin is currently discussing Canada's eligibility with George W. Bush.

This is a continuation of the approach that Canada has taken to the US-led war on Iraq since the beginning. Though not officially involved, Canada provided support in several different ways to the initial war and invasion, including:

- Commanding the multinational naval force in the Persian Gulf
- Providing billions of dollars in military equipment
- Providing intelligence services
- Refueling US aircraft carrying troops and supplies to Iraq
- Sending more troops to Afghanistan to free up US soldiers for the invasion and occupation of Iraq

Canada's role in Iraq is an extension of its

imperialist role in Afghanistan, where it is playing a leading role in the occupation that has been going on since the US-led invasion in 2001. Both of these imperialist interventions are part of Canada's long history as a military aggressor, as they are only the latest assaults by the colonial government of Canada. This is a country founded on the colonization of numerous Indigenous nations, and this is a country which continues to exist based on the suppression of Indigenous people and their rights to self-determination from coast to coast.

The antiwar movement within Canada must never try to fool anyone about the true nature of the Canadian government. By no stretch of the imagination can Canada be considered a 'peacekeeping' country, not now and not ever in its history of bloodshed, murder and hypocrisy. We must demand all occupation forces out of Iraq, including Canadian troops. We must demand that Canada get out of Afghanistan. And we must demand self-determination for Indigenous people. This is the most effective way for us to stand in solidarity with the people of Iraq and Afghanistan: we must join in their struggle against imperialist war by taking on the imperialist government of Canada. ■

Note: Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), the Lower Mainland's newly-formed antiwar coalition, is launching a campaign called 'Canada out of Afghanistan! Bring the troops home now!' This campaign highlights the illegal, immoral and devastating role that Canadian troops are playing in Afghanistan. For more information, see page 3 or check out the MAWO website at www.mawovancouver.org.

Israel, US, UK: The Axis of Evil

By Mike Krebs

Since the announcement made by Bush and Blair that they would seek the creation of a Palestinian 'state' back in March – on the eve of launching a war on the people of Iraq – this scheme has met barrier after barrier. Intended to placate the resistance of the Palestinian people through offering false promises of a Palestinian state, while at the same time ensuring that Israel's right to exist as a colonial apartheid state is protected, this roadmap has so far been a failure for the US.

With the resignation of Mahmoud Abbas, the first prime minister of the Palestinian Authority (PA), the US and Israel have had to deal with the problem of finding another 'leader' or element of the Palestinian political establishment that is willing to compromise the goals of the Palestinian liberation movement. In achieving this end, Abbas clearly failed, and has since been replaced by Ahmed Quraya, who was appointed as the new prime minister by Yasir Arafat in October of 2003.

'Road Map': A Deadly Trap for Palestinians

Right now the main problem that the US and Israel are having with both Quraya and Arafat is to what extent they will participate in cracking down on the Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation. Among other things, the roadmap demands that the Palestinian forces collect 'illegal weapons,' ban 'the show of power on the streets' as well as 'searching houses to collect illegal arms,' according to a Reuters article from November 23rd. Under the roadmap, the Palestinian Authority must also 'dismantle military cells' which are considered by the US and Israel to be major forces within the Al-Aqsa Intifada, the Palestinian uprising which began in September of 2000.



Through the roadmap, the US and Israel wish to hand the task of crushing, or at least containing, the Intifada over to the Palestinian Authority, which would essentially provoke a civil war as Palestinians would be pitted against each other. To date, however, neither Arafat nor Quraya have agreed to 'dismantling military cells' or many of the other demands being forced on them by the US and Israel.

Not only have the US and Israel faced problems getting the Palestinian Authority to agree to the terms, but also the US is facing problems trying to get Israel to take even the most token measures to appear that it is interested in so-called 'peace' with the Palestinian people through the roadmap.

Ariel Sharon has so far only discussed the potential removal of a handful of Israeli settlements in 'isolated or unprotected'

locations the West Bank, according to a BBC article from November 24th. His government is also coming under increasing pressure over the construction of the 'security fence' in the West Bank, which is to be halted under the roadmap, and was recently condemned by the European Union.

Israel, The World's Most Unpopular State

Israel is also facing increased pressure internationally due to the slowly growing consciousness around the world about the true nature of the brutal occupation of Palestine. Israel was hit especially hard on this front by a recent EU survey suggesting that nearly 60% of Europeans regard Israel as the greatest threat to world peace.

Despite these setbacks, these negotiations around the 'roadmap' are continuing, providing space for Israel to plan, and carry out, further acts of aggression against the Palestinian people, and further theft of their land and resources. They are happening while the brutality of the Israeli occupation continues and deepens.

The Brutal Occupation Continues

Since the start of November, six Palestinians have been expelled from the West Bank based on allegations of 'belonging to a terrorist group.' None of these six were charged or tried on these allegations, and have now been forcibly moved to the Gaza Strip. The government of Israel has announced that there are another 12 men that it wants to expel. Various human rights groups have condemned this practice, and there are currently 15 similar expulsions that are being challenged.

This practice of expulsion is one of the many tools that Israel uses against the Palestinian people in order to try to crush their resistance to the brutal occupation of their country that they have been fighting

for over 50 years. Murder, imprisonment without cause, torture, harassment at military checkpoints, curfews, restriction on movement, the demolition of Palestinian homes, land confiscation: all are routinely deployed by Israel against the Palestinian people as part of the brutal occupation of Palestine.

The Apartheid Wall

The most brutal form of violence that the State of Israel is currently launching against the Palestinian people is the construction of an apartheid wall through the West Bank. Officially referred to as a 'security fence' by the Israeli government, it is composed of a series of walls, razor wire fences, electric fences, trenches, and watchtowers.

According to a report by the UN office for Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, this wall, once completed, will result in the annexation of 14.5% of the West Bank, and



A Palestinian throws a tear gas cannister back at Israeli Defense Forces during a demonstration against the Apartheid Wall, Fall 2003.

will isolate roughly 700,000 Palestinians from their farms, jobs and schools.

This apartheid wall will have severe economic impacts on Palestinians living in the West Bank, who are already facing extreme hardship as a result of the occupation. Much of the best agricultural land in the West Bank, including the northwest districts, is being taken or destroyed by the wall, which will devastate the agricultural base of the Palestinian economy.

The Exploitation of Palestinian Workers

Palestinians in the West Bank have become more and more reliant on agriculture in the past few years due to the brutal conditions of curfew, restrictions on movement, and 'closure' that have been imposed as part of Israel's attempt to crush the Al-Aqsa Intifada. This has resulted in Palestinians not being able to travel to their jobs in Israel, and as of October 2002 added up to at least \$3.3 billion in lost revenues for Palestinians. Currently 67% of Palestinian households live in poverty, and unemployment is spiraling. In some areas, unemployment went from 18% before September 2000 to 78%. Not only will the wall destroy the agricultural base that the Palestinians are becoming more reliant on, but will also make their ability to access jobs even more difficult.

The alternative for Palestinian workers is finding a job in one of the 11 industrial zones that have been set up in the West Bank through incentives provided by the Israeli Ministry of Industry and Trade. These zones, which basically operate like the Maquiladoras in South America, are exempt from most regulations, and include factories and plantations, which can earn a profit through the super-exploitation of Palestinian labour. This is part of a strategy that Israel has pursued since the 1967 occupation of the West Bank: to exploit Palestinians in the West Bank as a source of cheap labour. This apartheid wall will diminish the position of the Palestinians even more, forcing them to accept the working conditions in these industrial zones while their land is stolen from underneath them.

Given that Israel's weak economy, aside from being propped up by billions of dollars in annual aid from the US and other imperialist countries, relies on this cheap Palestinian labour in order to stay afloat, Sharon and others in the Israeli ruling class know that they can't afford to give up the settlements in the West Bank that are making this exploitation possible.

This situation for the Palestinian people will be made even worse by Israeli plans for the construction of a second apartheid wall in the West Bank, which were

announced by Ariel Sharon in March of 2003. This wall would be built along the Jordan River Valley, and would result in a land grab of even more fertile agricultural land, which is currently occupied by Israeli settlements.

While the US and its allies dangle false promises of statehood for a people by offering them less than 20% of their original homeland, Israel is planning, while at the same time carrying out, the annexation of even more Palestinian land through the apartheid walls. What would be left under this plan for the Palestinians would be, at best, the creation of an Indigenous Palestinian reservation — a Bantustan that would deprive the Palestinian people of their land, their livelihood, and their dignity.

The Heroic Intifada Continues

'Rather than create the outlines of a two-state solution, this wall will kill that idea for Palestinians, and will drive them, over time, to demand instead a one-state solution – where they and Jews would have equal rights in one state. And since by 2010 there will be more Palestinian Arabs than Jews living in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza combined, this transformation of the Palestinian cause will be very problematic for Israel. If American Jews think it's hard to defend Israel today on college campuses, imagine what it will be like when their kids have to argue against the principle of one man, one vote.' – Thomas Friedman, *New York Times* column, September 15th 2003

The greatest barrier to the continuation, expansion, and consolidation of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, whether through Israel's preferred approach or that stipulated under the US roadmap, is the Palestinian people themselves. They have continued to fight back against the brutality, suffering, and poverty that they face every day as a result of the occupation.

Right now, along with the resistance of the Iraqi people to the brutal occupation of their country by the US-led forces, the Palestinians stand at the forefront of the international movement against imperialist bloodshed. Working, poor and oppressed people in Canada and the world over have all things in common against the treacherous assaults of these countries. We must support the struggle of the Palestinian people for their self-determination, and must struggle alongside with them as part of an international movement against imperialism. We must oppose US and Israel's imperialist policies in Palestine and in the Middle East, and demand and end to the occupation of Palestine, Iraq and Indigenous land in Canada, US/Israel hands off Palestinians, and US out of the Middle East. ■

Bolivia: Abriendo las Puertas a la Revolución

By Carlos López

Los mineros han visto el poder de la dinamita. Pero mucho más poderosa que el poder de la dinamita es la unidad de la clase obrera. – Miguel Campos (articulista de El Militante, www.elmilitante.org)

La clase obrera boliviana y el campesinado han demostrado su coraje sin límites, su inmensa solidaridad y su antiimperialismo desafiante al infringir una derrota mas a los proyectos de saqueo y explotación que el capitalismo salvaje pretende realizar sobre los recursos energeticos del subsuelo boliviano, con lo cual pretendía terminar de apropiarse de las ultimas reservas de sus riquezas naturales.

El saqueo del suelo boliviano

Entre septiembre y octubre la

rebelion boliviana desencadeno la movilizacion nacional mas importante de su historia contemporanea. Las causas que lo motivaron en esta ocasion es el intento del gobierno anterior encabezado por el expresidente Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada de exportar gas natural hacia los Estados Unidos a traves del puerto chileno. Los beneficiarios de esta "transaccion comercial" serian las mismas compañías transnacionales de energeticos del capitalismo. Las mismas que saquean y explotan los hidrocarburos del medio oriente: REPSOL-YPF, BRITISH GAS Y BRITISH PETROLEUM.

Las ganancias anuales que obtendrian estas compañías de la exportacion del gas seria de 1300 millones de dolares, mientras que para el Estado boliviano quedaria entre 40 y 70 millones de dolares en impuestos y regalías. Sumado

a esto, las transnacionales que operan en Bolivia se han apoderado de las reservas de gas del país, unos 52 trillones de pies cúbicos, la segunda más importante de Sudamérica y valorada en 80 millones de dolares.

La denominada "Guerra del gas" acumulo ancestrales rezagos historicos que han obligado a las masas proletarias y marginadas del pueblo boliviano a levantarse contra todo un regimen que no puede ocultar mas el fracaso de las politicas economicas neoliberales que en la ultima decada han colocado a Bolivia como el país mas pobre de Sudamerica, situacion que reconocen los organismos financieros del capital: el Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI) y el Banco Mundial (BM). Las contradicciones violentas y perversas de miseria y hambre contra las obscenas fortunas

millonarias de una pequeña clase en la que se encuentra el expresidente Sanchez de Lozada y que el capitalismo ha creado, han arrojado en la actualidad a 5 millones 600 mil bolivianos en la pobreza extrema y relativa de una poblacion de 8 millones. Un país potencialmente rico, reducido a una situacion de pobreza debido al saqueo realizado por los imperialistas a través de sus agentes locales en la oligarquía boliviana.

Resistencia en la historia boliviana

Pero la tradicion historica de lucha revolucionaria del pueblo boliviano cuenta con un perfil que en el transcurso del tiempo se ha ido consolidando. Solo Habra que recordar que obtuvieron su primer gobierno democratico despues de la revolucion de 1952, cuando los trabajadores tenian el poder; que perdieron

por un golpe de estado militar (con el apoyo estadounidense) y por el cual tuvieron veinte años de dictadura militar, pero que finalmente derrotaron con la insurreccion revolucionaria de los años ochenta. Y mas recientemente encontramos la Victoria de la insurreccion de Cochabamba en abril de 2000 contra la privatización del agua, las protestas campesinas en todo el país en enero de este año y tambien el movimiento insurreccional de febrero de este año que costaron la vida de 33 martires bolivianos.

La resistencia continua

En esta ocasion, la masificacion de la protesta por la defensa del gas, hizo al gobierno creer que respondiendole de manera tradicional, con ejercito, bala, masacres, desapariciones y carcel; el pueblo retrocederia en su lucha. Cuan grande error. La masacre mas sangrienta se realizo en El Alto. Entre el 13 y 15 de Octubre caen 30 asesinados por bala del ejercito; entre ellos dos niños de 5 y 8 años. Las masas enfurecidas, y principalmente en esta region del Alto, comienzan a desarrollar, en muchos casos espontáneamente y con un sentido muy creativo tácticas de confrontación militar; en suma formas de autodefensa. Se cavan zanjas antitanque, se hostiliza a los soldados con hondas y piedras, estallan petardos y "cachorros" de dinamita. Se establece un sistema de vigilia y alarmas y aparecen los esquineros que se conectan rapidamente unos y otros; organizan el hostigamiento y hacen que la población aprovisione a los bloqueadores y marchistas. Para entonces el movimiento ha paralizado otras ciudades capitales como Cochabamba, Oruro, Potosí y Sucre y muchas capitales de provincia.

El asalto de la clase dominante

El viernes 17, con el país paralizado por la huelga nacional y la movilización, Sanchez de Lozada; la cara mas abiertamente colonial de los regimenes clientes

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Bolivia: Opening the Doors for the Revolution

By Carlos López

English translation compiled in collaboration by Ali Yerevani, Ivan Drury, and Carlos López

'The miners have seen the power of the dynamite. But much more powerful than the power of the dynamite it is the unity of the working class.' – Miguel Campos (columnist of The Militant, www.elmilitante.org)

Historically and especially in the most recent uprising of September and October 2003, the Bolivian working class and campesinos have demonstrated their unlimited courage and immense solidarity in their struggle against the forces of US imperialism. This heroic struggle to stop the wild capitalist appropriation of the natural wealth and energetic resources of the Bolivian soil threatens to deal one more defeat to US imperialist plundering in Latin America.

The Plundering of The Bolivian Soil

Between September and October of 2003, the Bolivian rebellion unleashed the most important national mobilization of contemporary Bolivian history. The cause of this rebellion and mass mobilization was the attempt of the previous government, headed by then-president Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, to export natural gas to the United States across the Chilean port. The beneficiaries of this commercial deal would have been the same capitalist transnational oil and gas companies that plunder and exploit the oil and gas resources of the Middle East: REPSOL-YPF, BRITISH GAS AND BRITISH PETROLEUM.

Through this deal for the serious exportation of Bolivian gas, these companies would have made an annual profit of 1,300 million dollars, aided by the Bolivian State's stay of 40 to 70 million dollars in taxes and privileges.



Bolivian miners cheering at the resignation of ex-president Lozada, October 17th 2003.

Transnationals that operate in Bolivia had already gotten hold of the gas reservations of the country, the second most important gas reserves in South America, approximately 52 trillion cubic feet valued at 80 billion dollars.

The so-called 'War of the Gas' is the accumulation of the historical and ancestral oppression of the masses of proletarian and campesino Bolivian people. The War of the Gas forced the Bolivian working class and campesinos to stand up against the imperialists that have placed Bolivia alongside the poorest countries in South America. The failures of neoliberal restructuring in Bolivia can no longer be concealed, and are now being recognized by even the financial organizations that are responsible for them: the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). Plundering by imperialists through their local agents in the Bolivian Oligarchy have driven

the people of this materially rich country into desperate poverty.

History of Resistance in Bolivia

Through the course of time the Bolivian People's historical tradition of revolutionary struggle has been consolidated. Bolivia obtained their first democratic government only after the revolution of 1952, when working people took power. This power was lost through a military coup d'état (with the support of United States) that resulted in twenty years of military dictatorship. This dictatorship was finally defeated through the revolutionary insurrection of the eighties.

More recent examples of this tradition include the victory of the insurrection of Cochabamba in April 2000 against the privatization of water, the rural protests throughout the whole country in January of 2003 and finally the insurrectionary movement of February 2003 that cost the lives of 33 Bolivian

martyrs.

The Resistance Continues

Facing this history of resistance, the Government believed that by answering the mass movement against the export of Bolivian gas in a traditional way, with the army, bullets, massacres, disappearances and jail, they would force the people would step back from their struggle. This was a big error for the government of Lozada.

The most bloody government massacre of the Bolivian people during this rebellion happened in 'El Alto'. Between October 13 and 15, the bullets of government troops cut down 30 people, including two children, 5 and 8 years old. In response, the incensed masses, particularly in the "El Alto" region, began to develop, in many cases spontaneously and with a very creative sense, tactics of military confrontation as forms of self-defense. Anti-tank trenches were dug, soldiers were harassed with

slings and stones, fireworks and "pups" of dynamite exploded. A system of communications and alarms was developed to connect different areas together quickly. Others organized the harassment of soldiers and other segments of the population to supply the blockaders and marchers. Quickly, the movement paralyzed cardinal cities like Cochabamba, Oruro, Potosí and Sucre and many capitals of provinces.

The Assault of The Ruling class

On Friday the 17th of October, with the country paralyzed by the national strike and the mobilization, president Sanchez de Lozada, the colonial face of the United States and main supporter of the market economy favorable to the Yankees, resigned. Immediately, the Parliament urged vice-president Carlos Mesa to become the new transitional President. Before 500

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US Blockade of Cuba Condemned By The World

By Thomas Davies

Universal condemnation of the United States blockade against Cuba was shown at a November 5th vote by the United Nations General Assembly. The vote saw an overwhelming majority of 173 countries condemn the blockade the United States initiated against Cuba in 1961, which has severely limited Cuba's access to basic necessities such as food and medicine. This majority vote, which has grown in support every year since its introduction eleven years ago, is international recognition that United States policies aimed at strengthening the blockade attempt only to bolster an inhumane, politically bankrupt blockade that acts against the sovereignty and fundamental human rights of the Cuban people.

173 to 3

The only three countries to vote against the motion were the United States, Israel, and the Marshall Islands. 'The blockade is a cruel and absurd policy that finds no support within or outside the United States,' Cuban Foreign Minister Perez Roque said in his speech to the UN General Assembly. This is an especially relevant statement considering a recent decision by the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which voted 13 to 5 to end travel restrictions to Cuba introduced in 1963. In a similar move, the full Senate also voted to bar the use of government money to enforce the ban. This clearly shows that the heroic resistance of the Cuban people against the US's bullying politics of the blockade, despite its devastating effect on the Cuban people, has demoralized a large section of the US ruling class. They obviously observe that Cuba, by eliminating the capitalist system and adopting an economic system that puts forward people's needs over any other interest, and indeed regardless of the blockade, has elevated itself among the top

five countries in the world for achievement of the highest quality of education and health care systems, and politically achieving a definite participatory democracy against, for instance, the two-party system of the US.

Torricelli Act

Under the Torricelli Act of 1992, ships of any nationality or flying any flag, that have touched Cuban ports or that are transporting Cuban-purchased merchandise are banned from entering US ports for a 180-day period, under threat of being placed on a 'blacklist.' In 1991 the volume of Cuban trade with foreign US subsidiaries or companies affiliated to US enterprises amounted to \$718 million, 91% of that total being foodstuffs and medicines. This

basic necessity trading was severely decreased as a result of the Act, despite the passing of an amendment in 1992 with limited provisions regarding the sale of food and medicine to Cuba by United States companies. Officially named the 'Cuban Democracy Act,' it accomplished nothing beyond limiting Cuban people's access to food and medicine as well as assuming the right to decide, officially and publicly, on affairs that are the sovereign attributes of other states on things as basic as who they choose to trade with.

Helms-Burton Act

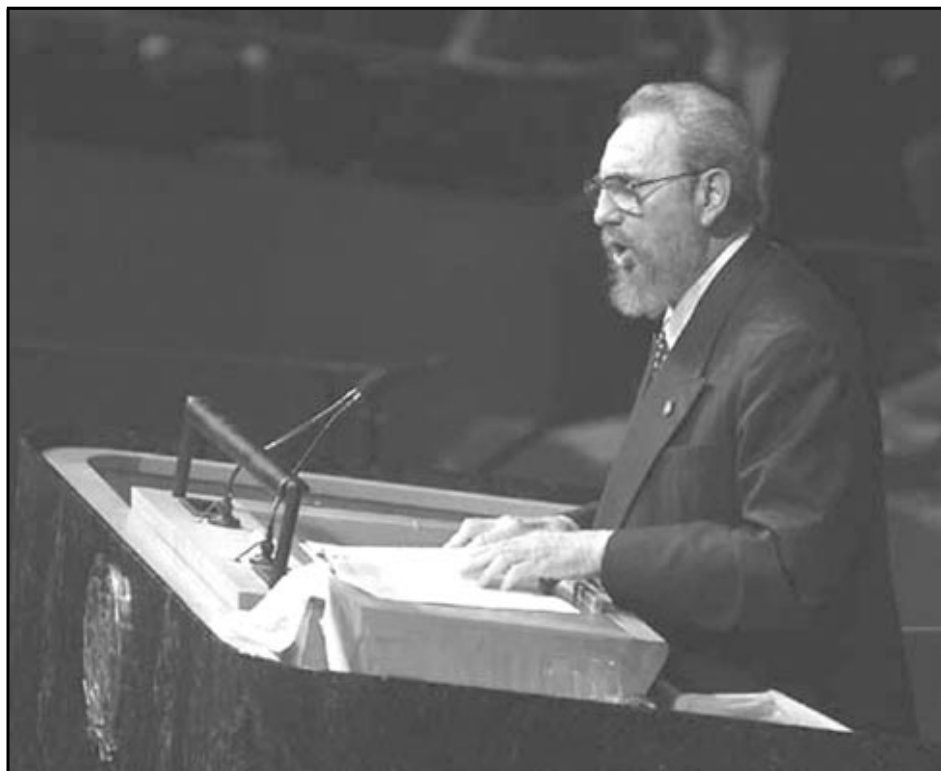
Along these same oppressive immoral conducts, as of March 1996, United States law under the Helms-Burton Act not only forbids American companies

from doing business in or trading with Cuba, it also seeks to penalize foreign companies who trade with Cuba. This attempt at a stranglehold on Cuba by the United States results in an appalling attack on the people of Cuba, and has served to bolster their resistance to the United States—a resistance with deep roots given the history of US suppression and exploitation of Cuba before the US-puppet regime of dictator Batista was ousted by the Cuban people under the leadership of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and the strong mass revolutionary July 26th Movement. No longer able to control and exploit the country since the Cuban revolution in 1959, it was then that the United States initiated the blockade, aimed at shutting the Island off from international trade and aid, and forcing them back under US authority and domination.

Blockade Must Go

Speaking as part of the 173 countries in favour of the motion to end the blockade, the Vietnamese foreign minister summed up international sentiment by calling for an end to United States interference in the sovereignty of other states, and recognizing the non-justification of a blockade that has been unable to force Cubans to give up their efforts to construct a more just society. Contrary to United States claims, the blockade has nothing to do with the 'human rights' or 'freedom' of the Cuban people. Instead, it seeks to damage and control their lives, a fact which has not gone unnoticed by the people of the world, and most importantly, by the people of Cuba themselves. It is now more important than ever for all people to support the self-determination and sovereignty of the Cuban people and denounce this inhumane blockade. ■

Thomas Davies is a member of the Free the Cuban Five Committee Vancouver and the Youth-3rd World Alliance.



Fidel Castro addresses the UN Millennium Summit, September 6-8, 2000, at UN Headquarters in New York.

US-led Imperialists fail to Establish Colonial Rule in Iraq

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This of course includes the 160,000 troops that the US and its partners are keeping in the country, but it goes beyond that. The US government is dumping tens of billions of dollars for 'reconstruction' costs into Iraq to ensure that its interests are protected in the country. It is managing billions more in American private investment in the form of contracts for reconstruction and the privatization of Iraq's state-owned enterprises.

Finally, the US will be playing a role in every step of the process of forming the new government in Iraq. Right from the beginning of this process, with the US-picked Iraqi Governing Council, the US has shown that it is not going to give any meaningful 'sovereignty' to Iraq if it means compromising the goals it set out to achieve through the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

US-appointed Governing Council in Tatters

Beyond the fact that this new 'timeline' will not lead to any real 'sovereignty' for the people of Iraq, it is also a plan that is doomed to failure even in terms of the interests of the US ruling class. Trying to underplay the fact that the US has little room to maneuver in Iraq, Condaleeza

Rice stated on November 13th that 'We've always wanted to turn over authority to the Iraqi people as soon as they built capacity to take it on.'

Certainly Rice is not referring to the capacity of the masses of Iraqi people who have been resisting the occupation, she is referring to the Iraqi Governing Council, which will play a significant role in the transition to a 'Sovereign' Iraq. So what type of 'capacity' has been built with the Iraqi Governing Council?

On November 9th, only days before the formation of the new 'timeline' was announced, the Washington Post reported that the US 'has become frustrated by individual members on the US-appointed council who, officials say spend all their time promoting private agendas rather than making important collective decisions.' An article by BBC correspondent David Bramford from November 10th reports that 'Although the council does include figures from each of Iraq's Sunni, Shia and Kurdish groups, its members were handpicked by the Americans and there have been doubts about whether some represent anyone but themselves.'

These above statements don't even describe the Iraqi Governing Council as it was originally established, but could only possibly mean the few who are

actually still participating in it. According to a November 6th article by Thomas Friedman, a columnist for the New York Times, 'The U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council... is becoming dysfunctional. Several G.C. members, particularly the Pentagon's favourite son, Ahmad Chalabi, have been absent from Iraq for weeks. Only seven or eight of the 24 G.C. members show up at meetings anymore.'

Clearly there is no 'capacity' for this body to take on authority. Now the US hopes the Iraqi Governing Council can assist in picking another set of Iraqis to take on the job because this initial body is getting them nowhere. The US is basically playing hot potato with who will hold official political power in Iraq, while ensuring that the real power still lies within the hands of the US; not being able to sustain direct control through the Civilian Provisional Authority, they are passing the responsibility of sorting out the mess that they have created to the Governing Council, who are to pass this to the transitional government, who are to pass this on to some sort of elected representation by 2005.

This plan will not work, and is clearly nothing more than a desperate attempt to pacify the escalating Iraqi resistance by giving the occupation of Iraq the appearance of being a neo-colonial, 'sovereign'

administration.

All Occupying Forces 'Fair Game'

'Whether this will quieten the insurgents in Iraq is another question altogether. They have shown themselves keen to attack Iraqi 'collaborators' as well as American (and now Italian) occupiers. This suggests that any government condoned by the Americans will be considered a fair target. Moreover, even if Iraqis take power next year, American forces will still be in the country, drawing more attacks.' – The Economist Global Agenda, November 13th 2003

The Iraqi resistance to the US-led occupation has primarily carried out attacks on military targets, so the transfer of 'sovereignty' is not likely to have any effect on these attacks. They will be carried out so long as the presence of occupation troops continues. The bombings of Iraqi police stations, as well as the killing of Iraqis who are either part of or working with the Governing Council, show that this includes Iraqis that are working with the occupation forces.

The Iraqi resistance is also continuing to make it difficult for the US to convince other countries to get involved in the occupation — involvement that the US needs to help ease the burden of an extremely costly and insecure military occupation. Following

the attack on the Italian military base in Nassiriya on November 12th, South Korea ordered its troops in southern Iraq to suspend their operations outside coalition bases, and put a cap of 3,000 on the total number of troops it would send to Iraq. The attack in Nassiriya also caused Japan to postpone its dispatch of troops to Iraq. Given this climate, where any force participating in this brutal occupation is fair game in the eyes of the Iraqi resistance, does it make sense to advocate a UN occupation, where the only thing that will change is the diversity of soldiers being sent home in body bags?

Black Hawk Down II: The Iraqi Resistance Continues

Since the US-led bombing, invasion, and occupation of Iraq began in March of 2003, the Iraqi resistance to this occupation has continued to grow. The level of support among Iraqis for this resistance is also growing as the occupation continues. According to John Alterman from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, a US-based think tank, 'Iraqis are united in that they all want Americans to leave.'

The attempts by US forces to crack down on the resistance have not stopped the growth of this resistance or the support of

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Saddam on Trial? US on Trial? Or Both?

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it. The recent firefight in Samarra on November 30th, where US officials claimed that up to 54 Iraqi 'insurgents' were killed, further polarized Iraqi people against the US-led occupation. During the battle in Samarra, at least nine bystanders were killed, including children and two elderly Iraqis. Satar Nasaif, a shopkeeper who witnessed the shootout in Samarra, told a New York Times reporter: 'If I had a gun, I would have attacked the Americans myself.'

During the battle in Samarra, the total number of US troops killed in Iraq since May 1st, when Bush declared that major combat operations were 'over,' rose to 187. This steadily increasing number of American casualties in Iraq is causing a steadily decreasing amount of support within the US for the occupation, which is creating yet another problem for the US government as they desperately sink deeper and deeper into crisis over the Iraq occupation. According to a recent Newsweek poll, disapproval for President Bush's policies in Iraq increased to 40%.

Global Opposition to the Occupation

The brutality of the US-led occupation is also feeding a strong sentiment of anti-Americanism throughout the world, especially within third world countries, as oppressed people around the world. According to a recent poll conducted by Pew Research, this growing anti-Americanism is generally directed towards the

policies, not the people of the US, and showed a marked growth following the bombing of Iraq. For example, the poll reported that in Indonesia, support for US foreign policy dropped from 50% to 15% following the bombing of Iraq. Clearly, international opposition to the war on Iraq is just as strong, if not stronger, than it was last spring when the world saw the largest mobilizations in history.

Saddam on Trial? US on Trial? Or Both?

Of course, the coverage of what is actually going on in Iraq has decreased as the US attempts to cover its problems with the news of its 'victorious' capture of Saddam Hussein. Clearly this is being used to distract people around the world from the quagmire that the US and other reoccupying forces in Iraq have fallen into.

As with the occupation of Iraq, the US occupying forces are stuck with the problem of 'now what do we do?' After a quick military victory last spring, the US ruling class doesn't have any solution for how to solve its problems in Iraq. Now, with Saddam in their hands, they are at a loss to decide the best way to deal with him.

This dilemma over how Saddam is to be put on trial further exposes the hypocritical nature of the US-led occupation of Iraq. Does the US have any moral or legal authority whatsoever to lead and facilitate any legal process against Saddam when they are leading an immoral and illegal occupation of Iraq? Are they prepared to try themselves as accomplices for

any of the atrocities committed in Iraq that they supported? How about the ones they committed? Are they prepared to put George Bush Sr., Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush on trial for the ten years of sanctions in Iraq, which resulted in the deaths of over 1.5 million Iraqis?

The people of Iraq are the only body with the authority to put Saddam on trial. To achieve this end the first step is an end to the US-led occupation of their country. We must support the right of the Iraqi people to self-determination, and this means deciding the fate of what to do with Saddam.

End the Occupation! Self-Determination!

There are two major things that the antiwar movement needs to learn from the current situation in Iraq if it is to take advantage of the current situation to bring more people into the movement who are already opposed to this war. The first is that the most powerful imperialist superpower is painting itself into a corner. The US, an imperialist country with the largest economy in the world, the largest military in the world, is watching its different imperialist strategies and tactics fail in Iraq, and is losing more and more space in which to move around.

The second lesson is to be drawn from the heroic resistance of the Iraqi people. Against all odds, and against the lie spread by imperialist countries like the US that oppressed people must always 'compromise' with their enemies, the Iraqi people are showing an example to the rest of

the world, and through their direct opposition to the occupation of Iraq, they are leading the international movement against war, against occupation, and against imperialist tyranny. It is the same example and source for inspiration that the Palestinian people have been showing the world for decades as they struggle against the brutal occupation of their country by the Zionist state of Israel. The Iraqi and Palestinian resistance is weakening imperialist hegemony worldwide more than any other force today.

We have to understand that the US is not invincible, and that it is not solely the responsibility of

the Iraqi people to wage this battle against imperialist aggression. A strong international movement against the occupation of Iraq needs to do its part to weaken the US even more. Only by continuing to demand an end to the occupations of Iraq, Palestine, and Afghanistan, and defending the self-determination of oppressed people, can we build an effective antiwar movement that will support the Iraqi people's struggle to end the crisis they are facing. We must demand an end to the occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine. We must demand all imperialist troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan, and all Canadian troops out of Afghanistan. ■



A US soldier stands next to a former Iraqi army officer who sits in line for his salary in Mosul, Jan 5th 2004.

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de los Estados Unidos y partidario de la economía de mercado favorable a los Yanquis, renuncia. Inmediatamente, el Parlamento unge al vicepresidente Carlos Mesa como nuevo Presidente de transición. Ante 500 mil personas en la Paz, promete "revisar las políticas" de explotación de hidrocarburos y la realización de una "asamblea constituyente", demanda que gano fuerza en el curso de la insurrección. Luego, designo a un gabinete de tecnócratas totalmente ajenos a las exigencias del pueblo y, dos semanas mas tarde, anunció que seguiria la política de su predecesor (y de su patron, el embajador Greenlee) en la erradicación de la coca.

La lucha avanza en el proceso

El pueblo organizado declara una tregua al nuevo gobierno. La Central Obrera Boliviana, Regional y Departamental (COB, COR y COD), el Movimiento Indígena Pachacuti (MPI), el Estado Mayor del Pueblo y el Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) convocan a darle tiempo y espacio a la nueva administración del regimen oligarquico.

80 muertos y mas de 400 heridos sumaron el costo de esta batalla contra el imperialismo en tierras bolivianas. Pueblo que cada vez es mas consciente de su condicion de clase, como asi lo demuestran las demandas y consignas enarboladas en la insurrección en voz de la COB: rechazo al libre comercio y al ALCA, anulacion de los decretos que establece la renuncia del Estado a los hidrocarburos, respeto a la propiedad comunitaria y de origen entre otros.

No obstante este triunfo, han reconocido tambien que los

obreros, campesinos, naciones oprimidas y clases medias empobrecidas no le arrebataron el poder a la clase dominante porque no cuentan aún con un partido revolucionario (una de las conclusiones del Ampliado Nacional con participacion de 150 organizaciones despues de la derrota de Sanchez de Lozada).

En Bolivia, los diferentes grupos nacionales indígenas suponen casi el 80 por ciento de la poblacion y la mayor parte de la clase obrera y el campesinado son indígenas. La historia del movimiento revolucionario en Bolivia demuestra como la nacion como un conjunto se reúne alrededor de la bandera de la clase obrera y sus organizaciones. Cuando los medios de comunicacion capitalistas hablan de un movimiento indígena realmente intentan ocultar su caracter profundamente proletario.

Solidaridad Internacional

Ahora, la tregua del movimiento obrero y popular comienza a agotarse; y el pueblo boliviano se prepara para la proxima batalla. La solidaridad internacional que ha despertado esta lucha con los tragicos resultados ocasionados por la oligarquía boliviana, no pierde de vista este proceso de la resistencia. La comunidad internacional comprometida con las causas justas del pueblo oprimido debe estar pendiente y atento para ofrecer la solidaridad necesaria que este requiera, y desde estas tierras no podemos estar ajenos e indiferentes a los ataques que el imperialismo pretenda realizar sobre suelo boliviano. Contra un pueblo que utiliza su legitimo derecho a la rebelion e insurrección en defensa de su soberania y autodeterminacion. ■

Struggle in Bolivia Advances

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thousand peacefully assembled people, Mesa promised to review the political impact of the contracts for the development of hydrocarbons and promised the achievement of a constituent assembly, demands that had gained force in the course of the insurrection. He then backtracked and designated an office of technocrats completely foreign to the requirements of the people. Two weeks later Mesa continued his betrayal and announced that he would continue the politics of his predecessor (and of his boss, US ambassador Greenlee) by pursuing the eradication of the production of coca.

The Struggle Advances in The Process

The organized people declared a truce with the new government. The 'Central Obrera Boliviana,' (COB) 'Central Obrera Regional' (COR) and the 'Central Obrera Departamental' (COD) the national trade union federation in Bolivia -like the CLC in Canada- the 'Movimiento Indígena Pachacuti' (MPI), and the 'Movimiento al Socialismo' (MAS) formed a coalition to coordinate resistance called 'the Joint Staff of the People.' This coalition and all the groups involved accepted the truce and Mesa took the time to settle his new administration into the old oligarchical regime.

80 dead men and more than 400 injured men added to the cost of this battle against imperialism on Bolivian soil. But through every tragedy in the history of struggle in Bolivia, the consciousness of people about the condition of their class has grown. The growth of this consciousness is reflected in the demands and slogans hoisted by the insurrection in the voice of the COB. They demanded the revival of national industry, rejecting the 'free trade' of the FTAA and demanded review by congress of all privatization contracts so that the political constitution of the nation could be respected. They also demanded the annulment of the agrarian reform law, redistribution of the land, and respect for communally owned land and land originally owned by indigenous people.

The 'Ampliado Nacional' meeting following the defeat of Sanchez de Lozada and was attended by over 150 organizations. One of the conclusions of this gathering was that the workers, peasants, oppressed nations and impoverished middle classes of Bolivia needed a revolutionary party to lead the mass mobilization in order to completely wrest power from the ruling class.

In Bolivia, different national indigenous groups make up almost 80 per cent of the population and most of the working class and the

campesinado are indigenous. The history of revolutionary movements in Bolivia demonstrate how the nation as a whole rallies around the flag of the working class and its organizations. When the capitalist mass media speak about an indigenous movement they really try to conceal this movement's deeply proletarian character.

International Solidarity

Now, as the truce of the working and popular movement begins to become exhausted, the Bolivian people prepare themselves for a close battle. The international solidarity that has risen up through this struggle, even with the tragic results caused by the Bolivian oligarchy, must not lose sight of the process of the resistance. Working and poor people in Canada must be attentive and ready to offer the solidarity needed to aid the struggle of oppressed people against imperialism in Bolivia. We must oppose the attacks that imperialists try to carry out against the Bolivian working class, indigenous and campesino peoples who are using their legitimate right to rebellion and insurrection in defense of their sovereignty and self-determination. ■

Carlos López is a member of the Group of Family and Friends of Political Prisoners in Mexico. He is also a writer for Latin-American Connexions.

La Migra Raids Wal-Mart Workers in US to Prevent Unionization

By Shannon Bundock

'We have a situation where our economy needs the services of these undocumented workers... Without these workers, who would perform the services that are sought after?' – Peter Ashman, Las Vegas Immigration Attorney

On October 23rd, 2003, across the United States, over 250 'illegal' workers were rounded up by the FBI in simultaneous raids of over 60 Wal-Mart stores in 21 different states. All of the workers who were arrested in 'Operation Rollback' were under janitorial contract with Wal-Mart, were working for substandard wages and were subject to major employment standards violations

that resulted in working, on average, over 56 hours a week for under \$350 a week. The 'illegal' workers who are detained in immigration jails are from all around the world. The largest group are from Mexico with 90 workers, followed by 35 workers from the Czech Republic, 22 from Mongolia, and 20 workers from Brazil; there are also workers from El Salvador, Poland, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Lithuania and Russia. Currently, according to Immigration and Naturalization Services, there are over six million 'illegal' workers in the US, which make up the backbone of lowest-paid sector of workers.

The reliance of business on 'illegal' workers has been highlighted by the Wal-Mart raids and has put

the American administration in a position to negotiate and cover up the clear contradiction that this reflects within the US political and financial system — a system that maintains that these workers are 'illegal' while at the same time desperately needing their labour. However, it has also served to increase pressure on low-wage workers, added to the real uncertainty and fear that afflicts their daily lives and given the US government a chance to further scapegoat undocumented workers as the problem in this equation.

Wal-Mart's Role

As the legal attacks against the arrested and detained workers continue, Wal-Mart has stated that it was involved in the investigative

process that led to the raids. Wal-Mart admits it did not know of the impending 'Operation Rollback'; however, the company asserts that it remained co-operative with Immigration and Naturalization Services throughout a three-year investigation into the janitorial contractors. Wal-Mart spokeswoman Mona Williams has stated that the government and Wal-Mart itself suspected that the contracted janitorial staff was mainly illegal immigrants, and in order for the FBI to continue its investigation, the company maintained its contracts at the request of the government. Wal-Mart is currently facing no charges as a result of the operation.

Ironically, with all the hype about the rule of law and defending legal

working conditions in the USA, apparently immigration authorities knew at least two years in advance that Wal-Mart had hired these 'illegal' workers. So the question remains: why did they arrest these decent workers now? The answer is the way Wal-Mart capitalist owners and all corporations do their business as usual. It has been public knowledge for a pretty long time that the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCWU) have been making efforts to organize Wal-Mart workers. This became a serious threat to Wal-Mart when the majority of meat cutters at a Wal-Mart store in Texas voted to become a UFCWU organized unit in early 2000 — a decision that was resisted and refused by the Wal-Mart management. Since that time Wal-Mart has made a tremendous effort to block any attempt by workers to unionize Wal-Mart branches by firing union supporters, working hand in hand with immigration authorities and using any intimidation tactics they can to ensure their system of wage slavery.

Workers: Who's Really Under Attack

What has become clear is that the raids, arrests, detentions and probable deportations are not an attack on Wal-Mart. The manner in which the raids were carried out was also not intended to send a message to the world's largest retailer, but rather to the entire low-wage workforce.

This move by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, now part of the Department of Homeland Security, serves to create a more unstable and frightening situation for all illegal workers in the United States. Combined with added legislative attacks faced by all immigrants, refugees and 'illegal' workers since September 11th, 2001, the mass raids have created a climate of fear for all those lacking status in the US. The raids of Wal-Mart are

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La Migra Realiza Redada contra Trabajadores de Wal-Mart en E.U. para Prevenir Sindicalización

By Shannon Bundock

Translated by Carlos López

"Tenemos una situación donde nuestra economía necesita los servicios de estos trabajadores indocumentados... ¿Sin estos trabajadores, quienes realizarán los trabajos que serán solicitados después?" – Peter Ashman, Las Vegas Abogado de Inmigración

El 23 de octubre de 2003, por todo Estados Unidos, más de 250 trabajadores 'ilegales' fueron acorralados por el FBI en redadas simultáneas a más de 60 tiendas de Wal-Mart en 21 estados diferentes. Todos los trabajadores que fueron detenidos en la 'Operación Rollback' estaban bajo contrato auxiliar con Wal-Mart, trabajaban con sueldos inferiores al normal y estaban sometidos a violaciones de estándares principales de empleo que resultaba en trabajar, en promedio, más de 56 horas a la semana por menos de 350 dólares. Los trabajadores 'ilegales' que fueron detenidos en cárceles de inmigración son de varios países. El grupo más grande es el de México con 90 trabajadores, seguido por los 35 trabajadores de la República Checa, 22 de Mongolia, y 20 de Brasil; hay también trabajadores de El Salvador, Polonia, Uzbekistán, Georgia, Lituania y Rusia. Actualmente, según Servicios de Naturalización e Inmigración, hay más de seis millones de trabajadores 'ilegales' en los EE.UU., los cuales forman la columna vertebral del sector de mas bajo salario entre los trabajadores.

La dependencia de las empresas sobre los trabajadores 'ilegales' ha sido destacada por las redadas en Wal-Mart y ha puesto al gobierno americano en una posición de



negociación y ocultamiento sobre la clara contradicción que esta refleja dentro del sistema estadounidense político y financiero. Un sistema que sostiene que estos trabajadores son 'ilegales' mientras al mismo tiempo necesita desesperadamente de su trabajo. Sin embargo, esto ha servido también para aumentar la presión sobre trabajadores mal pagados, sumado a la verdadera incertidumbre y miedo que aflige sus vidas diariamente y que da al gobierno estadounidense una oportunidad mas de encontrar a los trabajadores indocumentados como el chivo expiatorio en el problema de esta situación.

El Rol de Wal-Mart

Como los ataques legales contra los trabajadores arrestados y detenidos continúan, Wal-Mart ha declarado que estuvo implicado en el proceso de investigación

que condujo a las redadas. Wal-Mart admite que no sabía de la inminente 'Operación Rollback'; sin embargo, la compañía afirma que permaneció cooperativo con Servicios de Naturalización e Inmigración durante la investigación de tres años en los contratos salariales. La vocera de Wal-Mart Mona Williams ha declarado que el gobierno y Wal-Mart mismo sospecharon que el personal asalariado contratado eran principalmente inmigrantes ilegales, mas sin embargo el FBI continuó investigando, y la compañía mantuvo sus contratos a petición del gobierno. Wal-Mart actualmente no responde a ninguna de las acusaciones a consecuencia de la operación.

Irónicamente, con todas las exageraciones del reglamento de ley y defensa legal de condiciones laborales en los E. U, por lo visto

los servicios de inmigración sabían al menos con dos años de anticipación que Wal-Mart había alquilado a estos trabajadores 'ilegales'. Entonces la pregunta sería: ¿por qué arrestaron a estos honrados trabajadores ahora? La respuesta es que la forma en que los dueños de la capitalista Wal-Mart y todas las corporaciones hacen su negocio lo hacen como acostumbraban. Ha sido del conocimiento público que durante mucho tiempo el Sindicato Unido de Trabajadores Comerciales y de Alimentos (UFCWU por sus siglas en Ingles) ha estado haciendo esfuerzos para organizar a los trabajadores de Wal-Mart. Este se volvió una amenaza seria para Wal-Mart cuando la mayoría de cortadores de carne en una tienda Wal-Mart en Texas votaron para ingresar a la UFCWU organizado a principios del 2000. Una decisión que fue opuesta

y rechazada por la dirección de Wal-Mart. Desde aquella ocasión Wal-Mart ha hecho un tremendo esfuerzo para bloquear cualquier tentativa de los trabajadores que quieren sindicalizar las sucursales Wal-Mart y a los partidarios de un sindicato combativo, trabajando de la mano con las autoridades de inmigración y usando cualquier táctica de intimidación que les permita garantizar su sistema de esclavitud asalariada.

Trabajadores: Quienes están Realmente Bajo Ataque?

Ha quedado claro que las redadas, arrestos, detenciones y probables deportaciones no son un ataque contra Wal-Mart. La manera en la cual las redadas fueron realizadas no fueron también para enviar un mensaje al comerciante más

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Walmart and Attacks on Immigrant and Refugee Workers

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not the beginning of any mass 'cleaning up' campaign by the US administration to deal with all 6,000,000 illegal workers. Rather, these arrests are part of a continued and heightened campaign of terror against the most vulnerable layers of society. These raids are also intended to scare 'illegal' workers from organizing unions or defending their basic human rights.

As well, the arrests serve to maintain the reactionary and racist notion, which is continually enforced by the United States in its 'war against terrorism,' that all immigrants, refugees and undocumented workers are dangerous and must be deported. This attack must also be seen as a desperate move by the US government in its attempts to publicly 'deal with the problem' of the millions of 'illegal' workers in the US, without actually driving out this essential workforce. This attack is part of the necessary moves of the US ruling class to maintain the level of undocumented workers that is demanded by American corporations, while still keeping pressure on the workforce by scapegoating and profiling immigrants, refugees and undocumented workers as a source of America's problems.

'Rolling Back' Workers Rights

Cracking down on Wal-Mart for its use of

undocumented workers reveals the extent to which the US government, through denying citizenship, attacks the lowest-paid sector of the US working class. Denying people citizenship forces them to work illegally in order to survive. Fear of detention and deportation allows businesses to wield an incredible level of power over workers and as a result leads to equally incredible violations of workers' rights.

According to a New York Times article published October 23rd, 2003, '... immigration experts said the arrests of so many illegal immigrants at Wal-Marts across the country demonstrated that these workers have come to play a significant role in the American economy. They often take the low-end, low-paying jobs shunned by not just American workers, but also legal immigrants.'

The reliance of the American economy on low-wage workers has been exemplified by the situation with Wal-Mart. All across the country, within major sectors of the economy companies need to continually reduce costs of labour in order to remain 'competitive.' This raid is not a precursor to the rounding up and deporting of the majority of illegal workers in the US. Rather it serves to send the message to the tens of thousands of undocumented workers in the US that they, not the exploitive working conditions that they face, are the problem. Major moves

like 'Operation Rollback' serve as a stage in the development of a situation wherein workers learn that they have no means to fight back against exploitive labour practices. The result is that business can keep lowering wages and employment standards without fear of backlash—they are sending all employers the 'reassuring' message that the government is out to get the workers, not the bosses.

Solidarity Forever

Overall, the attack on undocumented workers through the Wal-Mart raids exposes the contradictions that exist and develop within the capitalist system. The raids also expose the intensity of the anti-poor, anti-worker agenda of the US administration. The further development of capitalism necessitates further attacks on labour and wages through attacking and maintaining pressure on the most vulnerable layers of the working class. By extension, the lowering of the bar for the lowest sector of the working class affects the wages and working conditions of all workers. In order to fight back against this attack, we must first support the notion that *no* worker is illegal and all workers must be given equal rights and status. We must support and help any workplace in becoming unionized; all workers are entitled to become union members regardless of their immigration status. In order to end attacks against all

workers, we must expose and recognize this federal raid as an attack on all poor and working people in the United States and we must demand that the workers arrested in 'Operation Rollback' be released immediately and afforded full citizenship status and rights. This is a time for we working people in Canada to raise our voice and support of our detained sisters and brothers in the US by the FBI and Immigration and Naturalization Service by sending letters, faxes and emails of protest to the immigration authorities in the US. ■

US Immigration and Naturalization Service
425 I Street NW
Washington, DC, 20536
(202) 514-3019
Fax: (202) 514-8345

Or visit the support group at:
www.unionvoice.org/alert-description.tcl?alert_id=176575



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grande del mundo, fué más bien a todo el personal mal pagado.

Este acto del Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización, ahora parte del Departamento de Seguridad de la Patria, sirve para crear una mayor situación inestable y de miedo para todos los trabajadores ilegales en los Estados Unidos. Combinado con las reformas legislativas que atacan frontalmente a todos los inmigrantes, refugiados y trabajadores 'ilegales' desde el 11 de septiembre de 2001, las redadas masivas han creado un clima de miedo para todos aquellos que carecen de estatus en los E.U. Las redadas a Wal-Mart no son el principio de ninguna campaña de limpieza masiva de la administración estadounidense para tratar con 6,000,000 de trabajadores ilegales. Más bien, estas detenciones son parte de una campaña continua y aumentada de terror contra las capas más vulnerables de la sociedad. Estas redadas también pretenden asustar a los trabajadores 'ilegales' de organizar sindicatos o defender sus derechos humanos básicos.

También las detenciones sirven para mantener la noción reaccionaria y racista, el cual es continuamente reforzada por los Estados Unidos en su 'guerra contra el terrorismo', de que todos los inmigrantes, refugiados y trabajadores indocumentados son peligrosos y deben ser deportados. Este ataque debe también ser visto como un acto desesperado del gobierno estadounidense en sus pretensiones publicitarias de que 'trata con el problema' de los millones de trabajadores 'ilegales' en los E.U., sin expulsar realmente esta mano de obra esencial. Este ataque es parte de los movimientos necesarios de la clase dominante de los E.U. para mantener el nivel de trabajadores indocumentados que es exigido por las corporaciones americanas, mientras mantienen la presión sobre la mano de obra como excusa y a los inmigrantes fichados, refugiados

y trabajadores indocumentados como una fuente de los problemas de los estadounidenses.

'Retrocediendo' los Derechos de los Trabajadores

Las medidas adoptadas sobre Wal-Mart por utilizar trabajadores indocumentados revela el grado por cual el gobierno estadounidense, por negar la ciudadanía, ataca el sector de más bajo salario de la clase obrera estadounidense. La negación de la ciudadanía a la gente los obliga a trabajar ilegalmente a fin de sobrevivir. El miedo de detención y deportación permite que los negocios manejen un nivel increíble de poder sobre los trabajadores y por lo tanto conduce a violaciones igualmente increíbles de los derechos de los trabajadores.

Según un artículo de New York Times publicado el 23 de octubre de 2003, '...los expertos de

inmigración dijeron que las detenciones de tantos inmigrantes ilegales en Wal-Marts en todo el país demostraron que estos trabajadores han desempeñado un papel significativo en la economía americana. Ellos a menudo toman el último lugar de los empleos más mal pagados rechazados no solo por los trabajadores americanos, sino también por los inmigrantes legales.'

La dependencia de la economía americana sobre trabajadores mal pagados ha sido ejemplificada por la situación con Wal-Mart. Por todo el país, dentro de los principales sectores económicos de las compañías, necesitan reducir continuamente costos de trabajo a fin de permanecer 'competitivos'. Esta redada no es antecedente del incremento y la deportación de la mayoría de trabajadores ilegales en los E.U. Más bien

sirve para enviar el mensaje a las decenas de miles de trabajadores indocumentados en los E.U. que ellos, no las condiciones de trabajo explotado que ellos enfrentan, son el problema. Los principales movimientos como la 'Operación Rollback' sirven como un escenario en el desarrollo de una situación en donde los trabajadores aprenden que ellos no tienen ningún medio para pelear contra las prácticas explotadoras de trabajo. El resultado es ese negocio que permite seguir bajando salarios y estándares de empleo sin temor de reacciones en contra. Ellos envían a todos los patrones el mensaje 'tranquilizador' de que el gobierno echa afuera a los trabajadores, no los jefes.

Siempre Solidarios

En general, el ataque contra trabajadores indocumentados en

las redadas por todos los Wal-Mart expone las contradicciones que existen y se desarrollan dentro del sistema capitalista. Las redadas también exponen la intensidad de la agenda contra los pobres y contra los trabajadores en la administración estadounidense. El nuevo desarrollo del capitalismo requiere de nuevos ataques sobre el trabajo y los salarios, atacando y manteniendo la presión sobre las capas más vulnerables de la clase obrera. Por extensión, la reducción de tamaño del sector más bajo de la clase obrera afecta los salarios y condiciones laborales de todos los trabajadores. Para pelear contra este ataque, debemos primero apoyar la noción de que ningún trabajador es ilegal y que, todos los trabajadores deben tener igualdad de derechos y status legal. Debemos apoyar y ayudar a cualquier lugar de trabajo que quiera sindicalizarse. Todos los trabajadores tienen derecho a hacerse miembros de sindicatos sin importar su condición migratoria. Para terminar con los ataques contra todos los trabajadores, debemos desenmascarar y reconocer esta redada federal como un ataque contra toda la gente pobre y trabajadora en los Estados Unidos; y debemos exigir que los trabajadores detenidos en la 'Operación el Rollback' sean liberados inmediatamente y se les proporcione status de ciudadanía plena y derechos. Es tiempo de que el pueblo trabajador en Canadá levantemos nuestra voz y solidaridad para nuestras hermanas y hermanos detenidos en los EE.UU. por el FBI y Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización, enviando cartas, faxes y correos electrónicos de protesta a las autoridades de inmigración en los E.U. ■

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Food Banks and the Fight Against Poverty

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paying an average of 30% to 50% of their total income to housing, it becomes less surprising that the food banks become the only option.

Slowing the Systemic Disaster

The direct effect of the neo-liberal agenda throughout Canada shows itself in the day-to-day lives of poor people -- and it shows itself in the 750,000 people whose survival has been dependent on accessing food banks each month. This rise in food bank use in Canada is a concrete example of how cuts to social services, attacks on workers and the implementation of reactionary economic measures will continually mean more and more poverty, devastation and death for poor and working people. These attacks and the resulting increase in reliance on non-governmental structures to provide people with basic services are unstable and unsustainable. As pressure on food banks increases they will not be able to handle the demand and as they break more people will slip through the cracks.

According to the 'Something Has to Give' report, over half of food banks are at risk of being unable to meet the demand in their communities and are forced to take additional steps to remain open. In addition 40.2% of food banks have reported that after taking additional

measures there was still not enough food to meet the demand. As a result, food banks are constantly and increasingly forced to turn people away, give inadequate amounts of food or simply not open.

Fight Back! Taking On the Crisis

In order to combat this crisis at the root, we must organize and fight back to defend ourselves and our communities. We must recognize that the increase in food bank use is the result of an overall trend of attacks by both the BC and the Federal Liberal governments on poor and working people. These vicious and inhuman attacks are leading major numbers of people into humiliating and critical conditions, and as poor and working people we must recognize that our lives and securities are threatened each time oppressed people are assaulted.

In British Columbia we must unite to demand and fight for dignity and security. In order to improve the position of poor and working people -- to ensure that no person is forced to rely on accessing food banks -- we must demand adequate welfare for all in need; dignified, accessible social housing; increased minimum wage, to \$11/hour in BC; and an end to attacks on employment standards. Through this we can fight locally to defeat the BC Liberal government. ■

National Security for Who?

Racism, Detention and Deportation in Canada

By Ivan Drury

'Canada is the place where you talk about human rights. But you don't have anything if you're not Canadian.' – Irma, a refugee claimant in Canada interviewed by the *Globe and Mail*

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, passed in June of 2002, gave the Canadian government far increased powers of detention and deportation by delegating decision-making powers away from the courts to individual immigration officers. The effects of this new legislation began to be heavily felt this summer when an average of 681 people were being held in immigration detention at any one time across Canada. This is a 65% increase from 2002 when the average number of people in detention was 440.

The people targeted in this Canadian detention and deportation spree are the same people targeted in the US-led and Canadian-sponsored international 'war on terror.' Imperialist wars and occupations in the Middle East and Africa and economic and military interventions in Latin America displace millions of people from their homelands where they have lost control of their resources and survival. The imperialist governments that reap the spoils of these wars are continuing the war against these oppressed people on the home turf of Canada, the US and other imperialist countries through reactionary immigration and refugee policies, detention and deportation.

Enforcing a racist double standard

'September 11th changed the paradigm. It's impossible to discuss borders without discussing security.' – Prime Minister Paul Martin

The case of Maher Arar has attracted international attention, but the detention of this Muslim man and his deportation to Syria by the US government is only unusual because he is a Canadian citizen. Arar was detained by the US government during a flight stopover on his way home to Canada from a family vacation. Raising the suspicions of the racist US Department of Homeland Security because he has dual Syrian-Canadian citizenship, Arar was deported to a Syrian prison where he was tortured and held for ten months before being returned home to Canada.

The furor that has erupted in the media over Arar's case has been mostly over Canada-US relations and the idea that he should have been immune to such treatment because he is a Canadian citizen. The more important point for poor, working and oppressed people is that we cannot allow the US and Canada to deport anyone to be tortured, persecuted or stuck in the third world poverty created and maintained by imperialists like Canada and the US. This aspect of the Arar case is not being examined by the Canadian government because they rely upon racial profiling, discrimination and racism to push forward their imperialist agenda. The threatened deportation of Palestinians, Algerians, Pakistanis, Chinese and all refugees across Canada deserve the same scrutiny, opposition and protest as has been rightfully shown in the Arar case.

Detention and Deportation

Twenty-one South Asian Muslim men were arrested in August by immigration officials and the RCMP in an operation called 'Project Thread.' Although all of the 'threat to national security' charges against these men were proved groundless and were dropped, 13 of these 21 men have been deported to Pakistan. These deportees have found that the unfounded label of 'terrorist' has followed them to Pakistan where they



Maher Arar and his wife at a press conference days after his release from a Syrian prison and his return to Canada.

have been denied employment, harassed by authorities and even attacked by gangs in the streets.

On November 6th a 23-year-old Palestinian refugee claimant named Abdel Majeed Ahmad was deported from Montreal to the US. Ahmad, a young Muslim Palestinian who was one of the most active members of the Coalition Against the Deportation of Palestinian Refugees, was one of about a hundred Palestinians in Montreal awaiting deportation under order from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

Ahmad was deported despite the persecution he has found in the Clinton County Jail in the US and the poverty and oppression that awaits him at the hands of Zionist Israel if he is sent back to the 55-year-old refugee camp where he was born. As the first deportation of the hundred Palestinians in Montreal, CIC's racist suppression of Ahmad's rights has grave meaning for the other hundred awaiting deportation and for all 100,000 to 200,000 non-status people in Canada.

The myth of National Security

Even before being deported, refugees, immigrants and non-status people face racist oppression in the jails of Canada. Under the 'Secret Trial Security Certificate,' non-Canadian-citizens are denied the very basic right Canadians have: to know the charges and evidence they are faced with and to not be detained for an unreasonable period of time. Five Muslim non-Canadian men have been held on security certificates for 114 months collectively without charges or released evidence. One of these men is Hassan Elmrei.

On December 23rd, Hassan Elmrei won the main demand of his 39-day hunger strike when the Ontario Superior Court ordered the Metro West Detention Centre to give him a pair of shoes. Almrei has been held without charges on a security certificate in the Metro West, a transitional holding centre not meant for long-term prisoners, since October of 2001. He started his hunger strike out of the fear that he would not survive another winter in the cement-walled and floored solitary confinement cell located against the outside wall of the jail where wintertime temperatures often sit at 10 degrees Celsius.

The Judge of the Superior Court of Ontario ruled that the denial of shoes and the freezing temperature in Almrei's cell 'constitute an infringement of his Charter rights.' This court ruling was a victory

for Almrei, and for the rights of others in the same facility including Mahmoud Jaballah, detained since August 2001, and Mohammad Mahjoub, since June 2000. However, the ruling still does not solve the racist problem at the base of these detentions: different Charter rights for legally recognized Canadians and for non-citizens.

Security Certificates are being used routinely to arrest and detain non-Canadian-citizen Muslim men in Canada, whether they are landed immigrants, refugees, or non-status. These detentions are part of the war in the Middle East and part of the racist anti-Arab, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant, anti-refugee agenda being pushed and popularized by the Canadian government to make their imperialist agenda and overall shift to the right easier. These arrests and detentions, disguised as so-called 'national

security,' are the criminalization of immigrants, refugees and non-status people in Canada and are furthering the imperialist agenda of the Canadian government both at home and abroad.

As the era of war and occupation continues, the arrest, detention and deportation of Muslims, Arabs and all immigrants and refugees, as the people most deeply impacted by imperialism, will increase and gain importance for the Canadian ruling class. The 'national security' of Canada is the security of imperialism and capitalist profiteering, and it is the opposite of the security of immigrants, refugees, non-status, and all other working people in Canada.

Open the border

In order to defend the international security of poor and working people against imperialist war and occupation, and capitalist attacks on the rights of workers, all of the working class in Canada must demand an end to 'security certificates,' detentions and deportations. All people interested in peace and justice must defend the rights of all people to live in Canada with dignity and equal rights, whether they are Canadian, Iraqi, Palestinian, Syrian, Algerian or stateless refugees.

Only when all people in Canada are given equal rights and status will the problem of so-called 'illegals' in Canada end. For the security of poor and working people in Canada against the reactionary agenda of the Canadian Government, working and poor people must demand the right of all people in detention, all non-status people and all immigrants and refugees to live and work free of persecution, discrimination and torture. We must organize and defend the rights of all immigrants, refugees and non-status people, demand an end to all detentions and deportations. We must demand legalization, equal rights and status for all people in Canada.

NO ONE IS ILLEGAL!
NO DETENTIONS!
NO DEPORTATIONS!

MISSING IN ACTION: CIVIL LIBERTIES IN CANADA POST-9/11

PROTEST

THE deportation AND torture of **Maher Arar**



AND support a review of anti-terrorism legislation

WHEN Saturday Noon
January 17 2004

WHERE Vancouver Art Gallery
(Georgia Street steps at Hornby)

WHY Freedom and civil liberties are indivisible. What they can do to Maher Arar or the security certificate prisoners they can do to any one of us. Now is the time to defend the rights of all.

SPEAKERS

- John Dixon, Past president, BC Civil Liberties Association
- Ibrahim Sayed, social activist
- Others to be announced

Please join with the BC Civil Liberties Association at noon on Saturday, January 17 to call for a public inquiry into the deportation and torture of Maher Arar and for a review of the security certificate process that allows the government to hold prisoners indefinitely without revealing the charges against them, and of other post-9/11 security laws. Support a call for due process and transparency. The war on terror should not be an excuse for a war on civil liberties.



The Past, Present, and Future of the Antiwar Movement in Vancouver

On October 25th, ten days after our expulsion from Stopwar.ca, Fire This Time held a public workshop to provide information and analysis about our expulsion from Stopwar.ca. The workshop was organized to provide a forum to expose the true basis for this

expulsion, placing it in the context of the degeneration of Stopwar.ca and the agenda of a secret clique within Stopwar.ca to manipulate Stopwar.ca for particular political interests at the expense of building an effective mass movement.

We have included the three presentations which were given at this workshop covering the past, present, and future of the antiwar movement in Vancouver. The history of Stopwar.ca's bureaucratization was presented by Shannon Bundock, coordinator of Fire This Time. The

present state of the antiwar movement and Stopwar.ca was presented by Ivan Drury of Fire This Time, and Mike Krebs of Fire This Time gave a presentation about the future prospects and direction for building an effective antiwar movement in Vancouver.

How Stopwar.ca Became Bureaucratized

Political History and Analysis of Stopwar.ca: Fall 2002 to Summer 2003

By Shannon Bundock

In order to understand why a section of the labour movement and a major social democratic trend in BC got involved in the antiwar movement in the first place, we must first understand the conditions that created the movement. Those conditions are, at the foundation, the global political shift of imperialists into an era of direct military intervention, assault and occupation of oppressed nations.

The response of social democracy to imperialism was to position themselves in control of the inevitable antiwar movement and to strategize on how they could best capitalize on the coming momentum. The antiwar movement provided this trend and part of the left who supported it in Canada with a major opportunity to build its voting constituency and to put pressure on the national capitalist ruling class in order to gain concessions.

In the beginning of Fall 2002, the future founding members of Fire This Time participated in initiating a new coalition in Vancouver to organize against the impending US invasion of Iraq. The antiwar coalition called the November 17th Coalition Against War. From the beginning, the broad November 17th Coalition, which later developed into Stopwar.ca, showed a distinct political division. This division, which eventually developed into a factional division, is based on fundamental political differences – differences that go to the basis of the involvement of tendencies active in Stopwar.ca. The division is now, and has always been, between movement-building and lobbying

– the way each of these political objectives have played out has changed based on the momentum of the movement against war and the demands the movement made on organizers to respond effectively. During high momentum the intensity of the demands of the movement meant that the organizers of Stopwar.ca had to respond and listen to people in the streets. As momentum slowed, however, and the pressure reduced, differences became more visible and it became easier for some mainstream leftist organizers to ignore the voices in the streets.

For over a year, the different groups that have been active in Stopwar.ca that have worked against the interest of building an effective and broad movement were led by the Social Democratic trend. Along with Humanist, Centrist, and Stalinist tendencies, and despite political differences, an unprincipled front was created to work against the broad movement-building – and essentially revolutionary – tendency that Fire This Time, Youth - Third World Alliance and other independent activists belonged to. This unprincipled block consisted basically of the leftist status quo: the political trends and individuals who have been in the 'progressive movement' for decades – the usual suspects in the left; and they consisted basically of older white semi-political activists or hobbyists, partly labour and partly non-labour, who under any circumstances, no matter what they are, practice their business as usual, which fundamentally is to defend their official polite, harmless and safe leftist opposition. The role of the unprincipled grouping is, at its root, to maintain a status quo left that does not expand politically or in numbers out of control. Through that the dominant imperialist-

capitalist status quo is maintained. As a result the capitalist ruling class is not threatened in a radical and militant fashion by a broad and effective movement, but is pressured to 'lessen' the exploitation, humiliation and attacks on all poor and working people in Canada. In the final analysis, by extension imperialism is free to plunder oppressed nations through war, occupation and whatever methods they deem necessary, against a radical-militant movement for fundamental change.

To understand why people who were involved in Stopwar.ca would not want a broad and expanding movement, one must understand that a broad and expanding movement is an uncontrollable movement – a movement with revolutionary potential. The role of this grouping necessitates that they do not allow the movement to expand in a way that would threaten their very survival and therefore, in Canada they must maintain the status quo. Revolutionary change would not only destroy the reactionary ruling class, it would also destroy the comfortable spaces that that ruling class keeps for polite and safe leftist opposition.

By taking up space and creating organizations and bureaucracy that have a 'progressive approach' while never effecting substantial change, the status quo left (SQL) has established itself as an important part of maintaining the current capitalist system. Capitalism is willing to make a comfortable space for the SQL and even make concessions now and again if it means that poor and working people on the whole will remain immobilized, ineffective and demoralized. The SQL does this job by taking the reins of a movement and pulling back.

It was on this basis that, in the fall of 2002, the intellectual and strategic leadership of the SQL in Canada felt the potential of a major antiwar movement and they predicted what was coming. The establishment of the November 17th Coalition and later Stopwar.ca – 'a long-term organization' – was with the understanding that their very existence was under threat if a movement rapidly grew without limitation and if especially young and third world activists posed themselves as the leadership. The role of the official leadership of Stopwar.ca has thusly been, since its inception, to cripple and limit an effective movement to become a low pressure one. This is the root of the division in political direction in the coalition.

September 2002: Inception of Nov 17th Coalition

Similar to many other places in Canada (and the western world in general) the intervention of part of official labour (OL) and SQL in the November 17th Coalition was to ensure that the inevitable rash of mobilization would not explode into an uncontrollable movement, and to redirect all possible energy into lobbying activity focused on pressuring the current government for some concessions. The intervention was to use antiwar sentiment against the current ruling administration, and redirect the energy of the working class movement into working to improve the position of OL and SQL in relation to the current ruling capitalist administration.

Members of Fire This Time, before our inception, were among the founders of the

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We Represent People in Struggle Against Imperialism

By Ivan Drury

The political and strategic differences between a secret faction and a political tendency in Stopwar.ca grew along with the polarization between the same differences in Iraq, and all around the world. When Bush declared major combat in Iraq over, the same question was asked of the organizers and activists in Stopwar.ca as was asked of the whole international antiwar movement: do you support the self-determination of the people of Iraq?

Following the beginning of the US-led bombing of Iraq on March 19th, 2003, Stopwar.ca meetings had been focused around arguing between two possible political directions of the coalition and the antiwar movement. First, building a mass movement against war and occupation in solidarity with struggle for self-determination for the people of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan. The second direction was to redirect the energies of the antiwar movement into long-term lobbying of the Canadian government for policy reform to popularize the soft-imperialist agenda of the United Nations and of more progressive political parties and trends with the

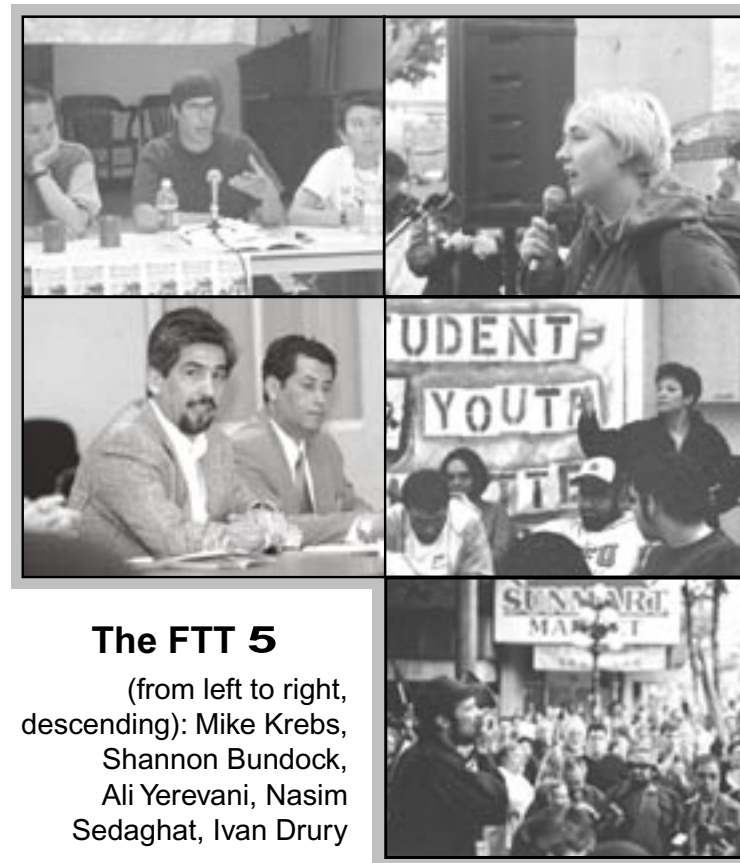
same agenda in Canada.

After Bush's Mayday declaration that the war was 'over,' and through the summer, the political polarization between these two directions had become factionalized by organizations and individuals in the coalition committing to one side of this polarization, the secret clique. Fire This Time (FTT), Youth - Third World Alliance (Y3WA) and other independent people and groups continued to push for the first position: to build an antiwar mass movement. On the other side, a secret clique that had formed to take and keep control of the coalition continued to organize against this movement. This secret clique was led by representatives of the intellectual status quo left that help carry out the agenda of political parties, NGOs and social democratic trends trying to regain trust with the working class in Canada. This secret clique organized against this movement by conspiring, character assassinating and lining others in the coalition up, or even offering material incentive against the groups and individuals of the movement-building tendency. These attacks focused on the most vocal of these groups and individuals, Fire This Time.

Voice without a vote?

In the middle of August, the independent, movement-building tendency brought to a meeting a motion to create a fact-finding committee to deal with a homophobic and violent assault that had occurred after a previous meeting. When it was clear that the motion might pass, the lobbying faction, set on protecting the status quo and those members of Stopwar.ca involved in the secret clique from accountability, walked out of the meeting and declared it illegitimate. The majority of the Coordinating Committee of the coalition were involved in the organizing of this walk-out undermining the democracy of the coalition. In response to this, and to the subsequent unilateral canceling of the following Stopwar.ca meeting by the same majority of the Coordinating Committee, Fire This Time and Youth - Third World Alliance members Ivan Drury and Leah McKenzie-Brown resigned from their positions as Outreach Committee representative and Treasurer of the Coordinating Committee.

Up until this point, Stopwar.ca had functioned on the basis of open voting with one vote for every person who attended a meeting. This structure had usually worked in the favour of the secret clique because of their stacking of meetings with inactive



The FTT 5

(from left to right, descending): Mike Krebs, Shannon Bundock, Ali Yerevani, Nasim Sedaghat, Ivan Drury

people in their peripheries. The votes in Stopwar.ca meetings were consistently split—24 to 26, 30 to 33, but usually in favor of the status quo. But as the secret clique pushed harder towards the coalition becoming a lobbying group for political parties in Canada, many independent people started to vote against them.

When Jef, the main leader of the secret clique, returned from vacation on September 3rd, 2003, he brought a motion to bureaucratize the coalition. Jef introduced a notice of motion to

limit voting rights to one vote per member organization. Under this structure, anyone would be allowed to speak, but only recognized representatives would be able to vote. Sid, another leader of the secret clique, brought an accompanying notice of motion to dissolve the Outreach and Education Committee, the committee FTT and Y3WA had done most of our movement-building work from. Sid's motion sought to replace this very active and effective

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The Future of Our Movement Lies in the Hands of Oppressed People Around the World

By Mike Krebs

To look at the future of Fire This Time's work in the antiwar movement, it is first important to quickly outline the overall approach of Fire This Time to politics.

As Fire This Time, we carry out our antiwar work within the context of anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism, or basically, we start with what our enemy is doing. As poor, working, and oppressed people, we are subjected to multiple attacks under capitalism, on a variety of fronts, every day. This is reflected in the work of Fire This Time in that we do our political work on a variety of fronts, from defense of immigrant and refugee rights to support for Indigenous struggles, from promoting the Cuban Five case to organizing against the occupation of Iraq. This work is done with the goal of building a mass-based movement built on revolutionary politics, and building a mass-based movement that is internationalist in character. It is within this framework that imperialist war and occupation is the most important feature in the world today, and it is within this framework that we focus on building a movement to oppose imperialist war and occupation.

Second, we must look at where we are at, as poor, working, and oppressed people in terms of consciousness. It is clear that we are not at a stage where we can build a mass-based movement based on a general slogan of 'anti-imperialism' or 'anti-capitalism.' To effectively achieve our goals, we must focus on the most important attacks that capitalism is waging—on the attacks where there is already a high level of consciousness. This is the way that we can expand the number of people involved in political work, while at the same time pushing to always expand the politics of the movement; while we develop our political approach with where people are at in mind, it is with the goal of expanding general consciousness, as opposed to arousing it but leaving it untouched and unchanged in a populist fashion.

In short, to develop effective strategy for revolutionary political work, we first analyze the situation objectively, then pick our course of action in order to change this situation in favour of poor, working, and oppressed people.

Self Determination

It is based on the concrete situation in the world today that we are pushing for an emphasis on self-determination as a political demand of the antiwar movement, specifically demanding self-determination for the people of Iraq, Palestine, and Afghanistan. By pushing this demand, we stand in solidarity with the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine in two ways. First, we are expressing clear support for their struggle against the occupation of their lands. Second, around this demand, we are trying to build as effective an antiwar movement as possible to challenge and weaken imperialist power 'at home,' thus making the struggle easier for oppressed people resisting occupation.

Focus, not Exclusion

Unlike what some people within the antiwar movement have claimed, especially around the issue of focusing on 'No War on Iraq' and how we relate this to Palestine, establishing a focus in the antiwar movement is not about separating the focus from other issues, from other struggles, or from other aspects of the struggle of oppressed people. No, we focus on key attacks being launched *because* of the connections that exist between these different attacks, because of the connections that exist between the different oppressed people around the world resisting these attacks. From our focus, we make the connections to these other issues and attacks, providing the potential to break down the barriers between the different layers of poor, working and oppressed people. This is a key part of our educational work.

Our suffering is NOT inevitable

The other major part of our education work is using the examples of those fighting back, the heroic resistance of the Palestinians and Iraqis, to show the ability of poor, working, and oppressed people to take things into their own hands. It's not just about how we are oppressed or exploited, and it's not just about why this happens. It's about learning that resistance is



Palestinian children in a refugee camp in Lebanon protest against the Israeli Occupation of Palestine, October 2002.

not futile, that we can, and must, fight back in order to improve our lives.

The importance of knowing this can be seen in the difference in momentum within the antiwar movement before the March 20th bombing campaign began versus after. Did the momentum drop because people around the world changed their mind about opposing the US-led war on Iraq? No, it was because of demoralization, because of a loss of faith in our ability to reverse the current path of war, occupation, and destruction that is reflected in the decline in momentum.

Related to showing our potential strengths is showing the weaknesses of our enemy: drawing attention to the problems and crises that the imperialist countries face worldwide. By drawing attention to the fact that the American ruling class is not almighty and invincible, pointing to the multiple failures it is facing in Iraq, we are able to increase our confidence as oppressed people when fighting our enemy. We understand better that capitalism isn't going to be around forever, and that it is indeed possible to crush it. The same applies to building a movement against the BC Liberals' attacks on poor, working, and oppressed people in BC: despite their majority in the legislature, and despite the absence of a strong, organized opposition, they are having all sorts of problems reversing the economic downturn in BC. Understanding the problems that capitalism creates even in terms of its ability to sustain itself is key to educating ourselves for the task of building a movement to defeat it.

Building a Dynamic Movement

Education and consciousness-raising are key to building an antiwar movement that is dynamic. Building a movement that is dynamic is essential if this is to be a revolutionary movement, as opposed to simply acting as a 'loyal opposition' to the ruling class in Canada. We won't get anywhere by trying to build a

movement within the boundaries handed down to us by these imperialist warlords, and the task of breaking these boundaries is not one that can be done with a comfortable, normal approach to movement-building.

To build a dynamic movement, we must always be asking ourselves: What is the next step? When we have 30,000 people on the streets, the first thing on our minds should be 'now what'? What is the next step in order to ensure that this escalates: in numbers, in the scale of action we take, and in politics?

We must also always be in tune with the dynamics of the movement itself. We have to see the highs and lows of the movement, and be able to assess what our strategy will be based on the level of momentum.

The importance of engaging with people

The most important way to read the momentum

of the movement is by always understanding the mood and level of consciousness of poor, working and oppressed people. This is why, especially in the situation we are in right now where momentum is low, our street work is so important.

We need to conduct the bulk of our outreach work through direct contact with people. In the current situation, our access to people through already-existing organizations is limited because of the campaign being waged against us to isolate us. Organizations and institutions which play this role of 'loyal opposition' to imperialism will act as a barrier rather than a facilitator of movement-building whenever there is the potential for the movement to become so big in size and dynamism that it takes on a life of its own and cannot be so easily controlled by an outside force. This happened with the April 5th rally against war, when the status quo left almost completely boycotted an antiwar rally when the dynamism of the antiwar movement in Vancouver was near its peak.

This is one reason why we must engage in direct contact with people. But we also have to emphasize street work because of the process of two-way education. From peoples' experiences and analysis, what they think about war and occupation, what they think of us and our approach, and what they would like to see happen, we can better assess the consciousness of people. We get a better idea of how people perceive our politics and we see our shortcomings. It is very educational for us to be challenged in public by the poor, working, and oppressed people we claim as our constituency.

From antiwar to anti-capitalism

This work, of building a dynamic, conscious, and revolutionary antiwar movement, is to seize on the potential of moving from antiwar to an even broader movement of working, poor, and oppressed people against capitalism. The primary task is to open as much space as possible for the movement to burst out of being a 'normal' protest movement, outside of the existing channels.

In this light, we see why the secret clique in Stopwar.ca viewed us as 'disruptive.' For the bureaucracy that puts defending its privileges and siding with imperialism first, using the power of mass mobilization to improve their bargaining position with capitalists rather than direct that energy towards abolishing capitalism, certainly for them pushing to build a movement with revolutionary goals is disruptive.

So long as they act as a barrier to building a mass movement, inevitably they will be threatened by the potential for a movement that has a life of its own, that is unharnessed, and impossible to keep within the regular boundaries. Most of all, they are unfortunately scared of a mass movement, rather than welcoming it. But this is what we must continue to work on, to avoid the isolation of revolutionary politics.

As before, we must push for a politics that is based primarily on a belief in poor, working and oppressed people to actually change their conditions rather than find the best way to survive in misery under the current conditions. This is our future. ■

The History of Stopwar.ca

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of the initial demonstrations – this was before even OL and SQL became aware of their role and their unprincipled block. The reasons for our involvement in building the antiwar movement overlapped in places with that of several healthy independent individuals' and groups' participation in the coalition. Where FTT diverged, however, was in the root of our involvement, which went beyond the war on Iraq and directly contradicted the root of other tendencies in Stopwar.ca; FTT saw the antiwar movement as a place to build an international movement against imperialist war and domination, and for

self-determination for oppressed nations. FTT saw the antiwar movement as having the potential to expand in numbers and in politics. To go beyond Iraq and to fight for all oppressed people globally – and all oppressed people locally. It could be better understood if we activists take into the consideration the three years of worldwide anti-globalization movement, a movement whose main characteristic was hundreds of mass demonstrations globally. It was with this understanding that FTT went into the Stopwar.ca coalition with dedication and commitment to building the broadest, most powerful antiwar movement possible.

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The False Basis for the Attacks on Fire This Time

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committee with three committees that would be more easily controlled by the secret clique.

Two weeks later, Jef's motion to bureaucratize the coalition passed. At the same meeting, FTT and Y3WA announced the first meeting of the Student-Youth Committee of Stopwar.ca. Even before Jef's restructuring motion passed, FTT and

The motion for expulsion passed with a vote of 24 in favour to two against with one abstention. However, none of the five groups represented by people working with FTT or Y3WA voted in the illegitimate kangaroo court. In order to prevent FTT from organizing a defense, the secret clique was anxious to push through the decision from their secret meeting, so there was no notice of motion given for the expulsion of one of the most

to oppressed people who assert themselves against people with power. This contempt for oppressed people by the secret clique of Stopwar.ca was evident in this documented language, but also in their approach to the members of Youth - Third World Alliance. These young people who worked tirelessly to build Stopwar.ca and the antiwar movement were met with condescending disrespect by older members of the secret clique

of mobilizations. Through this development of mass consciousness, the mass antiwar movement could become a mass anti-occupation movement, then a mass anti-imperialist movement, and eventually a mass anti-capitalist movement. Far from ultra-leftism, organizing this long-term development is the job of sincere revolutionary political organizers opposed to war.

The email conspiracy

The letters and emails sent out and supported by some people in Stopwar.ca accused the FTT-5 of 'hacking personal computers' of other activists in Stopwar.ca. FTT never said where we got the emails that we published in the 'In Defense of StopWar' document we released, and there was never any proof to suggest that we 'hacked' any computers. However, the same people who called the police to have the FTT-5 arrested sent out public documents accusing us of 'hacking' and threatening us with legal charges.

This focus on 'hacking' has been a distraction from the sectarianism and conspiracy exposed by the emails that we published. These emails show those involved in the secret clique developing a conspiracy to kick FTT and Y3WA out of Stopwar.ca, a coalition some of us were involved in starting. This dishonest sectarianism and conspiracy to suppress the work of building an antiwar movement is reactionary, and FTT exposed it by publishing the emails.

It is not the publishing of emails that should be condemned, but the conspiring of the secret clique for the expulsion of FTT and the destruction of the antiwar movement in Vancouver.

The beginning of a new movement against war and occupation

Two weeks after FTT was expelled from Stopwar.ca, George Galloway, an outspoken opponent of the war and occupation and an MP in the British Parliament, was expelled from the Labour Party in the UK

well as any sort of occupation by United Nations forces.

Unfortunately the secret clique does represent the consciousness of some working people in Vancouver, although in general they represent the interest of an elite section of the unionized working class. The problem is not that the secret clique is 'in touch' with the thoughts and beliefs of some elements of the working class, the problem is the way they organize and lead these people. Rather than leading the whole working class towards the level of consciousness held by the many people who oppose imperialist war and occupation, they organize to paralyze this natural development. Some people in the leadership of Stopwar.ca organize to force the entire working class to advocate a mild reform of capitalism and support a United Nations occupation by offering nothing else to oppose the US-led war and occupation. The result of these efforts is the demoralization of the strongest and most revolutionary elements of the antiwar movement, and the creation of a weak and ineffective movement that cannot and will not support people in struggle against imperialism.

However, by lobbying for a gentler UN occupation of Iraq, Stopwar.ca would, directly or indirectly, be able to support the same campaign of the social democratic trends and help them re-build their trust amongst the working class of Canada. Because we represent people in struggle all around the world and are committed to building a movement led by oppressed people in Vancouver in support of this struggle, FTT and the FTT-5 got in the way of this agenda, and were expelled.

Fire This Time remains under attack by some elements of the status quo left and soft imperialists because we have not given up. We are fighting to build a mass movement in the Lower Mainland against war and occupation. As long as we create



Rally in Edmonton against war in Iraq and the occupation of Palestine, October 27th 2002.

Y3WA had organized the 'Student Week Against War' through the Outreach Committee of Stopwar.ca. This week of activity on campuses across the Lower Mainland brought us into contact with hundreds of young people and many of them got involved in the antiwar movement through this work.

Because of this work, the secret clique knew that Jef's re-structuring motion would not block FTT and Y3WA antiwar and anti-occupation organizing in the name of Stopwar.ca. They knew that Sid's motion to dissolve the Outreach Committee would not be heeded either, so they decided to begin the final drive to throw FTT out of the coalition altogether.

Unable to stop the movement-building faction from organizing, the secret clique set out to consolidate their control over the coalition by lining people up against the organizers of Fire This Time. In return for their support, the secret clique offered independent activists safety, recognition, comfort, financial support and status within the status quo left in Vancouver. To show what fate other activists would suffer if they did not support the lobbying agenda and to cover the political nature of the split in the coalition so they could continue to publicly present Stopwar.ca as an antiwar coalition, the secret clique targeted five members of Fire This Time: Shannon Bundock, Ali Yerevani, Mike Krebs, Nasim Sedaghat and Ivan Drury, all founding members of the November 17th Coalition and Stopwar.ca.

The expulsion of Fire This Time and the banning of the FTT-5

The secret clique called a secret meeting on October 8th to plan the undemocratic expulsion of Fire This Time at the Stopwar.ca meeting on October 15th. FTT called a press conference before the meeting and invited the media into the meeting to observe the expulsion. The expulsion was the first item on the agenda. The FTT-5 were never given a chance to prepare a defense or a meaningful chance to defend ourselves.

active groups in the coalition. Only 24 of these 160 groups that reportedly made up Stopwar.ca voted for the expulsion of FTT and the banning of the FTT-5. This was not a majority decision, and therefore could not be considered a legitimate decision by the coalition.

Because of this illegitimacy, the FTT-5 refused to recognize the expulsion or leave the meeting. Jef and Terry, members of Stopwar.ca, called the police to have the FTT-5 removed from the building for 'trespassing.' This act began the campaign by some elements of Stopwar.ca against FTT and the FTT-5 as a group outside of Stopwar.ca.

The public campaign against the FTT-5 took on the same characteristics that the slander campaign had within Stopwar.ca. In order to isolate antiwar, anti-occupation and movement building politics, they began to try to isolate FTT from the majority of the Left and progressive community in Vancouver.

The false charges against Fire This Time

Some people in the leadership of Stopwar.ca sent a letter to the Ubysey Newspaper and an email out on public lists accusing the FTT-5 of the same things they used to line people up against us in preparation for the expulsion.

The secret clique claimed that the FTT-5 were consistently disruptive in Stopwar.ca meetings, but they did not say why our disruptions were bad. In our involvement in the coalition we consistently argued for the coalition to do outreach, education and mobilization against war and occupation. When the secret clique began to push its bureaucratic lobbying agenda, these arguments became more frequent and disruptive. In the same way they attacked the FTT-5 personally with character assassinations in the coalition, the secret clique spread lies publicly that FTT are 'ultra-left,' 'arrogant', and 'dangerous and crazy' and warned other groups to not work with us.

The labels of 'arrogant, dangerous and crazy' are always attached

with name-calling like: 'I remember when I was young, you'll grow up,' 'How long you been doing this for, youngster?' and 'You're a smart young chick aren't you?'

The charges of ultra-leftism are completely groundless. We consistently argued for Stopwar.ca to focus specifically on opposing war and occupation to allow the involvement of everyone opposed to



Antiwar rally in Rome, Italy, September 28th 2003.

war. We argued from the beginning of our involvement with Stopwar.ca that we could bring other related issues up within the context of war, but to broaden the focus would shrink and weaken the movement. This approach is far from an ultra-leftism that would make coalition exclusively for leftists with an anti-capitalist agenda in a time when anti-capitalist consciousness is low.

In order to stand with the struggling people of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan, we organized and argued to develop the mass antiwar movement into a mass anti-occupation movement through all possible forms of outreach, political education, and the organizing

for his position on the war. Even in Iraq the polarization was deepening between the people trying to work with the occupying forces in governing councils and police forces and the people resisting the occupation by any means necessary. While the expulsion of FTT from Stopwar.ca was a setback for the antiwar movement in the Vancouver area, it was also part of the beginning of a new era in the antiwar movement internationally.

Fire This Time and the FTT-5 organize in support of self-determination for the people of Iraq. This means supporting the heroic resistance of people in Iraq and it means opposing occupation by the US/UK forces as

a space for people to get involved in this movement for real change, Stopwar.ca's attempts to steer the antiwar movement into domestic lobbying and gentle reform are weakened.

Fire This Time and the FTT-5 are still under attack by some people from Stopwar.ca because the struggling people of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan, who we represent, are still under attack. Only by building a mass antiwar, anti-occupation movement can we help to end the occupations of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan and build a new world free of this war, terror and destruction. ■

From Antiwar to Anti Occupation: the Failure to Maintain an Effective Antiwar Program

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Working with Stopwar.ca despite having an understanding of what the official leadership — SQL and OL — was doing was based on the fact that in order to meet our objectives we would have to use the most effective avenues possible to organize, educate and mobilize poor and working people against war. And as long as we could do this effectively within Stopwar.ca it remained the best place from which to organize. FTT went into the coalition with the understanding that millions of people in the streets all around the world can potentially stop the war — with the understanding that millions of people in the streets is in fact the *only* way that oppressed people can effect change.

The history of Stopwar.ca, from the most minor fight to the most major, clearly illustrates how the defenders of the Status Quo Left upheld their mandate and how — if FTT managed to successfully build the movement and politics that we outlined — the split and our expulsion from Stopwar.ca was not a question of *if* it would happen, but rather *when* would it happen and *how*.

Early Stages: The First Signs of the Division

It was within the first stage that the politics of Stopwar.ca were established on some levels. On the issue of Palestine the SQL and affiliated groups and individuals saw the necessity to make a concession to elements pushing for a main focus on Palestine — or better to say, for an equal focus on Iraq and Palestine. The fact was that the SQL did not agree with bringing Palestine into the picture and saw the potential of it to limit their objectives because of lower consciousness on the occupation of Palestine. They did, however, later see that they could use this issue to maneuver and bringing it forward was accepted partially as a compromise and partially as a tactic to keep the movement from growing too rapidly. The approach that the SQL and OL trends had towards Palestine was from the opportunistic perspective of the right and they saw the concession of Palestine as having potential to alleviate pressure from other radical groups. While Fire This Time agreed with not having Palestine as a central focus at the beginning of the war and bombing drive by the US and UK, but rather exploring the Palestinian issue via the war on Iraq, this was an approach from the left and revolutionary working class position and was in fact more threatening than the push for Palestine as the central strategy at the beginning of the war on Iraqi people.

As a result, the second stage of this revealed to the lobbying tendency that an alliance could be forged with those advocating the focus on Palestine immediately with the US-UK

not successful, they did establish the concept of 'being careful' and 'not burning people out.' They established a fear in some organizers of being irresponsibly swept away. This was expanded upon later and was important in the campaign to build a low-pressure movement. This leadership, instead of exploring the militant and radical potential of the activist-organizers, advocated the reactionary aspect of the comfortable capitalist life of the political and social activists.

As the beginning of the war drew nearer, February 15th was called as an international day of action as well. This demonstration was the largest one globally, and in Vancouver as well. With over 30,000 people on the street, Vancouver showed its potential to mobilize and to expand. This was the last demonstration for which the Vancouver official labour movement came out in full force.

Within weeks, in the middle of March 2003, Bush gave 48 hours notice for the beginning of the war March 20th. That evening, the Coordinating Committee of Stopwar.ca met and made no plans for a response. The next evening, the Outreach Committee of Stopwar.ca met and within the 2-hour meeting four consecutive demonstrations was called beginning on the night of the approaching invasion and war.

Next Stage: SQL and OL Open Attack on Third world and Young activists

The next evening during the general meeting of Stopwar.ca, the movement-building tendency — including FTT — who were most active in the Outreach Committee, were attacked for the first time by the lobbying tendency — the SQL and OL. The four planned demonstrations were condemned and the Outreach Committee was labeled renegade. Ironically all these arguments and attacks fell to pieces, however, as a cell phone rang and a member of Stopwar.ca informed the meeting that the US had begun bombing Baghdad. Immediately the entire meeting moved to the Vancouver Art Gallery where they were met with an amazing, militant demonstration of 2,000 people — exactly the way the Outreach Committee had planned and predicted.

The next day began with the March 20th Students Walk Out. Young people left their campuses across the Lower Mainland and flooded downtown. The streets of Vancouver became the streets of the world as youth marched globally against war. At 5 pm students joined with hundreds more people for the Outreach Committee's second rally at the Vancouver Art Gallery. People filled up the Robson side of the Art Gallery, the crowd thick all the way across the street.

Mainland-wide forum/meeting to build a network against war and expand the organized movement beyond Vancouver proper. The meeting was scheduled for March 23rd in New Westminster.

After the Friday mobilization, which again saw people in Vancouver mobilized and energized for hours into the night, Saturday March 22nd brought 10,000 people to the streets on three days notice. This rally ran incredibly long and it became very clear that the lobbying tendency in Stopwar.ca was functioning more slowly than the movement as these organizers began

When, on May 1st, George W. Bush announced that major military combat in Iraq was over, the lobbying tendency in Stopwar.ca sighed with relief and began pushing with greater success to shift into a campaign against the 'Star Wars II' Missile Defense program, and for boycotts of US products. This approach fit directly in line with the social democratic, liberal and middle class humanist trend's conference on peace in Ottawa, which Stopwar.ca participated in. The movement-building tendency, however, recognized the need to shift the political focus of its organizing into a focus on occupation and



Antiwar rally in San Fransisco, October 25th 2003.

to ask people to go home and hundreds of people refused to leave. Saturday, March 22nd saw the people of Vancouver on the streets from morning to sundown.

The next Stopwar.ca general meeting followed a week of demonstrations, it followed a week of devastation and destruction in Iraq and it followed a major inaugural organizing meeting of the Lower Mainland Network Against War. At that general meeting the lobbying tendency — the SQL and OL — who was nervous about and scared of the rapid growth of the antiwar movement and the role we play in it, again condemned the level of action and won a close and crippling vote: the decision was made to not call any rallies after March 29th; to instead sit down to a major strategy meeting on April 2nd.

At this point in the movement it became clear that young people and people from the third world had a strong position in the streets but not in the leadership of Stopwar.ca. This again amplified the polarization and showed, for the first time publicly, the division between building a movement against war and steering the movement into lobbying. The necessity to ensure that the official leadership of Stopwar.ca represented the movement in the streets was essential in establishing a close relationship with the movement and developing a leadership that could effectively respond to it.

After this meeting it became clear to many members of Stopwar.ca that, in order to respond effectively to the movement, organizing would have to happen outside the coalition in addition to the organizing within Stopwar.ca.

On Friday, March 28th, Fire This Time and other members of Stopwar.ca organized a meeting of 20 people (organizers within and outside of the coalition) who were interested in continuing to organize mobilizations. Out of this meeting the organization Youth - Third world Alliance was born. Youth - Third world Alliance (Y3WA) decided to work within Stopwar.ca and also externally when necessary, and on this basis the first major demonstration organized outside Stopwar.ca was called for April 5th by Youth - Third world Alliance. Within Stopwar.ca, the SQL and OL narrowly defeated a motion to endorse this march and rally by two votes: 33 against, 31 for and 25 abstentions. Despite lack of support and official endorsement, around 1,000 people participated in this rally.

The Failure to Shift from Antiwar to Anti-occupation

It was during this period that momentum began to slow. Stopwar.ca organized its next action on April 26th as a 'Picnic for Peace,' breaking from the strategy of energizing mobilization, in favour of settling into a quiet summer routine — all before the official end of the war was declared.

war now that the occupation had really begun. Unfortunately, this shift failed to happen and the movement slowed even more drastically.

The summer set in at this point and the lobbying trend of Stopwar.ca began to resign itself to taking a summer break. The movement-building tendency continued to fight, but under the weight of global demoralization and the pressure of 'slowing down' within Stopwar.ca, it was difficult to maintain momentum objectively.

Deepening Divisions: Open Factional Fight Begins

It was during this low point in the summer that internal structure and strategy discussions were silenced. The lack of a clear strategy for building the antiwar movement in the short or long run, and the lack of adequate structure, was amplified by a homophobic attack by a member of Stopwar.ca — and a member of the SQL — on another member. The lobbying tendency attempted to cover up and silence the physical and psychological assault, whereas the movement-building tendency attempted to use the incident to establish policy and set a precedent for how Stopwar.ca was going to proceed politically. The movement-building tendency again came under vicious attack, including character assassination, a smear campaign, and racist and sexist slurs, for its work to address the assault in a political manner. The developments of this incident lasted from June until July and further enforced the basis of the division that already existed in political vision and strategy.

In late August, when the coalition began to again piece itself together and prepare for the fall strategy, it was clear to all members of the coalition that the factional division was nearing its peak and would soon develop into a split if space was not allowed for the existence of a loyal opposition and sharing the leadership within Stopwar.ca. Within weeks, perhaps days, the lobbying tendency — the SQL, OL and their block members — began secretly organizing a secret clique for the purging of 'disruptive' tendencies; obviously FTT, Y3WA and their supporters. We know now for sure from documents we have and also admittance by some members of this secret clique that, in a secret and unofficial meeting of selected coalition individuals, this secret clique decided to expel Fire This Time (FTT) members from the Stopwar.ca coalition on the first point of agenda in the October 15th, 2003 general meeting. This was five days ago. With this a new era has begun. The era that will be marked by a great antiwar, anti-occupation movement consisting of thousands of youth, women, people of colour and third world people. ■



Antiwar banner display in Venice, October 5th 2002.

campaign for war on Iraq. They were able to provide space, recognition and resources and in return gain the appearance of being connected to third world movements and communities of color. Finally, by using some elements of third world groups who were willing to cooperate with the SQL and OL for the reward of getting a position (material, financial and institutional help) within the SQL, they hoped to neutralize those groups, like FTT, who were introducing and advocating a more radical and effective agenda.

From the beginning of Stopwar.ca, before the invasion even began, there were attempts to cancel Vancouver's participation in the international January 17th demonstration because of 'lack of time to plan!' Despite the fact that these initial attempts to slow down were

It was during this time that Fire This Time made a significant intervention in the antiwar movement and began publishing the first of six Updates on War. These included important assessments and analysis of the Vancouver antiwar movement in the context of the international resistance and imperialist developments. The updates also included the first published public announcements of Stopwar.ca meetings. These Updates were instrumental for educating public on imperialist war and aggression considering that up to this date Stopwar.ca never published one piece of documentation on its stance or political analysis of the imperialist war drive and antiwar movement-building.

On Thursday the Outreach Committee met again and began organizing the first Lower

Privatization Not the Solution to Capitalist Economic Crisis

By Ivan Drury

'It's going to be very difficult for subsequent [governments] to come along and reverse the process; don't do the difficult and unpopular [privatizations] first. Do the easy ones first and use the success and popularity of these to gain support for the other ones.' – Briton Madsen Pirie PhD, for the right-wing think tank, the Fraser Institute, 1987

Thousands of jobs have been lost in two years of privatization by the BC Liberal Government. An estimated 9,000 health care jobs will be lost by the spring of 2004 through contracting out laundry and cleaning services to private companies. On December 1st, in an extended day of legislature, the Liberals leased BC Rail to CN for 90 years and 750 BC Rail workers were laid off. In the same legislature sitting, Bill 85 passed, opening Terasen Gas up to merger or takeover and threatening the jobs of 500 Gas workers.

The immediate impact of privatization for workers when their jobs are cut, moved or contracted out is felt in the long term by all working and poor people when corners are cut in the profit driven industry and rates are introduced or raised for services. At the base of the privatization of publicly owned industries and infrastructure is the agenda of redirecting governmental priority from creating, providing and managing services

in order to meet the rights and needs of poor and working people, to an agenda of profit for big capitalists off of these same basic services.

Three examples of the impact of privatization on services for poor and working people stand out in 2003. The spread of SARS, the August power blackout on the East Coast, and the December ferry strike in BC were all influenced and instigated by a widespread campaign of deregulation and privatization by the BC Liberals and governments like them.

Privatization and the ferry strike

The path to the complete privatization of BC Ferries began on April 1st of this year when the Coastal Ferries Act passed through the BC Legislature. The Act began the process of privatization by demanding, 'The designated ferry routes are to move towards a greater reliance on a user pay system so as to reduce over time, the service fee contributions by government.' In order to carry this out, the Act gives the company 'unfettered' ability to contract out jobs to lower costs and restricts the power of the union to defend the rights and jobs of ferry workers.

As in all cases of privatization, the industry must be changed in two important ways in order to make it attractive to capitalists: wages, labour and administrative costs must be lowered and prices must be raised. The BC Liberals fulfilled both these



Minister of Women, Aboriginal and Community Development George Abbott launches a 'youth employment' Public Private Partnership with 'Concert Properties'.

requirements when they passed the Coastal Ferries Act, attacking the rights and securities of ferry workers and their union in the short term and the accessibility and cost of using ferries in the long term.

The contract handed to ferry workers in the fall would have increased work-week hours, decreased hourly wages by up to 48% and expanded the company's ability to contract out labour. The strike that

resulted from this contract was quickly made illegal by the BC Liberals in order to defend the interests of the company and the privatization of BC Ferries. The agenda behind this privatization was clearly stated by right-wing journalist Michael Smith in an opinion piece in the Vancouver Sun on December 18th when he complained of ferry workers' 'unrealistic pay levels that are far higher than private-sector equivalents.' Behind the ferry strike was the privatization of ferries. Behind the privatization of ferries is the reactionary demand that all workers' wages and conditions be lowered to the level of the most exploited private sector workers, rather than the progressive reverse demand: that all workers' wages be raised to the living wages of public sector workers.

All electrical power to the people

The company that took the blame for the East Coast blackout on August 14th of this year is the fourth largest privately owned utility company in the US. Repeatedly, Ohio-based First Energy has come under fire for cutting back workers who maintain transmission lines and for allowing their nuclear generators to literally fall apart. However, the spread of the blackout to Ontario has as much to do with privatization and deregulation in Canada as in the US.

The 1998 Energy Competition Act in Ontario started the privatization and deregulation drive that shot the electrical system into chaos and allowed the conditions to run down to the level that resulted in the blackout.

Two years later, a complete privatization bill was passed in Alberta and resulted in the tripling of people's power bills in the province within months. In BC, the same process is just beginning.

In February 2003, the BC Liberals passed the Energy and Mines Statutes Amendment Act that sold one third of BC Hydro to a private company called Accenture. Far from improving hydro infrastructure, this sale is the beginning of the full privatization of Hydro, the cutting of workers' wages and securities and the artificial raising of Hydro rates in BC.

Why is the government selling off BC Hydro? In BC, electricity comes from a cheaper source than elsewhere in Canada or the US: hydroelectric dams. By opening up the market to capitalist competition, the capitalists will be able to sell the cheaper product at the same high rates as their competitors around the continent. For this reason, the power industry in BC

Union Matters, HEU Fights Back

By Shannon Bundock

'They're really into this divide and conquer. They really want to break unions. Campbell [Gordon] doesn't like unions; he doesn't like anyone questioning or challenging anything he does. It's a matter of them increasing their power, and part of that is increasing the polarization between the haves and have-nots. It's basically class warfare politics.' – Fred Muzin, President of Hospital Employees Union (HEU), in interview with FTT # 2, March 2003

This fall and early winter has brought increased attacks by the BC Liberal government against poor and working people throughout the province. In November, the Hospital Employees Union (HEU) was faced with the announced closure of St Vincent's-Heather Hospital and over 450 HEU unionized workers were issued pink slips. St Vincent's-Heather, located in Vancouver, is BC's only acute care hospital specializing in geriatric health. At the time that the closure was announced, the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority also announced that \$1.3 million is slated to be spent on consultants for more cost-cutting advice. Since at 87%, HEU has a larger percentage of women members than any other union in BC, these layoffs are not only a direct attack on women as workers but are also a serious attack on women's rights and their welfare.

'There are 1,840 seniors waiting for cataract surgery at St Vincent's-Heather,' said HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. 'But instead of using scarce health care dollars to shorten their wait, the health authority is shutting down the hospital and its operating

rooms, firing health care workers while spending more than a million dollars for tips on how to cut even more services.'

St Vincent's-Heather provides essential facilities through its Urgent Care program, which focuses on accessible emergency care for non-critical patients. The Urgent Care facility was significant in relieving pressure from emergency rooms. With the closure of St Vincent's-Heather, there will not be a program relocation, but rather the Liberal government is simply scrapping the program completely, which promises to lead to increased pressure, again on ER facilities. This is a combined attack against workers and patients, as people in the Lower Mainland will feel added pressure through the effects of this closure on our health care system.

The closure of St Vincent's-Heather is not isolated: at the same time, the Liberals have recently stated that they will be breaking another collective agreement. In a letter sent to the non-profit agencies that provide community services for the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), the ministry stated, 'Due to budget pressure, the ministry will not be able to fund the October 2002 classification/equity increase contained in the collective agreement.'

'This government appears determined to take money out of the pockets of low-paid workers, and does not hesitate to break contracts to do it,' said Chris Anderson, lead negotiator for 13 different unions representing workers who deliver community-based services for vulnerable people, including children at risk, children and adults with mental and physical disabilities, and women fleeing abuse.

The breaking of this collective agreement

is yet another example of the anti-worker, anti-poor agenda of the Liberal government. Poor and working people all across the province have already felt the effects of cuts to women's services, universal childcare, disability benefits, welfare and healthcare. The attacks that are now being faced by people across the province are a deepening of the assaults we have been facing since the Liberal election. Since the election of Gordon Campbell's Liberals, HEU workers have suffered immensely from government cuts and layoffs. These attacks have been met with resistance from HEU and its members all over the Lower Mainland. Just recently in a December 2nd victory, the Health Employers Association of BC was forced to withdraw its bid to have the courts impose legal and financial penalties on HEU over a community-led protest against privatization at the Salvation Army's Sunset Lodge last summer.

These developments further enforce the necessity that all poor and working people in BC fight to defend the healthcare system in BC and the workers that provide healthcare services. We must demand that the BC Liberals retract the announced closing of St Vincent's-Heather, restore the Urgent Care facilities and allow the HEU workers to keep their jobs. As well, we must demand that the classification/equity increase contained in the collective agreement with MCFD workers be respected and implemented. In defense of all poor and working people in BC we must fight back against these attacks and demand an end to all cuts to healthcare and community social services and an end to all attacks against government workers. We must also demand that liberals STOP UNION BUSTING, and STOP BREAKING CONTRACTS. ■

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Homelessness is a Result of Capitalism

Social Housing is a Solution to Homelessness

By Ivan Drury

'Some suggest homelessness is the result of a permissive society, and they say we need to take a zero tolerance attitude toward the crime and the nuisance homeless people create. Advocates for the homeless, on the other hand, say the solution lies in creating more jobs, more social assistance, more social housing.'

'Yet both perspectives have much in common: Each is impossibly simplistic, as each presents a one-size-fits-all solution to homelessness.' – Vancouver Sun editorial, October 14, 2003

In October, BC Premier Gordon Campbell publicly attacked Vancouver Mayor Larry Campbell about Tent Cities in parks around the city saying, 'The city's got a responsibility to enforce its bylaws' and remove the homeless from these parks.

Mayor Larry Campbell responded, 'What the hell has he [Gordon Campbell] done to help the people who are suffering from mental illness? What's he done for those who cannot find jobs? What's he done for the economy?'

According to the feature series on homelessness in the Vancouver Sun, the Mayor and the Premier represent the two sides of the leaders of the governments in

BC's debate on solutions to homelessness. However, neither one of them is able to address the problem at its base with a solution that speaks to the thousands of people in BC who are homeless nor the hundreds of thousands of people who are at risk of homelessness.

BC Liberals create more homelessness

'This [homelessness] is a Vancouver problem. There's not a problem in Surrey, there's not a problem in West Vancouver, there's not a problem in Port Moody, because they enforce their by-laws.' – BC Premier Gordon Campbell

Since coming to power in 2001,

the BC Liberal Government has implemented legislation that has increased homelessness throughout BC. Obviously this legislation includes the elimination of funding for social housing and the changes to the Residential Tenancy Act, but it also includes the cuts to welfare, health care, women's centres, legal aid, and assaults on working people's rights through changes to labour standards, the \$6 'training' wage, child labour legislation and privatization. All of these changes and cuts have destabilized life for poor and working people in BC in favor of profit for big business and real estate capitalists.

One visible effect of this increasing poverty and instability has been a rise in homelessness in Vancouver and throughout the province. However, the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) have released a report that shows 'people who are "absolutely homeless" represent only the tip of the iceberg.' They estimate that more than 131,000 people in the province are at risk of homelessness because they spend over 50% of their income on rent and housing. Even these numbers do not show the depths of the problem as they are based on the 1996 census, the last census to take count of income and poverty in Canada.

In the past year, homelessness, the acid test of poverty and housing crises, has exploded in almost every community in the province. Gordon Campbell demands that homeless people be made illegal through by-laws that, if enacted, would fill the jails and prisons in BC with well over 1,200 people.

Like all other capitalist politicians, Gordon Campbell has lost touch with the reality of life for poor and working people in BC under his government. Contrary to his remarks, homeless shelters in Surrey, Maple Ridge, Richmond, the North Shore and New Westminster have actually reported double the previous amount of people showing up for a place to sleep for the night. More than 5,000 people were turned away from shelters because they were full last winter. Many of these people migrate to the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver for access to the services there and to escape the harassment of 'zero tolerance' policies of police forces in places like Whalley.

In order to lower overall wages while increasing rent and profit for real estate monopolies and big landholders, the BC Liberal government has eliminated social housing spending while removing rent increase limitations in the Residential Tenancy Act. Along with other cuts to welfare, health care and labour rights, this means that working people are making less money with less secure employment along with higher rent and less secure housing. Meanwhile, the ruling class makes more profit through business and higher profits off real estate investments. The recent increase of homelessness implies a tragic

increase in overall poverty and instability for working and poor people throughout the province, resulting from these attacks by big business and the government.

Tent Cities, a creation of the capitalist system

There has been a Tent City in Seattle for years. Starting in 1990, the roving Tent Cities of Seattle have become a portable fixture of the city. They were shut down twice in ten years before a judge granted one Tent City legal status in 2001, as long as it stays in one place no longer than three months.

Vancouver Mayor Larry Campbell has introduced a similar plan for the Lower Mainland: 'Maybe a huge army barracks with cooking facilities.' And in October, City Council approved a motion that aims to stop the conversion of residential hotel rooms to tourist use by charging hotel owners \$5,000 for each room conversion.

While this approach to homelessness at least recognizes that homeless people exist, it does not offer an effective solution. Army barracks, hotel rooms, cold-wet-weather warehousing shelter strategies and the national homelessness initiative are all part of the desperate scramble by government to find somewhere to put the people cast into desperate poverty and homelessness by capitalist crisis and reactionary BC Liberal Government policy.

In his opinion article in the Vancouver Sun on October 27th, Larry Campbell argued for better government management of the effects of this capitalist crisis and the attacks on the rights of poor and working people by the BC Liberals. Explaining why it is necessary for city government to pass anti-conversion bylaws for residential hotels in absence of social housing Campbell said, 'The city must protect itself, to the degree that it can, from the consequences of [federal and provincial government] failure.'

The strategy behind these so-called 'solutions' is to manage and minimize the negative effects of rising poverty, like homelessness and property crime, so the cuts and attacks on the rights and securities of working people can continue.

Larry Campbell contradicts his demands for provincial and federal government to take responsibility for homelessness with his opposite approach to visible signs of homeless people in Vancouver: Tent Cities. In the October 27th opinion article in the Vancouver Sun, Larry Campbell wrote, 'None of this [poverty and homelessness] justifies, in my mind, the occupation of parks by Tent Cities or the defiance of city and park board officials.'

Until the problem of homelessness is solved, it is the worst sort of hypocrisy for the government to criminalize the homeless. The Vancouver Sun and Gordon Campbell's off-the-cuff comments about 'enforcing bylaws' and 'permissiveness' deny

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In Memory of Taum Danberger

Taum Danberger died in November 2003 in his hotel room.

We met Taum in the Woodward's Squat in September of 2002. He was a poet, a lover of people, a fighter, a Downtown Eastside resident, a Woodward's 54er, a supporter of Fire This Time, a comrade and a friend.

I last saw Taum a few days after his fiftieth birthday. He had just gotten his welfare cheque and, as he had done for the past three or four months, rang my apartment to bring me a donation for the FTT newspaper. He was leaving in a couple weeks to go visit his Mom up north and was excited about getting out of the Downtown Eastside for awhile. He died before he could make this trip.

Taum was killed by the brutality of the poverty created by capitalism and maintained by the BC Liberal government. Under the BC Liberals Taum was subjected to humiliating disability welfare application and to police brutality in the Downtown Eastside. Although this oppression both shaped and ended Taum's life, it did not cripple him. Taum was an active member of his community and a tireless defender of the rights of poor, working and oppressed people in Vancouver and throughout the world.

Taum... it was an honour to know you and fight alongside you.

We Will Win.

Do You Remember the Big W Really?

Playing guitar, laundry to do
Kryptonite locks
Like glass in the air
Dusted really fine particulates
in the air

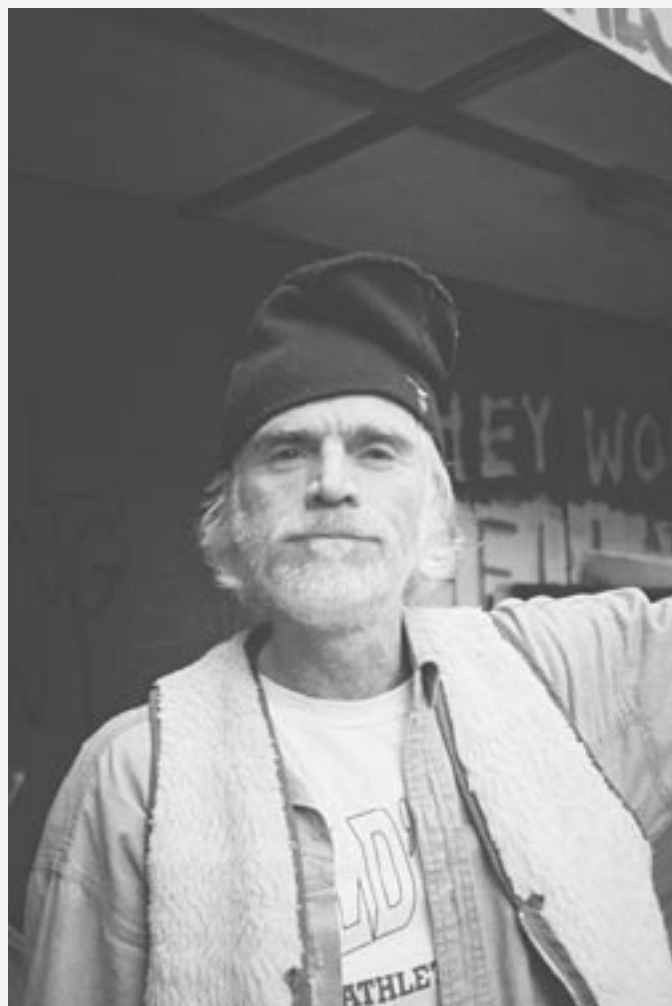
Miss the hit, hit the miss
banging on a cardboard box
with a stick
'cross the street the purple door
earth dance pavement crash
leaning
grating window grill

The Police
will be coming only too soon
where to go from here
now we don't need
the truck the cameras
until it's over
it's through TV

Doing time here
Happysack carts butZzz
No backgammon
vegan treats, putrid meats
10 hours of time
of donation
of yers 'n mine...

... Street nurses overtime
no one sick of it
that cousin of mine
the hyphenated CDN
Coalition for nuclear defense

Scot through it all like maybe it's cmas
do you really remember the big W?
T'N'T that's tarps and tents
bring cranberry cocktails for the HEP G
over all we will win
oakey doaks



Taum Danberger

August 26th 1953 - November 6th 2003

This poem originally appeared in WOODSQUAT #24, Oct 21, 2002 and will appear in Taum's forthcoming first book of poetry, 'I'm Completely Distracted Within The First Seven Seconds', to be published by Fall 2004 by Thuja Books. Box 2684 Station Terminal Vancouver V6B 3W8

Drop the Charges Against the Britannia 9!

By Nasim Sedaghat

'They are just a bunch of thugs, and thugs are thugs, and they are not going to stop us from doing what we are going to do. We are just going to re-double our efforts.' – Premier Gordon Campbell, on the six o'clock news the night of the October 3rd Britannia protest

On October 3rd, 2002, Premier Gordon Campbell was scheduled to speak at the opening of the 'Canucks Literacy Centre' in the Britannia Community Centre in East Vancouver. Parents from 'Save Our Schools' with kids at the Britannia Community Centre and School organized a protest against Campbell and the BC Liberal cuts to education.

What began as a quiet and peaceful protest with children and grandparents turned violent when a junior officer arrested an elderly man wearing a clown nose doing a pantomime for the crowd. This man, First United Church Minister George Feenstra, was dragged into the alley beside the building and run face first into the stucco wall by police. The demonstrators surrounded the police and their prisoner and chanted, 'Let the clown go!'

After demonstrators sat down in the alley to block the police wagon from leaving, the police

attacked the crowd. A 14-year old boy who the police reported as 'appearing eleven' was punched in the face by a cop, picked up, carried away, arrested and charged with assault on a police officer. The police then targeted people in the crowd and beat, pepper sprayed and arrested eight people in total. Two days later they obtained a warrant for Ivan Drury, now an organizer with Fire This Time, and arrested him.

On December 1st, over a year after the demonstration and arrests, the trial of five of the Britannia 9 began. After two weeks of trial, 12 police officers have taken the witness stand to try to prove the trumped up charges against these demonstrators. Their testimonies,

inconsistent with their own written reports, have shown the trial to be a farce. The police themselves have admitted that the violence at Britannia was caused by the actions of the police.

Despite the flawed and failing case against the Britannia 9, it is continuing. Initially scheduled for the first two weeks of December, that period has passed without the prosecution calling even half of their planned 24 police witnesses. Amidst overbooked courts and massive cuts to funding, the trial has been scheduled to resume for 15 more court days, starting March 8th, 2004.

What is the case of the Britannia 9 really about?



Scott Rohan, one of the Britannia 9, arrested during the Britannia police riot, October 2nd 2002.

With the fundamental flaws of the crown prosecution's case against the defendants exposed, the question is: why are the government and the police proceeding with charges against the Britannia 9?

The trial is not to convict and punish the Britannia defendants; it is to justify and cover-up the same police brutality the Vancouver Police Department has been found guilty of in the Stanley Park beatings. Police witness after witness have taken the stand in the courtroom and have failed to defend their own brutal actions at the Britannia police riot.

Police spokesperson Sara Bloor said, the day after the demonstration and arrests, that it was the 'violent demonstrators' who undermine others' rights to a democratic and peaceful protest. She, along with Premier Campbell, blamed the violence of the police on October 3rd on the handful of protestors 'known to the VPD.'

The people who are targeted by the arrests and charges from the Britannia protest are not the so-called 'violent demonstrators' and 'thugs' that Bloor and Gordon Campbell blame. The real targets of these arrests are the same people who are targeted by the BC Liberal Government.

The victims of the BC Liberal Government cuts are women who cannot afford a divorce from abusive marriages because of the cuts to legal aid. They are working families who live in sub-standard conditions because of the cuts to social housing, secondary school students in overcrowded classes and former university students who cannot afford the tuition raise. They are workers living in poverty under the \$6 minimum wage and the 30,000 people who are threatened with being cut off welfare in April. The families that organized the protest on October 3rd were not full-time political organizers. They organized this protest because they had to take action against the attacks on them by the BC Liberal Government.

The police were called to the demonstration to suppress the rights of poor and working people who were protesting the cuts of the BC Liberal Government. The BC Liberal Government was called to office to suppress the rights of poor and working people for the profit of big business in British Columbia. When the police attacked Minister George Feenstra, the crowd that was assembled in the defense of the rights of all poor and working people against the attacks of the BC Liberals defended him against the attacks of the police.

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BACK TO THE MIDDLE AGES GORDON CAMPBELL'S NEW CHILD LABOUR: A CRIMINAL POLICY

By Brennan Luchsinger

On October 8th, 2003, the BC Liberal government passed Bill 37, the changes to the Employment Standards Act. With this deregulation of labour standards, employers now only need a letter of written consent from a parent or guardian to employ children 12 years and older. These changes have brought to BC the weakest employment standards for children in all of Canada.

The introduction of Bill 37 by the BC Liberal government is the most recent, most vicious attack on the rights of child workers in BC. The changes to the Employment Standards Act have been made under claims of removing 'red tape,' and getting rid of regulations that did little to protect the rights of children, while in actuality these changes give employers greater access to a cheaper, exploitable pool of labour.

The abolishment of labour laws in BC is a visible tactic of the BC Liberal government to look out for the interests of big business. These aggressive changes cannot be seen as an isolated incident that affects only children in the workforce. The BC Liberal government has worked hard to lower the benchmark of employment standards, and has successfully been whittling away the rights of workers through attacks like those waged through these recent changes to Bill 37. As children are subjected to deregulated workplaces, it becomes easier for the BC Liberals to apply these deregulated standards to the entire workforce.

Child Slavery

'There is in our society a responsibility on parents as well. It's fine to think you

can place everything on the state, but for things to work you've got to have parental involvement.' – BC Labour Minister Graham Bruce

Along with applying a new procedure, or lack of procedure, for employing children, more 'red tape' has been cut by removing all the restrictions that were applied to child labour, without approving new regulations to take their place. Before the changes were passed, Bill 37 read that children under the age of 15 could not be employed without a permit from a director of the Employment Standards Branch (ESB).

As stated in ESB procedures, 'Permits will be granted where it appears that the health, welfare, and safety of the child will not be compromised.' In the past the ESB was responsible for monitoring conditions of a workplace to identify threats to workers and protect them from situations that could be jeopardizing.

Now, to employ a child between the ages of 12 and 15, the employer only needs to obtain a note of written consent from a parent or guardian. The ESB has successfully been removed from the process and the safety of children in the workplace has been compromised.

Before this legislation was passed, permits were often denied by the ESB according to sources from outside the government, even though in most cases parental consent was provided. Placing the regulation of child labour solely on parents is a compromising situation that the ESB has seen and often remedied by denying permits for children to work in unfair and dangerous work conditions.

Who Benefits?

'These changes are clearly designed to

benefit employers, not children... They will grant business greater access to a pool of young, inexperienced workers who cannot command a decent wage and who will be less likely to stand up for their rights.' – Neil Worboys, president of the BC Teachers' Federation

As children suffer from these attacks on their rights, the employers are the ones who benefit. Removing the ESB from the procedures has provided employers greater access to a cheap and inexpensive pool of child workers. To date the only restriction that has been put in place around child labour is that children cannot work during school hours.

The only means of enforcing children's rights through Bill 37 has been by placing a violator's fee on the new regulations. There is a first time violator's fee of \$500 to an employer who is found to be abusing employment standards, a meager slap on the wrist that most businesses consider as simply a cost of doing business. Further, with the introduction of the 'self-help kit' (introduced last year under previous amendments to the Employment Standards Act), workers have virtually no access to filing a complaint. They must first get a 'self-help kit' from the ESB, fill it out, and file it with their employer. Forcing workers into a situation where their job security is at risk during the process of filing a complaint renders this procedure useless.

Bill 37 Must Be Revoked

As a result of this direct offensive towards children's rights as workers, more and more children that come from marginalized communities will be pushed into the workforce at an early age. The act of coercing children into employment has an adverse effect on their schooling and in

turn it has proven to increase the chances of dropping out.

Combined with the lowering of the minimum wage through the \$6 'training' wage, as well as previous changes to the Employment Standards Act, Bill 37 affects all working people in BC. It is a further lowering of even the most basic labour standards for workers, which in turn means a lowering of standards across the board.

Straightforward attacks and increased aggression coming from the BC Liberal government on the working population of BC must be met with resistance. The exploitation of children as a source of cheap labour is not something that happens far away from home. It's happening under our very noses right here in Canada. These attacks push children into a position where they are unable to protect themselves, unable to stand up for their rights and unable to escape poverty that is forced on them by condemning children to a life of low wage work. As long as this Liberal aggression carries on, the rights of people from marginalized communities are constantly being abolished.

Working people need to fight back to change employment standards so that workers and children alike will not be forced into positions that take their welfare for granted. We must unite as workers, people from the third world, people of color, women, parents, young people and all oppressed people suffering under the BC Liberal government to fight to revoke Bill 37 and win the essential rights that every person is entitled to. ■

Brennan Luchsinger is a member of the Youth-3rd World Alliance.

Social Housing is the Solution to Homelessness

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the real roots of homelessness. Larry Campbell's contradiction of accepting his government's need to manage the crisis of homelessness in Vancouver yet not accepting the real existence and lives of homeless people in the city shows the limitations of his half-hearted solution to homelessness.

Working and poor people must demand that Larry Campbell, the city and the police not dismantle any Tent Cities without providing decent and dignified housing for all the homeless people living in them.

What next?

Homelessness in BC is exposing the BC Liberal era for what it is: stripping the rights, wages and securities of working and



Rally in support of Woodward's Squat, September 2002.

poor people in BC for big business and real estate profit. This era will only become more desperate and widespread when the 2-year welfare time limit runs out in April of 2004 and up to

30,000 people lose their income overnight.

As long as homelessness is viewed as an isolated problem that affects only the homeless

themselves, there will not be a solution. When homelessness is dealt with only through shelters, Tent Cities and jails, the real problem of capitalist profiteering through increasing poverty will continue to grow.

By guaranteeing that no one pays more than 10% of their income for shelter, homelessness would be eliminated. Social housing is the solution to homelessness as well as to overpriced apartments, run down and overcrowded houses and crushing mortgages for families throughout the province. As well as guaranteeing decent and dignified housing for all people in BC, the Liberals must provide universal jobs and training to end unemployment and poverty. For those who are not able to work, for whatever reason, subsidies must be provided to guarantee that no one

lives at or below the poverty line. This must become the meaning of the demands for social housing and health care in Canada.

Working and poor people in every corner of BC must recognize that social housing is not only a homeless issue. It is an issue and a demand that is in the favor of all working class people, whether renters, mortgagors or homeless. We demand that no one have to pay over 10% of their income to housing so that we can all guarantee our own secure housing. We demand that the civic COPE government, the BC Liberals and the Federal Liberal government fund and build social housing immediately. Through these measures, the problem of homelessness will gradually, and effectively, be eliminated.

SOCIAL HOUSING NOW! ■

Stop the Privatization of Health Care

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is especially attractive to capitalists. In order to keep power relatively affordable and functioning in BC, to avoid similar crises as have occurred on the East Coast and to protect the rights of hydro workers, it is equally important that poor and working people in BC demand that BC Hydro stay in public hands.

Health Care for the health of people, not for profit making

In the midst of the international SARS scare of 2003, the head of Taiwan's disease control agency reported that the SARS spread was aided by contracting out hospital cleaning and laundry to private companies. In Ontario, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE Ontario) reported much the same thing:

'The SARS outbreak was marked by chaos and confusion, inadequate resources and planning and a determination to place economic interests above health and safety interests.'

The seeds for the same problem have been laid in BC. In the spring, the laundry contract for hospitals in the Vancouver Coastal district was added to the resume of K-Bro, a US company run out of Alberta. K-Bro secured the contracts for hospital laundry in the Fraser Valley in 2002. They distinguished themselves by being caught violating health standards by washing bloody hospital linens in clothes washers in Senior's Care facilities because of the shortage of linens resulting from their practice of shipping all laundry to Alberta to be cleaned by \$5 an hour minimum wage workers.

This corner-cutting for profit that directly undermines the health of patients in BC Health Care facilities is a cornerstone of privatization. This practice extends into the privatization of positions within hospitals as well. Aramark, a corporation handed over 1,000 in-house cleaning positions in Vancouver Coastal Hospitals, including Vancouver General, St Paul's, Richmond and Lions Gate, offer a starting wage of only \$9.25 an hour. This wage means the employment of inexperienced, poorly trained and transitional employees who, being heavily exploited people, will be overworked and unable to maintain the level of cleanliness necessary to maintain a hospital.

Sodexo, the French corporation contracted out by the Fraser Health Authority to take over more than 800 former Hospital



HEU rally at Vancouver Art Gallery, February 2nd 2002.

Employees Union (HEU) positions, has been investigated and criticized in the UK and the US for keeping 'filthy conditions throughout areas used by staff and patients.'

Insistent to carry out this privatization agenda at any cost, the government, through the Vancouver Island Health Authority, turned down a concession offer from the HEU to accept the equivalent of \$21 million in cuts to wages, benefits and hours restrictions in exchange for not privatizing the positions of 1,200 hospital workers.

Following the form dictated by capitalist architects like the Fraser Institute, this privatization drive is beginning by targeting industries with predominately oppressed and heavily exploited workers. In the case of hospitals, the target workers who will lose 9,000 jobs by the spring of 2004 are 90% women. Most of these women are immigrants and people of colour. Women of colour will staff these contracted positions as well, likely the same women, but at much lower wages and without the security they have as government employees and members of HEU.

The same way the BC Liberals created their argument for the privatization of Medicare and Pharmacare by cutting 44% of the jobs in the ministry and creating a 230,000-request backlog, they are creating a crisis situation in hospitals. The answer for poor and working people to the problem of wait lists for surgery and emergency rooms is not found in privatization. Privatization is the creation of two-tiered health

care, where wealthy people have better access to services than poor people and working people. The effects of privatization on patient care will not be countable until after the Liberals have carried through their agenda. However, the purpose of the privatization drive can be measured by the attacks on workers in hospitals and the effects of the same two-tiered system in other places in the world, like the US.

Privatization is the theft of workers' rights and securities

'Toll roads exist everywhere and there's a movement that infrastructure will be on a pay-per-use system.' - Michael Brazeau, VP and public sector leader for Cap Gemini Ernst and Young, a global consulting firm active in Public Private Partnerships

The fundamental difference between a publicly owned industry and a capitalist owned one is the reason that it is run. These reasons are directed by who owns the industry and what they hope to accomplish with it. In the case of publicly owned industry and infrastructure in BC like ferries, power and health care, the public owns them and runs them in order to serve themselves with the services necessary to survive. The wages and conditions of workers in the industries must be upheld in order to guarantee decent and dependable services and the raising of standards of living of all workers and poor people. When these industries are privatized, as is happening in all of these three cases, the wages

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Police Suppression and the BC Liberals

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Anti-Liberal Movement on Trial

Since the fall of 2002, the organized anti-Liberal movement has shrunk. Gordon Campbell is not haunted by demonstrations wherever he goes. The BC Federation of Labour has not organized a mass demonstration or any mass protest or strike in over a year and many of the people who were becoming involved in organizing for the first time got demoralized by the 'redoubled efforts' of Gordon Campbell and the Liberals. Indeed, without separate and dispersed strikes and protests by different unions -- like the Hospital Employees Union, who championed in organizing and mobilizing workers against the Liberal government -- in response to cuts and massive layoffs, not much could be said today about the resistance movement to Gordon Campbell's right-wing government in British Columbia. The BC Liberals need to use the Britannia 9 as an 'example' of

punishment for protesting. They know damn well the frustration and anger of poor and working people are mounting -- a recent poll in BC showed for the first time after the Liberals' victory in 2001 that their popularity has dropped below 50%. They know damn well, with a militant and aggressive labour movement they could have been paralyzed by massive strikes, protests and even a general strike. The Liberal government is now facing a different danger: the widespread scrutiny of the VPD. After the Guns n' Roses riot, the Pivot legal society affidavit report on police brutality in the Downtown Eastside, and the six officers pleading guilty to assault in the case of the Stanley Park beating, the case of the Britannia 9 could further expose the role of brutality in the daily work of the Vancouver Police Department.

A mass demand for an end to this police brutality from all poor and working people could put pressure on the VPD and stop the police in Vancouver from unaccountably violating the rights of poor, working and oppressed people in

Vancouver. By taking this tool of suppression away from the BC Liberals, we would put the entire working class in a better position to organize a mass movement to demand an end to the cuts, privatization and attacks on workers' rights.

Fire This Time and all those on trial appeal to all poor and working people in BC to rally around the case of the Britannia 9 against police brutality, in defense of the right to protest and in defense of the rights and securities of us all.

DROP THE CHARGES AGAINST THE BRITANNIA 9! ■

To donate to the Britannia Legal Defense Fund or send a letter of support, email info@fire-this-time.org or call 604-322-1764.

Write a letter demanding that the Crown drop the charges against the Britannia 9, and send it to Rich Coleman, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General of BC: (phone) 250-356-7717 / (fax) 250-356-8270 / (mail) PO Box 9053 Stn Prov Gvt, Victoria BC, V8W 9E1

Cheam Nation Struggles for Dignity

By Rachel Taylor

"It has become apparent that you only stopped the logging for this past week and that you had no intention of even discussing our issues to further recognize our inherent rights and title."

- Former chief of the Cheam First Nation June Quipp, in a letter to BC Minister of Forests Mike DeJong, October 11th

Since Oct. 2nd, 2003, when members of the Cheam First Nation blockaded a CN Rail line in protest of logging on Cheam Mountain, a wave of solidarity and inspiration has rippled through Indigenous communities and supporters in BC.

The result of the Cheam organizing and fighting back was that logging in the Elk Creek area of Cheam Mountain, just east of Chilliwack, was stopped for seven days. However, this victory, won after members of the Cheam and their supporters met October 5th with BC Minister of Forests Mike DeJong, was a partial victory.

Cattermole Timber is a Chilliwack logging company that has been logging in Elk Creek without the consent of the Cheam since mid-September. Soon after the week-long stoppage was over, Cattermole resumed logging. Now that the logging is complete, Cattermole has begun hauling out the logs, and while the company has recently been ordered by the City of Chilliwack to halt logging operations on Nixon Road pending a public input forum at City Hall, plans by



A woman from Cheam standing in front of a blockaded CN train. Members of the Cheam Nation and their supporters successfully blockaded the railway line on October 2nd 2003 to protest the logging of Elk Creek Mountain.

Resorts West for the construction of a major ski resort and 1,000-unit residential area show no signs of slowing down. These moves completely undermine the Cheam First Nation's right to decide what should happen on their territory, which they have used for hunting, gathering medicinal plants, and spiritual practice throughout their history,

and which has never been ceded.

Immediately following the blockade, supporters began arriving in Cheam from all over the Lower Mainland and as far away as Toronto, and days afterward a gathering of First Nations people and supporters was hosted by the Cheam to strengthen networks of support.

Shortly after the gathering, a network called No Slopes was formed, committed to defending places like Cheam Mountain, Sutikalh and Skwelkwekwelt against unwanted development.

On Sunday, October 12th, members of the Cheam and their supporters mobilized at Sardis Community Church, leafleting, garnering support and calling for a stop to the destruction of Cheam sacred places. Also, a camp was set up in Elk Creek. Plans are being made to build cabins and lodges that members of the Cheam First Nation can use for spiritual practice. And finally, on November 15th, nearly 100 people gathered again at the Cheam Community Hall to discuss the logging and proposed developments, share information and network with other supporters and people opposed to the development of Cheam Mountain.

This blockade and other actions of resistance came after repeated attempts by the Cheam, through negotiation, litigation and written notices, to have their rights and title respected. The provincial government responded to all of these actions predictably: in defense of major corporate interests in unceded land and resources, and with complete contempt for any assertion of Aboriginal title.

These actions were part of the continuing historical struggle of both the Cheam themselves, who most recently were also under attack this summer by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and also of all First Nations in BC and North

America, who are in a state of perpetual resistance to Canadian and American colonialism.

The attacks on the self-determination of the Cheam First Nation are being carried out by the provincial government in partnership with a much larger campaign of attacks – in Canada and worldwide—on Indigenous people and their ability to exercise their rights and title. We must also see that the development and logging and attempts to quash resistance are happening parallel to the Liberals' attacks on all fronts, including attacks on the poor, on workers, on immigrants and refugees, on women, on people of colour, and on people with disabilities.

The Cheam resistance and support of it by all poor, working and oppressed people is an important part of building a movement that can threaten and weaken the provincial government's ability to carry out these attacks on all of us. In solidarity with the people of Cheam, we demand hands off Cheam land, hands off all Aboriginal land, and self-determination for Indigenous people. ■

Organizers in Cheam are in need of support. They are asking for: people, tools and knowledge for building cabins; non-perishable food; and financial support. For more information on how you can get involved contact June Quipp: (604) 794 – 5715 junequipp@hotmail.com.

For more information on the situation in Cheam see Fire This Time # 8/9.

First Annual Vancouver Antiwar Film Fest A Success

By Shannon Bundock

In late December, Vancouver's antiwar Coalition, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), put on two very successful artistic events against war and occupation. MAWO is a coalition of over 45 community, labour union, Indigenous, third world and student organizations throughout the Lower Mainland. Since Fall 2003, MAWO has been consistently mobilizing with the people of Vancouver against war and occupation in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan and on Indigenous land in Canada.

On December 18th, MAWO held a fundraiser at Pub 340 in Vancouver in order to bring issues of war and occupation to the people of Vancouver through the avenue of music and art. On December 20th, MAWO held the first annual Antiwar Film Festival, which brought out over 250 people to connect with the lives, struggles and experiences of oppressed people resisting war and occupation. Both of these events were major successes, not only because of the numbers and composition of those in attendance, but mainly because of the momentum and energy that was generated.

The Fundraiser

MAWO held the fundraiser on December 18th in preparation for the December 20th Film Festival. The event was a major success, with over 100 people coming out on less than one week's notice. The first performance, which was incredibly powerful, was by Skeena Reece, backed up by a blues band (Jason and Danny), who got the evening started with depth and energy. Next up were Ndidi Cascade and Deanna, local female hip-hop artists who dominated the entire venue with their voices and words.

The night continued with yet more powerful and moving music as we were given more performances throughout the night by MAWO organizers Curtis Clearsky and Clayton Thomas-Mueller, as well as local Indigenous hip-hop artists Josh and Manik.

Through the strength of their voices and words each artist gave us a glimpse of the faces and voices of the oppressed people who will lead our movement against occupation, against war and against the brutal oppression of poor and working people.

The Film Festival

On December 20th, 2003, the people of Vancouver participated in the hugely successful *First Annual Vancouver Antiwar Film Mini-Festival*. From the atmosphere, discussions and films it quickly became obvious that, of the 250 people who came throughout the day, there was not one who left without feeling the reality of struggle against war and occupation.

The Film Festival brought us moving films that truly illustrated the human side of the political fights that we are engaged in. From South Korea to Palestine, from Iraq to Oka, we were given a beautiful and horrific picture of the struggle that the oppressed people of the world are engaged in every day.

With this event, we were able to go through an experience together which helped to develop our understanding of struggle, of resistance and of our duty to fight in solidarity with all oppressed people.

With a majority—more than 80%—of the people in attendance being young people, third world people and new faces, MAWO was able to reach beyond the usual suspects who normally attend politically-left events, and attract new people who

have the potential to bring us their energy and invaluable experience.

The Future

As mobilizations organized by MAWO approach in January and March, along with the MAWO conference in February, we again are faced with the challenge to organize and build. On January 24th and March 20th, MAWO is organizing two major rallies and marches at the Vancouver Art Gallery, both starting at 1pm, in solidarity with the people of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan. On February 21st MAWO is holding a Lower Mainland-wide conference to further develop the understanding and capacity of our movement. Please see www.mawovancouver.org for more information on these actions.

The challenge to build awareness and unity is a challenge that we will and must meet with confidence and strength. This movement that we are building is one that must truly and effectively fight in solidarity with the struggling people of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan. We invite you to join MAWO's effort and struggle for the human dignity of all people on earth and in the creation of a better world, a world without aggression and war, a world in peace. Together we will win. ■

Free the Cuban Five, Political Prisoners in the US

By Nic Brown

"The power of the people, when we decide to fight something, is infinite."
-Aleida Guevara

These words were spoken by Aleida Guevara, daughter of Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara, at St. Andrews Wesley Church in Vancouver, on October 4th. Aleida was touring Canada along with Irma Gonzalez, daughter of Rene Gonzalez, to raise public awareness and education in regards to the case of the Cuban Five: five Cuban nationals unjustly tried and convicted in the US under completely fraudulent charges. Rene Gonzalez is one of these men. Ms. Gonzalez reminded the audience of about 450 people that Cuba has been subject to countless attacks at the hands of anti-Castro terrorist groups based in Miami. These attacks are well documented and came in the form of bombings, fumigation of crops, and even poisoning of water supplies. Despite these attacks and Cuba's call to the international community to stop them, the US government has done nothing to intervene and put them to a stop. In fact, there is evidence that the US government has supported these attacks, most notably by granting known terrorist Orlando Bosch asylum in Miami. In

light of these events and the resulting inaction of the US government, Cuba chose five dedicated men (at least two of them with US citizenship) to travel to Miami and observe these groups. 'They did not have any secret information on the government,' Ms. Gonzalez told the crowd, 'nor was it their intent to get any... They were punished for trying to save Cuban lives.' The Cuban Five were picked up by the FBI in 1997 and subsequently charged with a variety of spurious crimes. They were tried by an outspokenly anti-Castro jury in Miami, despite several pleas to have the venue changed to a climate that would be less biased.

One by one, Irma Gonzalez examined the charges brought against her father and the four other men—Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando Gonzalez—charges that included conspiracy to commit espionage, and conspiracy to commit murder. Irma Gonzalez recounted to the audience that the court admitted that the prosecution had no evidence of espionage or proof that any of the men were implicated in murder, so they fell back on the 'conspiracy' charges that did not need the evidence, and that the highly biased jury was more than happy to convict on. She reminded the audience that the Cuban Five even handed information to the



Dr. Aleida Guevara March (L) and Irma González (R) at an appearance in Toronto, September 2004.

FBI that implicated members of the terrorist groups in massive drug trafficking, but 'those men were of course untouchable.' Ms. Gonzalez finished up by stating: 'We are here to denounce the double standard of the United States, who claim to fight international terrorism but sponsor terrorism on their own soil... We want to educate the public about these five men, for there has been a wall of silence by the US government. We are not asking anything but the law of the US to be applied.'

After thanking the audience and receiving an astounding round of applause, Irma left the stage to Aleida, who spoke eloquently about the plight of the third world. In a world where 1.2 billion people live in poverty, 854 million adults are illiterate, and 40 million people are dying of aids (26 million of those in Africa) Ms. Guevara asked of the nation's wealthiest country, 'Are these not the manifestations of terrorism?' Ms. Guevara told the audience that Cuba's system, whereby education and medical care are 'free and accessible,' is under attack by the United States and surmised that, in the eyes of the US government, 'people born in the South do not deserve equality.' Ms. Guevara called upon the people to break the wall of silence built around the case of the Cuban Five, and pleaded to Canadians to communicate with our 'neighbours' to the south. 'We are an educated people, who gave birth to five giants.'

The Cuban Five have been held in five separate prisons across the US. Several attempts made by their families to visit them have been denied, and they have been held in 'punishment' cells for periods extending beyond 75 days. At one point during the trial, Rene Gonzalez was approached by the FBI to cut a deal: to testify that the other four men were indeed spies, in exchange for his freedom. When this did not work, Gerardo Hernandez's wife was arrested after being flown into the US and was to be released only when Gerardo confessed to the fraudulent charges. This too failed, and Ms. Hernandez was deported and denied any further visa.

Currently, there are 197 solidarity committees in over 75 countries across the world supporting the Cuban 5 cause. As Aleida and Irma previously stated, it is of the utmost importance that people work to educate and 'break the wall of silence' imposed by the US government, which has enforced a blockade on the tiny island of Cuba for more than 40 years. Cuba has been subject to US hostility ever since Fidel Castro led the country to revolution in 1959 and

nationalized industry, refusing to be further exploited by the US. ■

For more information on the Cuban Five, e-mail Vancouver's solidarity committee at: cuban5_info@yahoo.com or phone: (604)

322-1764

Nic Brown is a member of the Free the Cuban Five Committee Vancouver and MAWO. He is also a member of the Langara Students Union.

Amigos de Cuba...

Estimados amigos de la solidaridad y la amistad,

Lo invitamos a seguir de cerca los acontecimientos en Cuba y América Latina. Conforme se acerca la campaña electoral, la administración Bush y sus fuerzas más recalcitrantes de origen cubano prepotentemente apuntan sus metrallas hacia Cuba como su próxima víctima. Amigos de Cuba los invitamos a ser parte de la rebeldía contra la dictadura fascista de Bush que intenta dominar al mundo a punta de metralla, no sólo defendiendo Cuba sino también América Latina y a los pobres de esta tierra. Necesitamos expresar en todas las formas posibles nuestra oposición a esta nueva sangrienta intervención de EE.UU. contra América Latina.

Lo invitamos a navegar en nuestro portal cibernético para enterarse de los aspectos más relevantes de

Cuba y nuestra querida América Latina. También lo invitamos mandar sus opiniones. Como comunicadores comunitarios, esperamos servirlo mejor a través de nuestra pagina electrónica.

Lo invitamos también a ser parte de nuestro equipo, ayudándonos en traducciones, enviándonos artículos alternativos, sugerencias de cómo mejorar nuestra presentación digital y participando en la defensa de la justicia, de Cuba y América del Latín.

Puede escribirnos sus opiniones o el análisis y nosotros los anunciaremos alegremente en nuestro portal. Sus comentarios y sugerencias son bienvenidos. Espere tener noticias de usted..

En solidaridad,
escritorio editorial de Amigos de Cuba
www.amigosdecubacanada.com

Amigos de Cuba...

Dear friends of solidarity and friendship,

We would like to invite you to continue following closely the events on Cuba and Latin America. As the electoral campaign approaches, the US administration and its most recalcitrant forces of Cuban origin are targeting Cuba as their next pray. We invite you to be part of the rebelliousness against the Bush dictatorship by not only defending Cuba but also Latin America and the poor of this earth. We need to express in all our ways our opposition to the new bloody US intervention in Latin America.

We invite you to browse our new website and give us your opinions. We hope to serve you better as a community communicator. Through our site, you can learn about the most relevant topics related to Cuba, Venezuela and the rest of Latin America.

We invite you as well to become part of our team, by helping us in translations, sending us alternative articles, suggestions and by participating in the struggle for

justice and in defense of Cuba and Latin America. You can write your opinions or analysis and we will happily post them on our website.

Your comments and suggestions are more than welcome. Hope to hear from you.

In solidarity,
Amigos de Cuba's editing desk
www.amigosdecubacanada.com

Recommended topics:
Venezuelan Government Denies Supporting Leftists and Guerillas
President of the Republic of Cuba, At the Karl Marx Theater on January 3, 2004, for the 45 anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution
UN hands Iraqi funds to occupying force
Top Ten Bush Administration Outrages
Venezuela Asks Interpol to Help Capture Terror Suspects Seeking Asylum in the US
"Without culture there is no revolution" Interview with Farruco Sesto

Vancouver Association of Chinese Canadians Hold a Successful Conference

By Rachel Taylor

On October 30th, 2003, the first National Conference on Full Participation began in Toronto. The three-day conference, titled 'Full Participation in a Globalizing World,' was initiated and organized by the Vancouver Association of Chinese Canadians (VACC), an anti-racism and human rights group. The conference brought together 150 immigrants, refugees, people of colour, students, youth and people against racism to discuss and strategize around ensuring full democratic participation in the decisions that impact the lives of immigrants, refugees and people of colour so critically. In the organizing of the conference vital questions were raised: How can we ensure the full societal participation of immigrants, refugees and people of colour? What is the impact of globalization on full democratic participation? What are the barriers immigrants, refugees and people of colour face to full democratic participation? How do we work in solidarity with the global community?

This initiative helped to strengthen existing networks of people fighting for the rights of immigrants, refugees, and people of colour living within Canada's colonial borders, and faced with the global trend of increasingly restrictive immigration policy. At this conference, it was successfully established that these barriers to participation must be seen and fought in the context of globalization—today's global era of crises for poor, working and oppressed people in the forms of war, occupation, colonization, denial of self-determination, and suppression of rights, in particular for displaced immigrants and

refugees. This understanding of the roots of these barriers is vital to a strategy for building a movement to defeat them.

The conference successfully involved immigrants, refugees, people of colour, youth, students, and women. For three days, the people most impacted by the current system of barriers found an avenue to identify common issues and strategies, organize together, and eventually lay the groundwork for a network spanning all of Canada to work together to defeat these barriers in favour of all people's full participation in deciding their own lives and futures.

Afterward, participants returned to their communities to update their local networks on the outcome of the national conference and create discussion and momentum around it. In Vancouver, the VACC held this debriefing on December 6th, 2003, at the Kalayaan Centre, and featured report-backs and updates from the BC delegates to the conference, as well as political discussion on local related issues. The outcome was a parallel strengthening of the local network for immigrant and refugee rights. ■

Another Canada-wide gathering is planned for one year from now to reconvene, reconnect, and further consolidate this growing web of people fighting in solidarity with all immigrants, refugees, and people of colour, in today's climate of increased displacement and repressive policy. For more information on VACC or the National Conference on Full Participation please visit www.geocities.com/fullparticipation or contact Victor Wong, Conference Secretariat and member of the Vancouver Association of Chinese Canadians: victorywong@yahoo.com

YOUTH AGAINST OCCUPATION

Conference of Youth and Students in Vancouver Discusses Imperialist War and Occupation

By Shannon Bundock,
Nicole Burton,
and Mike Krebs

On Saturday, November 29th at UBC Robson Square, the Student Youth Committee Against War (SYCAW) hosted the major antiwar conference, *Youth Against Occupation*. This conference was sponsored by Vancouver's antiwar coalition, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) and was endorsed by over 45 student unions, labour unions, community groups, and Indigenous and third world organizations. Dozens of students and youth from across the Lower Mainland attended, addressing the issues of occupation and war in relation to youth globally. The conference also explored the future of building a movement in Vancouver, as part of a global antiwar movement with youth as the foundation. The intent of the conference was to discuss and develop our understanding of war and occupation; to build connections with youth and students across the Lower Mainland and to provide an outlet for youth to become involved in organizing against war and occupation.

9/11

Shannon Bundock, co-chair of

MAWO, opened up the morning, speaking on 'Confronting War and Occupation: What We've Learned Since 9/11,' which established the nature of the forces being confronted by the current antiwar movement: those of imperialist nations. Shannon stated, 'Since 9/11 we have learned that the wars and occupations in Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan are the beginning of a new era of constant imperialist assaults on oppressed nations, which will dominate the coming decades. In order to effectively confront this era of war and occupation, we must unite the struggles of poor and working people in Canada with the resistance to occupation abroad and fight in solidarity.'

War, Antiwar

The morning continued with a workshop, led by Ivan Drury, on the current state of the Vancouver antiwar movement, and its struggle to remain effective in mobilizing against war and occupation. Through the workshop 'War - Occupation - Antiwar: What Went Wrong and What Went Right,' the recent history of the Vancouver antiwar movement was examined. Through this workshop the question was brought forward: What is effective leadership in the antiwar movement? Further discussion on this followed through the third section of the conference,



Nicole Burton (l) of Youth-3rd World Alliance and Ali Yerevani (r) of Fire This Time presenting at the 'Youth Against Occupation' conference, November 29th 2003.

which focused on the role of youth and students in the antiwar movement

and was led by MAWO co-chair Kira Koshelanyk. 'Young people, throughout the world, throughout history, have always had a vital role in effective social movements,' she said. 'The antiwar and anti-occupation movements of today—from Iraq to Palestine to Canada—each show the dynamism, effectiveness and power of young people in leadership.'

Palestine: Conscience of the World

The next sections of the conference focused on Palestine ('Case Study on Palestine: Conscience of the World') and occupation from the perspective of Canada ('Occupation and Self-Determination: An Indigenous

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High Schools in The Era of Imperialist Wars and Occupations

By Meghan Harris

Excerpts from speech given at the 'Youth Against Occupation' conference.

Increasingly, high schools are taking an interest in global issues. For example, at my school, Van Tech, we have a group called Revolution 180, which is student-led. Its goal is to educate interested students and provide us with a way to be part of a movement that is much, much larger than our school. Recently, we had a forum on war and foreign occupation that served to educate a few classes about some of the issues we have been hearing today.

High School Students in the Forefront of Big Changes

Support or encouragement of student-led organizations in high schools around the world is incredibly rare because we have proved just how big an influence we can have. In Vancouver, where there are many student-organized groups, we have arranged and participated in a variety of marches, rallies, forums, and conferences, such as this one. Opportunities for further education on political and social issues not taught in school classrooms are so important in forming our own opinions and learning to think for ourselves. If public education can start with us youth, it will spread over time to include others who will join us in supporting those in need of aid.

However, with this new knowledge, we have the power to act. We can unite and protest injustices in different ways such as rallies, forums, and many other organized group events. As the Iranian revolution in 1979 showed when millions of students protested against the Shah

Reza Pahlavi and succeeded in overthrowing his regime, youth can have an enormous impact on their countries' ruling body/government. Another example was the Cuban revolution in 1959, where millions of youth, in high schools, in colleges and on the streets, led by the July 26th Movement with the leadership of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, overthrew their dictator and US puppet, Batista.

Inadequate Education in Schools

One of the shortcomings in our own education system is that we learn about general issues in a passive way. We are not encouraged to go out and show our support for global causes. Part of the reason for this seems to be that we learn the hard facts about certain issues that are deemed important by the School Board but we do not think of them in terms of actual occurrences that are affecting our lives in small or big ways. For example, the US-led war in Iraq was big news last year and was discussed in many Socials classes. Perhaps the teachers were able to initiate a discussion, but it is more likely that they did not go into great detail about it. So although you heard about it from another source than the news, it still may not have registered as something that we here in Canada could act out against to support the protests of Iraqi civilians or in support of Iraqi students. At the time, it seemed like something to watch on the news from the comfort of your warm house, or read about in the paper. Protests in support of self-determination of the Iraqi people got very little publicity also. It is even hard to organize a school club, like Rev. 180 at Tech, because of the conservative rules laid down by the school authorities, which mean that organizing the club means working

around their rules. Thus, it is hard to learn much about issues outside of schoolwork.

Inadequate Education in Society

The lack of education doesn't stop at schools, either, but is complemented by the biased media. In general, we don't hear the full story about political issues. In fact, CBC, a Crown corporation, compiled a documentary about the recent Iraq war's media coverage. Craig White, NBC's cameraman covering the war on Iraq, said about a tape he took during the

war: 'I didn't want that piece of tape to end up on the trash heap of history. And through some coaxing on my part, we showed some of the tape, which included badly burned and blown up bodies. So often we don't show those things on television. But I remember saying that if it wasn't appropriate for broadcasting at that time of day then we shouldn't be fighting wars at that time of day. Not to show it is a lie.' I agree with Mr. White; we get lied to by the media, sometimes little lies that don't really seem to affect us, but some of the images and information that is censored could be instrumental in swaying public opinion by simply showing the full picture.

Indigenous Issues, A Supersets Memory

Regular classes often ignore Indigenous issues, too—the issue that directly displays the problem of occupation, and naturally connects the occupation of lands abroad, like Iraq and Palestine, to occupation at home in Canada. I mean, lots of Europeans braved the rough and stormy seas of the Atlantic only to land in the 'New World,' a place described by them as

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War on Youth and Students in Middle East

By Kirstin Tearoe

Excerpts from speech given at the 'Youth Against Occupation' conference.

War has a great effect on the lives of students and youths, even those that do not live in the Middle East. During the year there have been many protests that have originated from schools in the US and Canada, not to mention Britain, Spain, Australia, Sweden, Greece and other countries. Protesters have expressed their views on the war on Iraq before and during attacks. They have paused their own education and learning time to protest against something they felt was illogical and wrong. Inside Iraq, students and youth are pushed to work instead of learn because of the lack of funding for education. Those that do attend school are enrolled into schools where there is double the amount of available capacity. How are future adults expected to lead their country economically and politically when their education as a youth and student has been destroyed due to war?

Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan

Education in Iraq has gone downhill since the Gulf War in 1991, and with the new war in March 2003, the educational

systems are in total ruins. It is said that Iraq had one of the best educational systems in the Middle East until the 1980s. After the Gulf War, the oil-for-food sanctions were imposed and money was used elsewhere, whereas education was neglected (as was health, water, sanitation, etc). In 2000 at the Arab conference, one of the concerns about 'Education for Everybody' was that the sanctions imposed on Iraq and contracts under the oil-for-food program have caused severe harm to the educational institutions. There is lack of funding to repair damaged buildings, equipment and supplies, and there are increasing problems in restoration and maintenance of existing school buildings. Before sanctions, the literacy rate was at 89%, now it has dropped to 58%. Enrolment in school was 99% for primary school and 74% for secondary school; there were also 9,460 schools. Now enrolment is 80% for primary school and 31% for secondary; there are now only 7,572 schools. Education was free and compulsory at all levels before sanctions, but now, as quoted from an article online at english.aljazeera.net, 'UNICEF estimated that only 10% of Iraq's needs for education could be met by the Oil for Food Programme.' Even after Hussein's fall, education will be one of the last

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'War has effect on students and youths, even those that do not live in the Middle East'

From page 24

Perspective'). Ali Yerevani presented the workshop on Palestine, and from the perspective of the Israeli occupation, he explored occupation and war in a very concrete and relatable way. Palestine was looked to as an example of oppressed people resisting occupation for more than 50 years and was examined in order to gain a sense of how occupied peoples continue to fight colonial domination.

Self-Determination for Indigenous Nations

The section on Indigenous perspective gave a new focus to the antiwar movement in Canada and opened up the struggle of Indigenous nations for self-determination. Presenter Rachel Taylor said: 'The struggle of Indigenous people for self-determination is the foundation of all oppressed people's struggles here at home. In order to build an effective movement against war and occupation, ending the occupation of Indigenous nations is integral in the demands of any antiwar movement.'

Highschools

Through the lively discussion during the final workshop, 'Highschools in the Era of War and Occupation,' the conference was led directly into the question of building an effective movement. Challenges were discussed along with strategies. 'Bureaucratic restrictions severely limit a student's ability to organize in their school,' said Meghan Harris, a Grade 11 student at Van Tech High School. 'And the limitations on building groups make it nearly impossible to work through a school-based student organization.' However, despite the barriers, there remained a strong enthusiasm for driving ahead, continuing to build and expand the existing movement within the Lower Mainland. Kirstin Tearoe, a Grade 10 student organizer from Templeton Secondary School in Vancouver, also presented an educational and in-depth analysis on the situation for highschool students globally in relation to the antiwar movement. Kirstin explained in her presentation: 'War has a great effect on the lives of students and youths, even those that do not live in the Middle East. During this year there have been many protests that have originated from schools in the US and Canada, not to mention Britain, Spain, Australia, Sweden, Greece and other countries. Protesters have expressed their views on the war on Iraq before and during attacks. They have paused their own education and learning time to protest against something illogical and wrong.'



She continued, 'Inside Iraq, students and youth are pushed to work instead of learn because of the lack of funding for education. Those that do attend school are enrolled into schools where there is double the amount of available capacity. How are future adults expected to lead their country economically and politically when their education as a youth and student has been destroyed due to war?' (See this section for excerpts from the workshop given by Meghan and Kirstin).

Building an Effective Antiwar Movement

After the discussion on the role and history of highschool students in the era of war and occupation, the conference went on to the final workshop, 'Building an Effective Antiwar Movement.' Mike Krebs opened this concluding session with a summary of the conference put into the context of 'moving forward.' This final period provided the opportunity to take the history and analysis

that was presented throughout the conference and talk concretely about where we must go from here. Despite questions of strategy and tactics that remained, it was clear that, to fight against war and occupation, we must continue to organize across the globe. What that means for us in Vancouver, in BC, in Canada, is that we must continue to mobilize and build momentum against the most explicit examples of imperialist assaults occurring in Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan, and connect them to the daily struggles of Indigenous people in Canada for self-determination. The role of young people and oppressed people in the process of building an effective antiwar movement was also a significant part of looking ahead. From the analysis of social movements throughout history, as well as from the recent history of organizing in Vancouver, the leadership of young people was understood to be essential in building an effective and dynamic movement.

The conference was an important part of

building on the growing momentum among young people across the Lower Mainland against the wars and occupations in Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan. It was effective in bringing youth and students together to delve more deeply into issues of war and occupation and relate them to war and occupation at home, and to activate them to get involved in organizing. The conference really showed that building our understanding of imperialist assaults, as well as critically examining our gains and losses, is important to developing an effective movement.

On February 21st, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) will be organizing a major conference in the Lower Mainland. Through this, MAWO intends to build on the foundations set out at *Youth Against Occupation* and further expand Vancouver's role in the global antiwar movement. ■

Life for Students in Iraq, Palestine, and Afghanistan

From page 24

priorities in rebuilding Iraq. The whole infrastructure of the country is gone, and most of the money supplied will be going to rebuild communications, health, water and sanitation before education. And even after that is done, there is the problem of replacing teachers and supplies, and building, fixing and maintaining schools. With the sanctions, parents are obligated to donate money for education, and since the economy is in ruins, money is hard to get so most students have dropped out of school so that they can help maintain a steady income. For students in Palestine, it is increasingly harder to learn due to the violent outbreaks inside and outside of schools due to military occupation or armed attacks by Israeli armed forces. School drop-out levels are increasing, although girls are more likely to drop out or be pulled out of school by the family than boys due to the fact of violence. Girls are also more likely to be found spending their time more at home. In a study done for an article online, it states that teachers feel that they are failing to improve the quality of teaching because of closures and violence and occupations. The study also found students to be pessimistic

because occupation and violence by Israeli armed forces against youth and students are daily life. There are 12 non-profit universities and more than a dozen public and private community colleges in Palestine. For all 12 universities, enrolment is only 70,000 students, accounting for 2% of the total Palestinian population. Women account for slightly less than 50% of enrolment.

Afghanistan suffers from the world's lowest literacy rate. Estimates show that 51.9% of men and 21.9% of women 15 or older can read and write. Before, under the Taliban rule, women were not allowed to work and girls were denied rights to formal educations, but were permitted to be enrolled in community-based education programs. Schools are low in number, especially in rural areas and they lack adequate supplies and facilities. Wars have caused the collapse of Afghanistan's educational infrastructure.

Let's Do Something, Let's Get Involved

In today's world, media portrays everything, from current issues to who is the hottest person in the world. Youth in certain countries have access to media, they learn from it, and almost all youths are

students. Certain schools have clubs such as Global Issues; if you have access to do outreach into these clubs, the students can spread the information around the school through interesting activities. Interest in taking a stand can be influenced by hearing public speeches, reading literature and looking at art. Through this, safe messages can be sent. Student groups are formed based on one idea that all members share and information is spread through a common goal. Student- and Youth-based organizations in schools can do a lot with their voice, they curve the future of societies and if you can inform them with knowledge, they will take into consideration that knowledge. Once information has been spread, it will continue to do so through families, friends, neighbors, etc. This can be done by forums at or out of school, meetings, speeches (such as what we are doing today) and other activities. Building bridges between students and organizations that have a common goal is vital because you not only include everyone, but you also receive an important point of view from the younger part of society who hold significant roles, just as adults and working parents do. We are still learning and expanding our views

on life, society and global affairs; if we are given information, we can apply it to our lives and then spread the information around to teach others. ■

Kirstin Tearoe is a student and organizer from Templeton Secondary School.

High Schools and The War at Home

From page 24

inhospitable and wild. Nevertheless, they claimed it as their own, ignoring the Indigenous peoples who cured their scurvy and kept them alive. Without treaties, we have managed to take over their land and put Native peoples on comparatively tiny pieces of lands called 'reserves,' where they've been forced to live, away from other people. Also, an old piece of inhuman legislation called the 'Indian Act' dictates that no Native person may enter politics. In the '50s, many of them attended residential schools on their reserves. These residential

schools were nightmares for many of them whose stories are being told now, after decades of silence. They have talked about teachers who sexually assaulted them and threatened them to keep them from talking, and other horrible crimes. During this time, their culture was forcefully suppressed and potlatches were outlawed. So we need to understand how assault abroad is connected and related to assault at home. We need a lot of education to understand this issue and also inform others about it. ■

Meghan Harris is a student at Van Tech High School and an activist with Rev 180.

Privatization in BC

From page 21

and conditions of the workers suffer the same fate as the industry itself; they become secondary to the profit of the capitalist privatizer.

All working and poor people in BC must recognize the importance of the publicly owned industries that we have and not allow them to be stolen from us. We must defend the rights and securities of the workers and the unions in these industries and defend our right to access the services we have already won. As with the attempted sale of the Coquihala Highway,

working people in BC cannot allow the infrastructure and services built, developed and run by working people to be stolen away from us by the BC Liberal Government and privatizing capitalist profiteers.

We must demand an end to the privatization of all publicly owned industries and infrastructure. End the contracting out of public services! End government union busting! We must demand the full funding of all public services and an end to all cuts for the benefit of all poor, working and oppressed people in BC. ■

Café Rebelde... Café Rebelde...

Café Rebelde is an opportunity for people to come together to celebrate and unite the various struggles for Social Justice in Latin America. It is a coalition of several grassroots organizations. The next Café Rebelde will take place on January 30, 2004 at 7pm, at 706 Clark Drive. The topic will be: political prisoners in different parts of the world. The purpose is to promote solidarity with Latin America. It seeks to open up spaces for the community of Vancouver to share and express Latin American culture and discuss issues of current interest in Latin America. It is a space for political socialization and participation. Café Rebelde can be defined as a place for conscious leisure.

Café Rebelde es un espacio para que la comunidad pueda celebrar y unir la lucha por la justicia social en Latinoamérica. Es organizado por una coalición de varias organizaciones Latino-canadienses. El próximo café rebelde se llevará a cabo el 30 de enero de 2004 a las 7pm, en el 706 de la calle Clark esquina Georgia. El tema será: presos políticos en diferentes partes del mundo. El objetivo de este proyecto es promover la solidaridad con Latinoamérica. Busca abrir espacios para compartir la cultura latinoamericana y discutir temas de actualidad. Es un espacio para la socialización y participación política. Café Rebelde se puede definir como un lugar para el esparcimiento consciente.

MAWO

From page 5

an action-oriented antiwar, anti-occupation coalition.

In the coming months MAWO will be organizing events and actions to build awareness and to mobilize people in Vancouver against the destruction of war and occupation. MAWO is planning a major demonstration for January 24th at 12 noon at the Vancouver Art Gallery. As the war develops in Iraq there is increasing pressure on people throughout the world to accept the denial of Iraqi sovereignty, in favour of a UN occupation. As a result the political focus of this demonstration is: OCCUPATION IS OCCUPATION! Hands Off Iraq! No to US Occupation, No to UK Occupation, No to UN Occupation! Next, on Feb 21st there is a major conference being planned by MAWO with the intention of understanding what the last year of resistance has taught us and how we must move ahead. Finally, MAWO has endorsed the call out from US antiwar coalition International ANSWER, for a global day of action March 20th. This day MAWO will be planning a major demonstration with people

all across the world.

Through the work that MAWO has done to date and as a result of the enthusiasm and momentum that MAWO has been met with, the coming months will see increased action and resistance. MAWO is committed to working with all people opposed to war and occupation and to building a broad and effective movement in BC that can work within the international movement and alongside the heroic resistance of the people of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan. ■

Get involved with MAWO!
Meetings are every Wednesday at 6:30 PM at Britannia Community Centre, 1661 Napier @ Commercial Drive. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

www.mawovancouver.org

mawoinfo@yahoo.ca

604-322-1764



'The Last Copter Out of Baghdad': Do you Remember Vietnam?

Movimiento Fire This Time Por Justicia Social - Bases de Unidad

La humanidad es amenazada hoy por guerra, crisis económicas, el hambre, la pobreza y el crimen: todos creados por el impulso capitalista por maximizar sus beneficios a expensas de la gente del mundo. Para oponernos a cada uno de estos crímenes contra la humanidad, debemos enfocar todo nuestro trabajo y acción para construir los cimientos para avanzar nuestros intereses en una amplia lucha contra el capital internacional, sus herramientas de división de la clase obrera y sus instituciones locales. El principio fundamental del Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social es la unidad y la solidaridad activa de todos los pobres y gente de trabajo, local e internacionalmente. Debemos reconocer que este principio no tendría sentido sin una lucha activa porque la búsqueda de este principio es agudamente contraria al interés de la clase predominante, los cuales utilizarán todos los medios a su

disposición para mantenernos divididos y hostiles entre nosotros mismos.

Fire This Time es una organización política basada en la acción y comprometida a construir poder social y político de la gente pobre y de trabajo en British Columbia. Creemos que la única manera de desafiar con eficacia y amenazar al gobierno y su agenda corporativa es con la organización de masas de gente activa en lugares de trabajo y en las calles. Estamos dedicados a movilizar y a unificar a gente pobre y de trabajo contra el Gobierno Liberal, sus legislaciones y políticas en contra de los pobres y trabajadores. Estamos comprometidos a organizar con trabajadores y gente pobre de las comunidades más atacadas y explotadas del Lower Mainland y más allá: comunidades de gente de color, inmigrantes, refugiados, "illegales", trabajadores de bajo-salario, gente lisiada, homosexuales, comunidades indígenas, gente

desempleada y familias de bajos ingresos. Nos oponemos a todas las formas de opresión y de explotación: desde sexismo al racismo, de la homofobia al colonialismo y a el resto de instituciones, de pensamiento, de creencia, de acciones y de los comportamientos que humille y degrade a gente para crear hostilidad y división entre nosotros.

La meta del Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social es construir un amplio movimiento de base para derrotar al gobierno Liberal de BC. Nuestro trabajo es proporcionar las herramientas necesarias para unificar y para activar a la clase obrera en BC., para construir un movimiento amplio de base, fuerte y eficaz para oponernos a los Liberales de BC. y sus ataques contra la gente pobre y trabajadores. Este movimiento debe ser integrado en el contexto revolucionario más amplio de la lucha internacional contra el capitalismo e imperialismo; aunque nos

enfoquemos principalmente en política local, esencialmente el alcance de nuestro trabajo es internacionalista. El apoyo a las luchas de la gente oprimida en otros países debilita la hegemonía y el poder de la clase capitalista en otras tierras y por lo tanto debilita su mando local, ayudando así en las batallas de la gente oprimida en Canadá. Además, la práctica de la solidaridad internacional solidifica la cooperación, esencial en la construcción de un movimiento del mundo por justicia social. La agenda del Gobierno Liberal es parte de un programa de reestructuración global conocido como neo-liberalismo. Luchar a los Liberales de BC. es luchar contra el neo-liberalismo y capitalismo global. Debemos ampliarnos en esto, implícita y explícitamente para hacer las conexiones relevantes a nuestras domésticas luchas diarias, para superar la división geográfica, y dejar en claro que cuando participamos en la lucha, no luchamos solos, sino

junto a millones de trabajadores y de gente pobre alrededor del mundo. En la globalización capitalista - imperialista no hay lucha local que no tenga un carácter internacional. Cada internacional es local y cada local es internacional.

El Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social apoyará y trabajará con otros movimientos y luchas progresivas ya sea por demandas inmediatas o a largo plazo, localmente, nacionalmente e internacionalmente. Nuestra meta principal es abolir la pobreza e injusticia por medio de educación, participación y acción directa. Intentamos alcanzar un nivel colectivo de conciencia que permita a la gente oprimida, pensar socialmente y actuar políticamente para alcanzar justicia social por cualesquiera sean los medios necesarios.

- Translated by Claudio Ekdahl

The Fire This Time Movement For Social Justice Basis of Unity

Humanity today is threatened by war, economic crises, starvation, poverty and crime: all created by the drive of capitalists to maximize their profits at the expense of the people of the world. To oppose each of these crimes against humanity, we must focus all our work and action to build a foundation for and advance the interest of an overall struggle against international capital, its tools of working class division and its local institutions. The fundamental principle of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice is the unity and active solidarity of all poor and working people, locally and internationally. We must recognize that this principle is meaningless without active struggle because the pursuit of this principle goes sharply against the interest of the ruling class and they will use whatever means they have at their disposal to keep us divided and hostile amongst ourselves.

Fire This Time is a politically based action organization committed to building the social and political power of poor and working people in BC. We believe the only way to effectively challenge and threaten the government and their corporate agenda is through the organization of masses of people in motion in workplaces and in the streets. We are dedicated to mobilizing and unifying poor and working people against the Liberal Government and their anti-poor, anti-working people legislations and policies. We are committed to organizing with working and poor people from the most attacked and exploited communities in the lower mainland and beyond: communities of colour, immigrants, refugees, "illegals", low-wage workers, disabled people, queer people, indigenous

communities, unemployed people and low-income families. We oppose all forms of oppression and exploitation: from sexism to racism, from homophobia to colonialism and all other institutions, thought, beliefs, actions and behaviours that humiliate and demean people to bring hostility and division amongst us.

The goal of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice is to build a broad based movement to defeat the BC Liberal Government. Our work is to provide the tools necessary to unify and activate the working class in BC to build a strong and effective broad-based movement to oppose the BC Liberals and their attacks on poor and working people. This movement must be integrated in the wider revolutionary context of international struggle against capitalism and imperialism; although we are mainly engaged in local politics, in essence the scope of our work is internationalist. Supporting the struggles of oppressed people abroad weakens the hegemony and power of the capitalist class in other lands and consequently weakens their rule at home, therefore aiding the battles of oppressed people in Canada. In addition, the practice of international solidarity solidifies the co-operation essential in building a world movement for social justice. The Liberal Government's agenda is part of a global restructuring program known as "neo-liberalism". To fight the BC Liberals is to fight neo-liberalism and global capitalism. We must expand on this both implicitly and explicitly to make the connections relevant to peoples daily domestic struggle, to overcome geographic division, and to make it clear that when we engage in struggle we do not struggle alone

L'humanité est incessamment menacée de guerre, famine, crises économiques, pauvreté et crime, suscités par les capitalistes et leur recherche du profit au détriment de tous les peuples du monde. Afin de combattre ces crimes contre l'humanité, nous devons concentrer nos efforts sur la création et l'avance d'une lutte contre le capitalisme et les autorités locales capitalistes, dans le but de détruire les instruments qui divisent le prolétariat. Les principes fondamentaux du Mouvement Fire This Time pour l'Équité Sociale sont la solidarité et l'unification des pauvres et des ouvrier(ère)s aux niveaux local et international. Il faut bien comprendre que ces principes sont denués de sens sans une lutte active concomitante, car les capitalistes ne nous donnerons pas la victoire sur

but alongside millions of working and poor people around the world. Within capitalist and imperialist globalisation there is no local struggle that does not have an international character. Every international is local and every local is international.

The Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice will support and engage with other progressive movements and struggles whether for immediate or long-term demands, locally, nationally and internationally. Our main goal is to end poverty and injustice through education, participation and direct action. We seek to reach a collective level of consciousness that allows oppressed people to think socially and act politically to achieve social justice by any means necessary. ■

Le Mouvement Fire This Time pour l'Équité Sociale: L'Union fait la Force!

un plateau d'argent – la poursuite de nos objectifs est à l'encontre des intérêts capitalistes et ils utiliseront les moyens les plus grossiers dans le but de nous vaincre. Alors la solidarité s'impose!

Le Mouvement Fire This Time est une organisation politique activiste qui s'engage aussi à édifier le pouvoir politique des pauvres et des ouvrier(ère)s de la Colombie-Britannique. Nous avons tout lieu de croire que la seule façon de contester le gouvernement et ses ambitions politiques est par une résistance organisée dans la rue et dans nos lieux de travail. Nous nous engageons à mobiliser et à unifier les ouvrier(ère)s et les démun(e)s des communautés les plus exploitées de la région métropolitaine de Vancouver et au-delà. Tous et toutes contre le gouvernement Libéral et ses politiques anti-pauvres et anti-ouvrières!: les personnes de couleur, immigrant(e)s, réfugié(e)s, "illégaux(ales)", les économiquement faibles, handicapé(e)s, trans/bi/homosexuel(le)s, peuples autochtones et chômeur(euse)s. Nous nous opposons à tout genre d'oppression et d'exploitation: sexisme, racisme, colonialisme, homophobie et tous les institutions, crédos, actes et comportements qui nous avilissent et nous divisent.

Notre objectif est de bâtir une base politique diverse et de mettre le Parti Libéral de la Colombie-Britannique en déroute. Nous forçons les outils qui démanteleront l'abominable monstre Libéral! De plus, ce Mouvement s'intégrera dans une lutte révolutionnaire internationale contre le capitalisme et l'impérialisme – quoique l'essentiel de nos engagements politiques est

au niveau local, l'envergure de notre entreprise est internationaliste. Par force de soutenir la lutte internationale contre la classe dirigeante, nous affaiblissons l'hégémonie des capitalistes en Afrique, Asie, au Moyen-Orient, etc., et par conséquent nous rendons vulnérable leur autorité ici aussi, au Canada. En outre, l'existence d'un mouvement internationaliste pour l'équité sociale exige la solidarité et le soutien de nos camarades à l'étranger. Les objectifs du Parti Libéral font partie intégrante d'un projet mondial économique connu sous le nom de néolibéralisme. La lutte contre le Parti Libéral de la Colombie-Britannique est donc aussi la lutte contre le néolibéralisme et le capitalisme mondialisé. Nous tenons à préciser que nous résistons au capitalisme bras dessus bras dessous avec des millions d'autres ouvrier(ère)s et démun(e)s dans le monde entier. Dans l'enceinte de la mondialisation capitaliste et impérialiste, les luttes régionales et locales font immanquablement partie de la lutte internationale.

Le Mouvement Fire This Time pour l'Équité Sociale appuyera et s'unira aux autres mouvements progressistes pour leurs/nos revendications immédiates et à long terme, soit aux niveaux municipal, national ou international. Notre but essentiel est de mettre fin à la pauvreté et aux injustices par l'entremise de l'éducation, la coopération et l'action directe. Nous envisageons une conscience collective qui permettra aux personnes et peuples opprimé(e)s de penser et d'agir politiquement et par la suite, d'atteindre l'équité sociale, à tout prix. ■

- Translated by Eric Lamoureux

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Fire This Time Basis of Unity (Farsi)

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- Translated by Joe Chou

- Translated by Nasim Sedaghat

PEOPLE IN MOTION, PEOPLE IN STRUGGLE...

Politics of Prison:

A Joint Effort Film night

Thurs Jan 22nd, 2004, 7pm
Video In. 1965 Main St (@ 3rd)
\$0-\$10 sliding scale
Featuring 2 Films: **Doing Time** and **Corporate Lockdown**
Followed by Speakers.

Organized by Joint Effort, a women in prison support group. Co-presented by DOXA, Documentary Film and Video Festival (www.vcn.bc.ca/doxa) and Video In Studios. (www.videoin.ca)

Korea, US Militarism and the Danger of War in East Asia:

A forum and discussion with special guest speaker Suh Sung

Sunday, January 25th from 7-9 pm
Maritime Labour Centre
(111 Victoria Drive at Triumph)

Organized by the Education Committee of StopWar.ca.

IN PURSUIT OF JUSTICE: What the Rape Relief Decision Means for the Trans Community

Monday, January 19th from 7-9 PM
1292 Hornby Street (@ Drake), Vancouver

For more information: [barbara.findlay 604-251-4356](mailto:barbara.findlay@604-251-4356)

"One Day Longer" Solidarity Rally in support of Steelworkers on strike at Modern Auto Plating since January 24, 2002.

Friday, January 23rd at 11:45 AM
Modern Auto Plating Picket Line
5th Ave. & Quebec St. in Vancouver
Speakers, songs, coffee & pizza.

2 Years On The Picket Line Benefit Evening Proceeds to benefit the Modern Auto Plating Strikers

Saturday, January 24 at 7:00 PM
Maritime Labour Centre
1880 Triumph St. at Victoria Dr. in Vancouver Featuring:
The Comedy of the Laff Riot Girls Music by Blues Cannon, all union member band from the Vancouver area. Appetizers and No Host Bar.

For further information call: 604-525-7481.

Eyewitness Reports by Three ISM Activists Returning from Occupied Palestine

Johanna, Lynne, & Maxine with Eyewitness Reports VIDEO - PHOTOS
Saturday, Jan 31, 2:00 - 5:00 pm
Palestine Community Centre
1874 Kingsway (@ Victoria Dr.)

For more information visit: www.ism-vancouver.org

Stop the legal Aid Cuts Justice for Immigrants And Refugees

Monday, February 2nd at noon
345 Robson Street
For more information contact
No One is Illegal-Vancouver
noi_van@hotmail.com/ 604- 715-4816

Laurie King-Irani: Co-founder of the Electronic Intifada and Electronic Iraq

Friday, February 6th at 7 pm
SFU Harbour Centre
555 W Hastings, Rm 1700
Vancouver

Admission by donation (No-one will be turned away for lack of ability to pay)

For further info:
www.canpalnet.ca/events
e-mail: support@canpalnet.ca

Axis to Grind: Inside North Korea

Film Festival

Come see this rare presentation of feature films and documentaries from and about North Korea. Tickets by donation at door. Proceeds benefit Canadian Foodgrains Bank for North Korean food assistance. Visit www.axisogrind.com for film schedule and program.

SFU Harbour Centre
January 17, 555 W Hastings. Films 1-10pm
7pm multimedia by Irwin Oostindie with panel "Prospects for Solidarity with the Korean People" followed by 45 min. of audience discussion. Game of Their Lives screens 8:30pm.

Capilano College
January 14-15 3:30-10pm
Cedar Auditorium, N. Vancouver. Bus #210 from Vancouver

Langara College
January 21-23 1:30-5pm
Student Union Building, 100 West 43rd @ Main St

University of BC
February Norm Theatre, S.U.B. (date and times TBA, see website)

Endorsed by CYNAPS, Korean Student Network Against War, Help from Capilano Students Union, SFPRG, and Langara Student Union.

Photo Exhibition

Capilano College Art Gallery runs to Jan 20
photo & web film work by Irwin Oostindie
Reception Jan 15, 5-9pm. Artists Talk Jan 13, noon-1:30
Studio Arts Building, 2055 Purcell Way, N. Vancouver
Transit: 953-3333 (#210 from downtown or #239 Seabus)
email info@axisogrind.com website www.axisogrind.com



OCCUPATION IS ... AND NO TO UNI OCCUPATION



**US/UK OUT OF IRAQ!
ISRAEL OUT OF PALESTINE!
CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN!**

US Soldiers standing on Guard in Baghdad after a car bomb exploded outside a US-controlled police station. December 14, 2003

BRING ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!

END THE OCCUPATIONS

As resistance to US/UK occupation in Iraq builds despite dozens of raids, arrests, beatings and killings, only in addition to the capture of supposed 'Iraqi resistance leader' Saddam Hussein, the global Anti-war movement must respond in support with continuing the fight against war and occupation, in support of self-determination.



SELF - DETERMINATION FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN CANADA!

RALLY & MARCH
SATURDAY 1 PM
JANUARY 24
@ The Vancouver Art Gallery

Organized by Mobilization Against War and Occupation
For more information or to get involved, CONTACT: mawoinfo@yahoo.ca
WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG

For more information on upcoming MAWO events and activities check out

www.mawovancouver.org

What is GRFPPM?

The Group of Relatives and Friends of Political Prisoners in Mexico (GRFPPM) is a Vancouver-based organization that works in solidarity with four social activists serving time in Mexican jails. Jacobo Silva, Gloria Arenas, Fernando Gatica, and Felicitas Padilla were arbitrarily detained in October 1999, tortured, and accused of being guerrilla leaders, since then, they have been held prisoners. The case of these four Mexican political prisoners has been internationally denounced; however, the Mexican government continues violating the prisoners human rights. Currently, a hunger strike of over three hundred and fifty prisoners is taking place in La Palma maximum security prison to demand the Mexican government:

- 1) To bring back the prisoners to jails closer to where their families live.
- 2) To improve the living conditions inside the jail, namely, medical service, food, etc; stop the repression and harassment to which they are constantly subjected.
- 3) To release the prisoners from inside the punishment cells, where they are isolated and not allowed to have any contact with other human being for long periods of time.

If you would like to help and/or to receive more information please contact us by e-mail: gfpmp2@yahoo.ca or visit our web page at www.mexprisoners.com

Que es GFAPPM?

El Grupo de Familiares y Amigos de Presos Políticos en México somos una organización de apoyo a cuatro luchadores sociales encarcelados injustamente en México. En octubre de 1999, Jacobo Silva, Gloria Arenas, Fernando Gática y Felicitas Padilla fueron detenidos arbitrariamente, torturados y acusados de ser dirigentes guerrilleros, desde entonces, ellos se encuentran presos. Este caso ha sido denunciado internacionalmente, sin embargo, el gobierno mexicano continúa violando los derechos humanos de los detenidos. En este momento, más de trescientos cincuenta presos de la cárcel de máxima seguridad de La Palma se encuentran en huelga de hambre solicitándole al gobierno mexicano:

- 1) que los prisioneros que han sido transferidos sean regresados a cárceles cercanas a su domicilio.
- 2) que mejoren las condiciones carcelarias, tales como servicio médico inadecuado, mala comida, etc.
- 3) que pare la represión dentro de las cárceles, ya que los detenidos son sometidos a largos períodos de aislamiento en celdas de castigo.

Si quieres apoyar esta lucha o si deseas recibir más información, por favor comunícate al correo electrónico: gfpmp2@yahoo.ca o visita nuestra página de Internet: www.mexprisoners.com

GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION AND BOMBING OF IRAQ

END THE OCCUPATION, US/UK OUT OF IRAQ!

BRING ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!

MARCH AND RALLY vancouver art gallery
march 20th 1pm

CANADA OUT OF AFGHANISTAN! ISRAEL OUT OF PALESTINE!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CANADA!

THE WAR IS NOT OVER!

MARCH 20TH



ORGANIZED BY MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR AND OCCUPATION
www.mawovancouver.org / mawoinfo@yahoo.ca / 604-322-1764