

FIRE THIS TIME



The Newspaper of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice

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FREE

End the Occupation! Self-Determination! US-UK Out of Iraq!

By Ali Yerevani

"We will be here as long as it takes,"

Lieutenant general Jay Garner, "civilian" administrator appointed by the US to Iraq

This quote exposes what the US government really had in mind before the war, as well as their strategy for today and for tomorrow. All that has been said about finding Weapons of Mass Destruction, stopping terrorist activity, regime change, and liberating Iraq, were nothing but lies and war propaganda. The US government has had only one aim: occupation of Iraq until they have planned, prepared, and are ready for the next war and occupation. "As long it takes" means further suppression, further tyranny, and the further killing and terrorizing of Iraqi people.



Iraqis protest the US-UK military occupation of their country, April 18th 2003

The US-UK completely failed in their campaign of colonizing Iraq. Yes, they have occupied this ancient land but they are finding

it very hard not to sink in the political sandstorm of the anti-colonial consciousness of Iraqi people.

What Went Wrong?

The US-UK armies have never been considered a force of liberation by the people of Iraq,

not when they began the war on March 19th, and certainly not after they occupied Baghdad in the past weeks. Although Jay Garner, the US appointed administrator, has traveled to the Kurdish areas and the media has broadcast little girls giving him flowers of welcome, both the Kurdish resistance leadership and Garner know that they are engaged in very risky business, and that the situation is very fragile in the Kurdish region. Even before "conquering" Baghdad, US and UK troops were confronted with thousands of hand fisted demonstrators in Basra, Najaf and Karbala, the major cities in Iraq. There has not been one single day that dozens of demonstrations have not been happening in Iraqi cities. Every day, occupiers have to defend themselves against small

Continued on page 10

Building an Anti-war Movement: Past, Present, Future

By Shannon Bundock

On the evening of March 19th, 2003, after months of demonstrations against the impending war; after the US and UK politically isolated themselves from the majority of the world population; after it

became crystal clear that what was about to happen was a criminal assault on the people of Iraq; after all of this, bombs began to fall, and the war on Iraq began. Within minutes the streets of the world erupted, and within minutes the streets of downtown Vancouver were filled with angry

voices of resistance. A militant, charged crowd of over 2,000 people took to the streets and rejected the imperialist world of the western powers. It would prove, however, that maintaining this atmosphere and building the Vancouver antiwar movement would require not only keeping up with the momentum of the mass global movement, but also providing the leadership to push forward.

Early Stages

The fact that 2,000 people in Vancouver came out of their workplaces and homes when the bombs began to fall was the result of an antiwar movement that had been building up strength for some time. A coalition was struck last fall to organize the people in this city around the threat of war on Iraq. This coalition, initially called the November 17th Anti-war Coalition (now StopWar.ca), called demonstrations in November, January, February, March, and April with numbers peaking at 40,000 for the February 15th demonstration. These monthly demonstrations were part of a movement that was building across the entire world. People were coming to the streets to oppose this war because they

did not believe the lies about "weapons of mass destruction" or some sort of colonial "liberation." The people of the world knew that this war was about oil, and it soon became apparent to everyone that it went beyond oil; the people of the world realized that ultimately the war was about US hegemony of the globe.

During the build-up to the war, monthly demonstrations were appropriate, but once the war began, the antiwar movement needed to respond more directly. The people of Vancouver were charged and willing to come to the streets with a moment's notice. The first four days of war saw continued escalation in antiwar mobilizations in Vancouver which grew in size and militancy throughout the end of the week, peaking on March 22nd with nearly 10,000 people in the streets.

Vancouver was not alone in its quick reaction. Actions grew every day after the evening of March 19th. March 22nd saw protests around the world as hundreds of thousands of people converged on US embassies in Buenos Aires, Manila, Paris, Seoul and Brussels; and people made visible the overwhelming

popular opposition to Bush's war on Iraq in Ankara, Rome, Taiwan, London, Damascus, Cairo, Quito, Bangkok, Johannesburg, Calcutta, Brazil, Kiev and Moscow. Thousands of students marched through Madrid; 100,000 people filled the streets of Athens; and 50,000 marched under the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. The Vancouver demonstration, organized in just three days, brought people out because the people of Vancouver, along with the people of the world, refused to believe the lies of imperialism, and knew of strength in numbers. Coming to the streets demonstrated this strength to the entire world.

The Movement Escalates

As the war continued Bush and Blair were forced to change their tactics due to massive Iraqi resistance. The tactics of the movement were also changing. Civil disobedience became more frequent all over the world. In North America, where militant acts of resistance are not readily accepted by the mainstream population, people overwhelmingly supported escalated resistance.

Continued on Page 4

What's Inside

- Women's Reproductive Rights and Racism | 2
- The latest Police Crackdown in the DTES | 2
- Interview with member of the Committee in Solidarity with Colombia | 3
- US out of Colombia! | 3
- New Anti-war Organizations in Vancouver | 4
- War is Colonization, Colonization is War | 5
- Canada's involvement in the War on Iraq | 5
- Hands off Kurdistan! | 6
- Iraqi People Resist Occupation | 7
- The US-Canada Alliance against Refugees | 8
- An Interview with Joe Chou | 9
- Fire This Time Basis of Unity | 11
- Fire This Time Bases of Unity, Farsi & Chinese | 11
- Fire This Time Bases de Unidad | 11
- RCMP Targets Native Youth Movement & Skwelkwew'welt Protection Centre Defenders | 12

The Control of Women's Reproductive Rights Through Racist Violence:

An Interview with April Sumter-Freithe and Addena Sumter-Freithe

By Ivan Drury

On March 14th, April Sumter-Freithe came across a Genocide Awareness Project (an anti-choice / anti-abortion group) display at the corner of Broadway and Commercial Drive in Vancouver. The 16 by 4 foot display consisted of a picture of a pile of dead Nazi holocaust victims that said, "unclean", a picture of a black man being lynched that said, "unwhite", and a picture of an aborted foetus that said, "unwanted". April demanded that the pictures be removed and was refused. April was joined by her mom, Addena and her Uncle, Douglas. The three of them repeated April's demand and when they were refused again, Douglas attempted to remove the displays himself. There was an altercation, and now Douglas is being charged with assault. Fire This Time interviewed April and Addena about the incident, the connection between racism and sexism in Canadian society, and the importance of resistance.

Do you consider this use in public displays of this image to be a hate crime?

Addena: Oh yeah, most definitely. You know, you can do a couple of things and black people understand them very very well. You can burn a cross on my lawn,

you can show me a picture of somebody being lynched, I understand what you mean. That is meant to put terror in me and control me, and to show me that you hate me and maybe my life is in danger. Very clear.

April: You think, "well, so they showed you a picture, and how can that really be a crime to show somebody a picture?" But it's a picture of a graphic depiction of violence and it's violence on Blacks by Whites.

Addena: You only have to lynch one person to control a whole community. It's been done many many times before. When my father was living in South Carolina, my father was born in 1893, what they would do was they would take one black man, tie him to a car, pour oil on him, drag him up and down the Black neighbourhood to show that "you guys are getting out of hand." And you would control all those people for a long time, they wouldn't try to defy you, they wouldn't try anything.

April: And G.A.P. set up this display at Broadway and Commercial, where else in Vancouver are there as many black owned businesses on one street? Nowhere in the Lower Mainland, nowhere in British Columbia. You'd have to go as far as Montreal to find a higher concentration

of Black businesses, and commerce and community. If you were going to incite black people, then you know this would be a really good place to do it.

What are the links between the struggle for women's rights and the struggle against racism and white supremacy?

April: The images G.A.P. uses manipulate you so that you can't actually make any reproductive choice without coming in with the existing power structure. If you don't want to join the existing power structure then you have to take their point of view. These people really want to control women. They want to control what they do or how they do it, where they go or what time of night they go there, and they want to control their bodies.

Addena: Women's rights is a battle that has been fought in tiers as well. You've got to think of all women because there were some women who had lots of rights before other women had rights. And so, the connection between white supremacy and women's rights is that they had to let go of certain women sooner, and give them a little. And other women, women of colour, black women, immigrant women, they could still be supreme over them a lot longer. It's sort of their last stand at white supremacy.

Why is it important to confront and oppose the display of racist imagery?

April: The Genocide Awareness Project people kept referring to the picture of a black man being lynched as an image, "well we have the right to use this image," but they couldn't even recognize that this was a picture of a person, who had a name, who had a life, who was an actual human being. And I don't know how you get from being a human being to an image unless someone has no respect for you. You're just nothing, you're an image.

Addena: If you don't stop it, it will escalate. This is why we moved out of Alberta. Alberta has the largest number Klansmen in North America. They were going to have a Klu Klux Klan rally there in Edmonton, and the people put this big fuss and said, "no, you can't, you can't." Convention centres and whatever wouldn't let them. So in protest, in Stony Plain, they burnt this big cross and it was so big that you could see the light in the sky by West Edmonton Mall. And I thought, you know we have seven generations of Canadians right here and they're burning a friggin cross in my city, its time to move. Those things mean something, that puts such fear in me in that I couldn't live there, because I know if that much hate is around, sooner or later, your life is in danger.

Torpedos and Broken Windows: The BC Liberals, the Vancouver Police and the Poor

By Ivan Drury

On April 7th, 2003, the Vancouver Police Department took 44 cops from around the city and assigned them to a special "Enforcement Team" to sweep the open drug scene from the streets of the Downtown Eastside. An additional 16 officers were assigned to the Enforcement Team to patrol the rest of the city.

The RCMP in Surrey intensified sweeps that had already been long underway, playing cat and mouse with the chauffeured drug trade there. The Downtown Eastside, with its inordinately sized and active open street drug trade, its inordinately high poverty and homelessness rate, its inordinately high population representation of indigenous, non-status Latino, South East Asian and other oppressed groups of people, received its inordinate share of Enforcement Team police. These cops swept down upon the Downtown Eastside on horsebacks borrowed from tourist duty in Stanley Park, on foot patrol and in searchlight blazing patrol car. Over night, the poorest postal code in Canada became, essentially, a militarised zone.

Ninety arrests were made in the first five days of the 90-day offensive that the police call, in appropriate military jargon, "Project Torpedo". After the project began, Police Chief Jamie Graham brought a proposal to City Council asking for \$2.3 million to fund the Enforcement Team for the projected full nine-month term; council turned him down without discussion. Council chambers were packed with protestors from the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users' Housing Action Committee calling for an end to the raid. Graham, however, was not disappointed

by the refusal for funding. He replied, "One thing we're not going to do is fold up our tent and we're not going to go home." The police plan to bring their proposal back to council after their ninety days of independent action are up. Dave Jones, the police Inspector in charge of Downtown Vancouver remains hopeful, "Council deliberately didn't move the motion, that leaves the door open."

Mayor Larry Campbell has said that he endorses and supports the police action. He called their displacement strategy an "experiment" that should be given a three-month window of opportunity before evaluation. Campbell was one of the original proponents of "Enforcement" as one pillar of his championed "Four Pillars Program". Essential to the Four Pillars harm reduction strategy was that all four pillars be enacted at once: Treatment, Prevention, Enforcement and, the most controversial, Harm Reduction, including safe injection (fixing) sites.

To date, the only pillar that has been erected has been Enforcement; and it has been carried through so forcefully that all the others have been overwhelmed and forgotten.

The Four Pillars Program, as an essentially band-aid solution, cannot begin to cope with the real harm that poor and working people are attacked by. When the BC Liberals took office, they initially froze and then proceeded to cut all social housing projects, rolled back the real minimum wage to six dollars, began the privatisation of health care and hacked away welfare recipients to a two-year limit of eligibility. Their attacks focussed on the services that disabled people in BC receive and rely upon

for survival. All of these cuts affected poor and working people throughout BC, but the Downtown Eastside is the Province's primary catchment area for disabled and other systemically poor and oppressed, so it has been hit especially hard by the BC Liberal cut backs. Real harm reduction would have to deal with the provision of all these rights and services denied to poor and working people under the BC Liberal government.

The Vancouver Police's Project Torpedo was hatched through a committee struck in the fall of 2002. The committee's mandate was to come up with a plan to deal with the open drug market in the face of what committee member Police Inspector Doug LePard called "a real embarrassment we couldn't tolerate any longer."

At the time, the Woodward's Squat was nailed to the awning around the Woodward's building and was consistently referred to by the media and the surrounding business community as an "embarrassment". The Woodward's Squat was the first example in the Downtown Eastside of organized, street level mass resistance to the BC Liberal cuts. The squat laid the foundation for organized civil unrest in many previously unorganized poor and working people's communities.

The Vancouver Police

Inspector in charge of the Downtown Area, Dave Jones, who was responsible for the handling of the Woodward's Squat, referred to the "Broken Windows" theory in the development of Project Torpedo. The Broken Windows theory says that the police can prevent crime by focussing aggressively on the first signs of civil disorder. That Project Torpedo was created during the first sign of organized civil disorder in the Downtown Eastside necessarily bypasses City Council completely and shows that the VPD are acting today to forbid further

Continued on page 4

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Phone/Fax: (604) 322-1764
Email: info@fire-this-time.org
Mail: PO Box 21607
Vancouver BC
V5N 5T5

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Confronting Canada's Anti-Terrorism Act:

An interview with a member of the Committee in Solidarity with Colombia

By Mike Krebs

On April 5th of this year, the *Canadian Gazette* reported that Canada's *Anti-Terrorism Act* had been amended to include the names of more organizations, including a couple of well-known revolutionary groups in Colombia. This classification has seriously hampered the work of the Committee in Solidarity with Colombia, an organization that seeks to raise awareness about the situation of the people in Colombia. We interviewed Eduardo from the Committee to find out how this *Anti-Terrorist Act* is being used to restrict civil liberties in Canada.

Could you describe what impact the Canadian *Anti-Terrorism Act* has had by classifying certain revolutionary groups in Colombia as "terrorist"?

Well, for various organizations and for the revolutionary movements in Colombia, it has closed a door on the possibility of bringing peace to the people of Colombia. These organizations that are operating in Colombia are the voice of the people who don't actually have a voice, but the anti-terrorist legislation in Canada completely closes the door on their situation, blocking whatever voice they may have had here.

How did the Canadian government come to define these organizations as terrorist?

Their definitions of terrorism are very broad. Unfortunately, after September 11th, 2001, a number of governments and bodies, including the European Community and the United Nations, in the context of the declaration of all-out war made by the United States against much of the world, started using

the term "terrorism" very loosely, to pressure civil movements and to eliminate dissent, along with many human rights.



How does Canada's *Anti-Terrorism Act* prevent groups and individuals within Canada from doing solidarity work for groups in other countries when they are classified as terrorist?

According to the legislation, it is illegal for solidarity groups or committees in Canada to work with or distribute materials for any organization or entity that the Canadian government lists as a terrorist. This prevents any of these solidarity groups from distributing certain material to raise awareness about what has happened to the people of Colombia in the past 100 years, to raise awareness about the dirty work of state terrorism done by the government of Colombia.

Opposition in Colombia doesn't exist, and it doesn't exist because the ruling class has run the politics in Colombia for the last 60 to 70 years. The Conservatives and Liberals are the only two parties

that have actually shared power in Colombia, by mutual consent. The only time that there has been a legal opposition was in the 1980's with the Patriotic Union, which was made up of political organizations that represented all the displaced and poor people of Colombia. However, more than 5000 people from the Patriotic Union were systematically murdered by state terrorism, effectively annihilating any legal opposition in Colombia.

So basically any solidarity committee in Canada that has worked on these issues of the revolutionary movements in Colombia can't do it anymore, because it is illegal. And of course, everyone who did such work in the past did so with the belief that Canada was a democratic society, with a democratic government, where the civil rights of the individual were respected.

That has changed, it has changed drastically around the world with "anti-terrorist" laws, and we have to obey the law. That doesn't mean that we can't continue working for the people of Colombia. We're going to continue denouncing the terrorist activities, which are committed not only by the Colombian government, but also with the support and collaboration of the United States government. Right now there are approximately 5000 members of the American military inside Colombia, some of whom have been seen participating alongside paramilitaries and military groups committing massacres and other crimes against the population.

The so-called anti-terrorism legislation is a way to suppress the voices of people trying to explain the real situation in Colombia from the side of the Colombian people, the people engaged in

the struggle, as opposed to the "official" version presented by the fascist media that we read every day.

According to a recent publication of the Canadian government, organizations that are listed as entities under the Criminal Code (in other words, are defined as terrorist groups under the *Anti-Terrorism Act*) can apply to the Solicitor General of Canada to no longer be a listed entity. Are any groups going to use this process to challenge the listing of certain groups as 'terrorist organizations'?

It is my understanding that the only entity who can dispute the listing is the actual organization that the government has listed as a terrorist. It's a huge law; to read and understand all of it, you have to be a very good lawyer, or a very good reader, and much of the wording is deliberately vague and open to interpretation. They do that so people don't have a chance to really understand what their rights are under this law.

I think that people, organizations, solidarity committees, political parties, etc. should campaign for modifications or the complete abolition of this so-called anti-terrorist law, and challenge its application whenever possible.

Why is it important to challenge the government's *Anti-Terrorism Act*?

Because it is a direct attack on our right to freedom of speech and association, and our civil liberties. We have to challenge any law that tries to take away our rights, like the right to stand up against what is wrong. For example, the war in Iraq is wrong, so we stand up against the war in Iraq. And we are going to stand up against any

kind of war that imperialism is trying to implement.

What has happened in Latin America, with the support of the United States, colonizing by force, taking possession of countries as their own, and destroying hundreds of thousands of men, women and children by starvation, malnutrition, sickness, that's a declaration of war on the people, that's a declaration of war on the poor.

Iraq is just the beginning. The Middle East is one part of the whole agenda, but Latin America has been on the agenda for a long, long time. There is only one way to actually stop the process of destruction, and that is for the people to stand up as a mass movement. That's the only way you're going to stop the advance of imperialism.

We see cases like Argentina, where millions of people stood up against the president, and threw out three presidents in less than 12 days. That's a very specific example of what the people can actually do when they have the power.

But now they are trying to bring anti-terrorism legislation to Argentina. That will be like opening a cage of a thousand starving lions – the police, the intelligence services, and the military – the repressive forces of my country are thirsty for blood after all these years.

So this is what these anti-terrorist laws are about. It is the decapitation of civil liberties to prevent people from expressing themselves wherever it goes against their government's position. So we have to denounce it. We have to one day stand up together, all together, and stop it.

US Out of Colombia!

By Ali Yerevani

Today in the Middle East, following its bloody bombing campaign and military occupation of Iraq, the United States remains busy consolidating the presence of its troops. Meanwhile, on the other side of the world in Latin America, the same US killing machine is preparing for a full-scale war with a massive military assault on the people of Colombia.

"There is no question that the US is becoming more deeply involved in Colombia's war"

-Tim Rieser, foreign affair aide to Senator Patrick Leahy

"There's no question we are now focusing more on terror."

-Anne W. Patterson, out-going US ambassador to Colombia, in the ultra-conservative Washington Times

The similarity of these two quotes is apparent. The US ruling

class is trying hard to justify the occupation of sovereign Iraq as the toppling of a tyrannical regime by a force of "liberation", and they are trying to extend that same rationale to Colombia: War on terror and terrorists is long overdue in Colombia. In practical terms, this means that the US is engaged in the process of direct military intervention in Colombia. The clear goal of this military operation is to crush the resistance against the Colombian government austerity measures and the growing popular movement against the ultra-rightist regime of President Alvaro Uribe. Ultimately, the US strategy is to finally end the four-decade-old civil war in Colombia in favour of the ruling class of Colombia and the US giant transnational corporations.

An economy in shambles

Colombia is a very rich country

with extensive oil reserves, amongst the largest in the world. Like its neighbour Venezuela, the principal export product of Colombia is oil. Six hundred thousand barrels of crude oil are exported daily, mainly to the United States. Even so, the vast majority of Colombia's 40 million people live under the poverty line. Government after government has been unable to secure and provide minimum [decent] living standard for workers and peasants in the country. Civil war and corrupt governments have created deep miserable social and economic conditions for the Colombian people. It is no wonder that this absolute desperation and poverty gives many peasants no choice but to plant coca in order to survive. With the accumulation of decades of negligence and lack of planning by government institutions and rich land-owners, coca remains the only means



Secretary of State Colin Powell on a trip to Colombia, December 2002

to make ends meet for many peasants in Colombia.

Massive government cuts and austerity programs implemented throughout the last 18 months have worsened the social and economic situation in Colombia. Unpayable foreign debt, inflation, unemployment and starvation have become [daily] permanent crises in Colombia. [And yet,]

the Alvaro Uribe government recently reached a \$2.1 billion standby loan deal with the IMF (International Monetary Fund) with the condition of accelerating further privatization and other neo-liberal programs. These loan conditions promise to further deepen the suffering of the Colombian people.

Continued on page 10



'Building an Anti-war Movement' from page 1

Today, with large mobilizations occurring at the same time as other more militant actions, organizers need to work to unify these tactics and use civil disobedience to radicalize and build the mass antiwar actions.

April 5th saw yet another Vancouver mobilization, this one called by the Youth – 3rd World Alliance Against War. This new organization focused on providing a space for young people, people of color and all other marginalized voices to lead the movement. Emphasis was put on the need for support and unity among organizers from all across the lower mainland. It was stressed that all effective antiwar actions needed to be supported by all other antiwar organizers to avoid fracturing and weakening the movement.

Today, people outside of traditional leadership roles are taking up the reins when the movement demands appropriate and powerful mobilizations. This is an important and positive step in broadening antiwar leadership.

April 12th was the most recent action in Vancouver. It was held days after the war changed forms to become an occupation, and it coincided with international actions. Numbers were up from the April 5th demo,

with nearly 3,000 people. However, April 12th gave an indication of the huge obstacles that lay ahead.

The most important task of antiwar organizers has always been to maintain the involvement of the mainstream population. Now that the war has become a war of occupation, our effectiveness as a movement depends more heavily on maintaining broad opposition. We need to keep the politics of occupation in the forefront, and do everything possible to make it clear that the people of Vancouver must oppose war and occupation. The movement can't allow itself to be killed by the imperialist lie that this war is over.

Building a Movement

When the war began, the response of antiwar coalitions and groups had to be quick and sure in order to be effective. The accelerating momentum of the movement was felt all across the lower mainland; an angry and unified public demanded frequent and dynamic mobilizations. Vancouver's response to the criminal war was an overall success, but that does not mean satisfaction and resignation. We must learn from any mistakes that were made and ensure that they are not repeated. We must also assess what was done successfully and use that experience to develop a truly long-term strategy and focus on building an effective movement.

Building for the long-term means that the politics of the movement must expand as the movement grows. Through popular education and an enforcement of independent working class politics, Vancouver successfully went beyond delivering a simple message of peace.

It is necessary for the movement to focus on politics that will unify all oppressed people. The leadership of the antiwar movement must skillfully balance building a broad movement with radicalizing and politicizing that movement. A crisis, such as war, provides an opportunity for the radicalization and mobilization of the masses that cannot be missed.

Overall, Vancouver's participation in the struggle against war was successful on two different levels. Firstly, the movement successfully expanded to become a broad and popular movement. In Vancouver, many people outside of the traditional war opposition played a part in the huge global resistance. Secondly, as part of

The Next Step

The leadership of this movement must expand in the same way the broader movement has. We must expand because, to be truly effective, we cannot be satisfied with 30,000 people on the streets. We can't even be satisfied if we get 30,000 people at each and every mobilization. In order to truly oppose war and occupation, we need 100,000, then 200,000, then 300,000 people on the streets. Until this movement is erupting on the streets and in leadership, we can't step back.

Now this war has turned into occupation, and the role of organizers has become much more difficult.

To do this movement justice, and to strongly, effectively respond to the imperialist assaults, we must build and fight to end to all wars and military assaults against people. The level of consciousness that exists when a movement is truly popular and mass-based allows for



Anti-war demonstration in Granada, Spain, March 15th 2003

the international movement against war, Vancouver effectively influenced imperialist politics. It's undeniable that the war would have played out differently if the largest protests in history had not been occurring. The global demonstrations served to support the heroic resistance of the Iraqi people and to affect the steps taken by local governments.

appropriate expansion of working class politics. This means that an expanding antiwar movement, with hundreds of thousands of people on the streets, is not limited to antiwar. A movement like this is a movement for all oppressed people, locally and internationally. By fighting against the unjust, brutal occupation and war on the people of Iraq we have the capacity to improve the position of all oppressed people globally against imperialism.

New Anti-war Organizations Take Shape in Vancouver

By Nasim Sedaghat

Since the beginning of mass mobilizations against the US-UK killing machine in Iraq in October 2002, the involvement of youth and third world people in the movement around the world has grown substantially. At the same time, in a few short months, a massive and multifaceted movement against the war on the people of Iraq and for peace and justice has taken root all around Canada and in Vancouver.

The Youth-3rd World Alliance Against War was formed in March 2003 out of necessity by young and third world people building the anti-war movement in Vancouver. "Youth-3rd World Alliance Against War put a focus on the necessity for those coming to the streets to have space to lead the movement," said Shannon Bundock, one of the founding members. "This means young people, people of colour and other marginalized voices."

The Iranian Committee Against War is another new organization in Vancouver. As the group's statement explains: "We

are anti-war and peace-loving Iranian groups and individuals who believe that US-UK war drive necessitates fighting and organizing against war and occupation in the Middle East, and we will work with all other groups who are committed to the same cause."

Fire This Time eagerly welcomes these two militant anti-war groups to the movement against war in Vancouver. In this time of war, occupation and destruction, these organizations who represent marginalized sectors of our society will pave the way for a movement that is growing ever stronger against imperialist military assault and aggression.

To contact these groups:

Iranian Committee Against War
604-682-3269 ext. 7979
Email
iranvanagainstar@yahoo.ca

Youth-3rd World Alliance Against War:
Email
youth3rdworldalliance@yahoo.ca

'Torpedos and Broken Windows' from page 4

unrest and to protect the agenda of the BC Liberal Government.

The police actions in Surrey and other impoverished areas outlying Vancouver fall in line with the Broken Window theory and the understanding that openly attacking the drug scene in the Downtown Eastside will push the scene elsewhere. Inspector Jones explains; "If you spread it, you have to follow it." His sentiments are echoed in the warnings of New Westminster police Sergeant, Casey Dehaas, "Don't bother coming to New Westminster to deal drugs." He says that they "cleaned up" their city's drug problem years ago. But, in the end, Project Torpedo is not about a harm reduction strategy or even about the "drug problem". VPD Inspector Rich reported that the Coastal Health Authority (responsible for health services to users, including the proposed safe fixing site) and City Council "have been watching us develop this. There hasn't been one objection from them." In the end, the torpedo is set to displace, destabilize and disorganize the mounting unrest of poor and working people throughout the

province.

The BC Liberals and the ruling classes that preceded them created the Downtown Eastside as a containment zone for the poorest and most destitute people in the province. The BC and the Federal Liberals have created the crisis that is facing poor and working people throughout the province and that crisis has created the potential for resentment and resistance that the police call "social unrest." The police force that has invaded the Downtown Eastside on horseback cannot be divorced from the governments that put them there to protect their corporate agenda and private property. The only way to beat back the invasion of the VPD Enforcement Team is to focus on the attacks of the Liberal Governments and win the rights and securities they have withheld and stolen away: social housing, welfare, liveable wages and employment, the right to organize, health care, safe injection sites, and native sovereignty. Gordon Campbell has set the province on the brink of civil unrest. We must organize this unrest beyond Campbell's police forces to build a movement that includes, represents and fights for the rights and needs of poor and working people in true solidarity for a new social foundation.

War is Colonization, Colonization is War

By Rachel Taylor
& Tania Willard

Indigenous people are all too familiar with this war. We've been fighting it for centuries - fighting against colonialism and imperialism, and against a government historically based on terrorism, assimilation, and genocide. What's different now is that international solidarity between people from all walks of life has been growing with unbelievable intensity in this time of crisis. People everywhere who recognize their own power are building a resistance movement together, out of necessity. It is our responsibility, not only to protest these abominations in Iraq, but to actively build a movement to resist and defeat those who benefit from genocide, all over the world.

America's, Canada's, and BC's Anti-Indigenous Histories

North America is founded on terror, bathed in the blood of the genocide of millions of Native Americans.

The American government is not a righteous defender of freedom. They have done nothing but perpetuate war against Indigenous peoples for profit. They introduced the world to weapons of mass destruction, and they tested their nuclear arms in Indigenous territories. They became one of the first state powers to use biological warfare when they murdered Native Americans by giving them smallpox-infected blankets.

The Canadian government has always waged a hidden war on Indigenous peoples. Canada is guilty of the genocide of millions of Indigenous peoples. Its weapons have included systematic racism, economic exclusion, residential schools, and anti-Indigenous policy like the First Nations Governance Act.

Indigenous peoples in Canada continue

to fight for Aboriginal rights and title, especially in BC where 95% of the territory has never been surrendered by conquest or treaty. When Indigenous peoples stand up for our rights, we face severe oppression and militarization. And yet, the Canadian government maintains a mask of innocence, which attempts to hide both Canada's involvement in the Iraqi war, and Canada's past and present of devastating racism. This Canadian power elite has blatantly demonstrated their policy of racism with the military and police repression at Oka, Gustafsen Lake, Cold Lake, Burnt Church, Skwelkwew'welt (where the Secwepemc Nation and supporters continue to protest Sunpeaks ski resort development) and Sutikahl (anti-ski resort development protests near Mount Currie, BC).

War on Indigenous Populations

The occupation is unjust to the Iraqi people and to all people, but this is no surprise; after all, this state was built on the blood and bones of Indigenous populations. Around the world, Indigenous people, the world's poorest, suffer under repressive regimes. In Iraq the Kurdish people have suffered under Iraqi control. War is waged against Indigenous peoples on almost every continent.

The US has manufactured a fear of the threat of terror and used it to encroach on the territories of Indigenous peoples, to carry out military exercises in former colonies like in the Philippines. States use this fear of terror to target their own Indigenous populations; in Israel the label "terrorist" is thrown freely on the Palestinian people, justifying Israeli oppression as "defense."

The effects of imperialism on Indigenous lives are not limited to the effects you hear about. For one thing, it's known historically that when American soldiers are in town during war or occupation, the



Canadian troops on patrol during the 1990 Oka standoff. Over 4000 Canadian troops were deployed to 'settle' the dispute with the Mohawk people of Kanesatake.

numbers of Indigenous women involved in prostitution and put into abusive situations go up. Also immeasurable, one of the most prominent issues for Indigenous youth at a recent International Indigenous Youth Conference, held in the Philippines, was the effect of militarization on their communities and resources.

War is a threat to all Indigenous people. It directly impacts our lands and our lives. The invasion of Iraq is a continuation of the global war on Indigenous peoples, an ongoing war that usurps and saps our resources, smothers our cultures and slaughters our people.

Local and Global Oppressive Forces...

Colonial governments and corporations are using force against oppressed minorities in order to gain profit and control over certain regions all over the world, and this includes BC. The displacement and forcible removal of Indigenous people from their traditional, unceded territories in BC constitutes genocide under international laws. And yet the BC government and Sun Peaks Resorts are committing brutal crimes right now against the Secwepemc people at Skwelkwew'welt with total impunity; but that's just one example. If you start digging for more tales of provincial oppression, you will soon be buried in them.

The wielding of power without authority, the combined forces of governments and moneymakers against oppressed peoples, and the use of overwhelmingly false propaganda are only a few of the similarities between the local and global systems of oppression for profit. It is clear that this war did not begin or end when CNN says it did.

One minute it's the American government murdering Iraqis, trying to plant their fists in the Middle East and saying it's about Saddam Hussein (just like it used to be about Osama bin Laden); next it's the Canadian and BC governments sweeping their sickening, blood-soaked past and present under a rug of propaganda and racism-for-profit. They push racist laws, slap anyone who resists on the list of "terrorists," and wave weapons and threats to silence anyone else. We realize the lies and genocide are coming from the same source, for the same reasons.

...Local and Global Solidarity

Links are being made between all groups who are resisting the same oppressors. Working together in unity with international groups to end the occupation of Iraq and build a strong resistance movement all over the world will weaken the global structure that is entirely based on protecting state & corporate interests; therefore, this will concurrently build the resistance movement against brutal practices and racist laws in Canada and BC.

Until we defeat this global tyranny, this unprecedented international movement will continue to grow. We will not give up, we will not get tired, and we will not be defeated.

Rachel Taylor and Tania Willard are both with Redwire Native Youth Media.

www.redwiremag.com

The Canadian Government: Peacekeeper or Hypocrite?

By Thomas Davies

While there are worldwide calls for the United States administration to stop using the pretense of a "global war against terrorism" to gain control in the Middle East, this same consciousness around the world, especially among people who live in this country, should examine Canada's use of the same tactics and its further alignment with the United States in what looks to be a prolonged campaign in the Middle East and beyond.

Canada was never against, in principle, a US-led war on Iraq, and was also not against going to war without UN approval. When asked in January if Canada found UN approval necessary to join a US led attack, Defense Minister John McCallum said, "Some may say, 'We're doing it only with a UN mandate.' We're saying we much prefer that, but we may do it otherwise." This was following his revelations that Canadian military planners were already in Tampa, Florida, working with the US Central Command to decide upon the scope and nature of Canada's contribution to a US-led invasion. Solidifying this position before a recent NATO summit, Jean Chrétien reiterated Canada's willingness to participate in a US-led war against Iraq. "We will see what we have got, what



Canadian Troops in Afghanistan, April 18th 2002.

they need," said Chrétien, referring to an official US inquiry as to what Canada could contribute to an invasion of Iraq. He then added, "We have already ships there. We have planes there ... so it will be the same thing."

Canada leads a nine-ship multinational "anti-terrorist" naval force in the Persian Gulf. Headed by Canadian Commander Roger Girouard, who reports to U.S. Vice-Admiral Timothy Keating, the fleet protects U.S. aircraft carriers, screens passengers in the Persian Gulf (with Girouard stating he

would detain any significant members of the Iraqi regime), and as reported by *La Presse*, also "escorted" all U.S. and British ships carrying troops and war material to Kuwait.

Beyond the naval forces, there are 31 Canadian officers with the U.S. and U.K. troops as part of an exchange program. Defense Minister John McCallum said the exchange officers are involved in logistical and support functions, and the ships are needed to fight the wider war against terrorism. "The terrorist risk will,

if anything, be greater than before as a consequence of war," McCallum said. "So for us to cut and run when the terrorism risk is greater would not be compatible with Canadian traditions." The same use of "anti-terrorism" to justify military involvement was also utilized when it was announced that Canada would contribute 3000 more troops to the force in Afghanistan by the summer. This would be to aid the over 1000 who are already there, performing operations which free up United States troops to focus on initiatives in Iraq.

On April 15th, amidst international debate concerning control of the "rebuilding process" in Iraq, Iraqi factions met near Nassiriyah, under recently U.S.-appointed retired American Lieutenant-General Jay Garner, to discuss the process of forming a new Iraqi government. The preceding Friday leaders of Russia, France, and Germany indicated they would participate in the reconstruction, but only if the UN took control of the process, while U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell reiterated the United States' position, "We didn't take on this huge burden with our coalition partners not to be able to have significant, dominating control over how it unfolds in

Continued on page 9

US-UK Hands off Kurdistan

By Shannon Bundock

The history of the Kurds begins with struggle; and with the current illegal war and occupation of Iraq, this struggle will only intensify. The Kurds have been attempting, throughout modern history, to fight off subjugation and gain their freedom.

The obstacles to this have been varied and substantial. First, the Kurds have never had an independent state; second, their people were divided by imperialist countries into four different states, with spillover into a fifth; and third, the Kurds have historically been betrayed by both the interventions of western imperialists and by their local governments. Under the long-standing conditions of colonial and local oppression the Kurds have had no choice but to unite, to demand their rights, to struggle for their freedom and to fight whatever powers attempted to stand in their way.

Nearly 15 million of the world's estimated 25 million Kurds live in southeastern Turkey. Roughly 5 to 7 million live in Iran, 4 million in Iraq and 1.5 million in Syria. In each of these four major countries the Kurds have faced national oppression in the forms of: the denial of basic human rights; cultural, political, and economic repression; attempted assimilation; and finally, elimination. Kurdish struggles for independence have fluctuated between simple demands for cultural and political autonomy, and all-out battle for self-determination.

What is at stake right now?

The Kurdish struggle for freedom in Iraq confronts two major obstacles: first, the US military occupation of their land, mainly located north of Iraq; and second, the threat of military invasion and aggression by the Turkish army. Turkish governments have been hostile to Kurdish struggle inside and outside of Turkey, and especially to Kurds in Iraq.

Ever since the establishment of Turkey in 1923, the Turkish Kurds have had to struggle just to be recognized as a people; they've been faced with active assimilation programs and, in some cases, total eradication. The Turkish state has denied the existence of Kurds, referring to them as "mountain Turks" and banning all reference to a separate culture, language, flag, etc. Law 2510, passed in June 1934, divided Turkey into three areas: "(1) localities to be reserved for the habitation of persons possessing Turkish culture; (2) regions to which persons of non-Turkish culture could be moved for assimilation into Turkish culture; (3) regions for complete evacuation." The incredibly harsh measures taken by Turkey resulted in the establishment of a strong Kurdish movement in Turkey, which still exists today. The Turkish and



Map showing where the Kurds live.

American governments list the peasant- and worker-supported Kurdish resistance movement as terrorists. Neither Turkey nor the US want to see a mass movement of Kurds succeed in their fight for self-determination in Turkey, Iraq or Iran.

Reach and heroic history of struggle

In 1946 the Kurds in Iran successfully established the Kurdish republic of Mahabad, which lasted for just over a year. This began with the pro-independence movement Komala Jiani Kurdistan in 1942, and continued with the establishment of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) three years later. The KDP demanded an autonomous government within Iran, not an independent state; and they successfully established diplomatic relations with the workers' and peasants' government that had come to power in Iranian Azerbaijan. The KDP then introduced Kurdish as the official language in schools and Kurdish language publications flourished. Hundreds of schools, community and cultural facilities, medical centres and educational centres were created in this short period of time.

Despite this success, or more likely as a result of it, the republic was soon crushed when the Iranian monarchy deployed forces to take down the two popular governments, kill thousands of revolutionary militias and reoccupy the region, bringing back the tyranny of monarchy and crushing the revolutionary movement. This showed that despite the autonomy the Kurds won within the state, the central state was still in ultimate control as soon as relation of forces could turn against liberation movement.

In Iraq liberation efforts have been less successful. In the late 1950s the Kurds, motivated by a vain expectation of self-determination, fully participated in an Iraqi military revolt against the monarchy. It soon became apparent that Kurdish demands would not be met and this led to a full Kurdish revolt beginning in the early 1960s. By 1975, Iran and Iraq had made a deal to subordinate their other political disputes in favour of putting an end to Kurdish resistance and demands for self-determination

in both Iraq and Iran. Thus they worked together to quell Kurdish revolt.

The Saddam regime has also systematically practiced the genocide of Kurdish people, by either waging wars on them, or using by weapons of mass destruction as in the case of Halabjeh. The genocidal gassing and bombing of the people of Halabjeh in 1988 during the Iran-Iraq war was neither an aberration nor a desperate act of a regime caught in a grinding, stalemated war. Instead, it was one event in a deliberate, large-scale campaign called Al-Anfal to kill and displace the predominately Kurdish inhabitants of northern Iraq. The massacre in Halabjeh is one of the most severe examples of Iraq's genocide against the Kurds.

What the US occupation of Iraqi Kurdistan really means

Imperialist involvement in the Kurdish areas has been no better for the Kurds than the situation they're already facing nationally. In fact, the involvement of colonial powers is rooted deeply in the national struggles of the Kurds. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent Treaty of Sevres in 1920, put forward by the Allied Powers (Britain, France, Italy and Japan), is what put 25 million Kurds on the intersection of four nations in the



Kurds in Northern Iraq, April 2003

first place.

Since that time the Kurds have been either conveniently ignored or, more consistently, used as tools in imperialist intervention. Most recently, British Prime Minister Tony Blair used Saddam Hussein's oppression of Kurds as an excuse for US/UK invasion: "under Saddam's rule, Iraq's Kurdish communities have

experienced terrible suffering... The persecution of the Kurds continues today."

Of course the atrocities Kurds face nationally are very real and very serious, but it's easy to see that the US and UK have no real concern for Kurdish oppression. History has shown that these imperialist countries have helped Iran, Iraq and Turkey to crush the Kurdish liberation movements at every turn. The US's and UK's own records acknowledge that their weapons have been consistently used in the Turkish war on the Kurds, including when American "Super Cobra Helicopters", armed personnel carriers and F-16 bombers were integral in the Turkish war on the Kurds. Over \$7 billion worth of weapons have been sold by the US to Turkey over the past decade. The US and UK intention is simply to use humanitarian excuses, no matter how faulty, to establish their own hegemony, keep Kurdish people divided, and of course to further the long run strategy of plundering the Middle East.

The Kurds, of all people, are not about to fall victim to a false promise; they know all too well how quickly the imperialist powers will betray them. During the 1990-91 Arab-Persian Gulf War, the Kurds came to the forefront in world politics as courageous fighters for self-determination. Following the end of the US-led war on Iraq in 1991, the Kurds in the north, with "support" from the US, rose up against Saddam. At this point the US pulled out in favor of keeping Saddam in power, and Baghdad brutally suppressed the uprisings, using massive aerial bombardment. US President George Bush Sr. described Saddam's savagery as an "internal matter." It was only after Saddam had completely defeated the Kurds, and scenes of terrible suffering were broadcast around the world, that US troops set up "safe areas" in the north.

The suppression continues

To the Kurds, the current US occupation of Iraq is no different from 1991. The US has allowed the Kurds to take control of Kirkuk in northern Iraq, but given Turkey's reactions, this control will not likely last. The Turkish government fears the Kurdish control of Kirkuk, because they see it as a potential power base

for building up a stronger Kurdish resistance in Turkey. According to the British newspaper *Mirror* on April 11, 2003, White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer said: "We've been in contact with officials in Turkey as well as free Iraqis in the north and I think it is fair to say that American forces will be in control of Kirkuk." The Kurds are not surprised, "We're being stabbed in the back again," said a number of opposition members recently assembled in Arbil, the main city in Iraqi Kurdistan.

It's clear the US has never supported the Kurdish people's right to national self-determination, or any Kurdish national rights. On the contrary, Washington has tacitly supported the Ankara regime's brutal war against the Kurds in southern Turkey and the Turkish army's invasion of Iraqi Kurdistan. According to a report in the September 5th *Australian*, the "State Department reiterated yesterday that the US recognized Baghdad's sovereignty over Kurd-dominated northern Iraq."

On Sept. 3rd, Mizgen Sen of the London-based Kurdish Information Centre told ABC's *Lateline* that there seemed "no limit" to US hypocrisy. "They claim their objective is to protect the Kurds, but the US and its Western allies did not say anything, and did nothing, when Turkish forces invaded Iraq. Political and economic interests lie behind every move [the US and UK] have made so far... What the US has done will not help the Kurds in any way. The Kurds are very angry ... at the hypocrisy and double standards of the west and the US. The Kurdish issue is not just in northern Iraq: there are over 15 million Kurds living in Turkey -- the largest number of Kurds -- and the repression and harassment there are perhaps 10 times greater than that of Saddam Hussein."

It is obvious, and with historical precedence, that Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria will never hand over Kurdistan. As well, the "humanitarian" powers of the west are terrified of any successful movement for self-determination by a colonized people. The current involvement of the US in Iraq can only mean further domination of the Kurds, either first-hand or through continued military and financial support to the US's Middle Eastern allies, namely Turkey.

Kurdish people all around the Middle East have demonstrated that they are determined to gain their rights by any means necessary. The history of the Kurdish people is a good witness of that. The Kurdish struggle, based on their demand for national rights, is just, humane and legal. The Kurdish struggle must therefore be supported by all working, poor, and oppressed people around the world.

This is the Voice of Iraq: Iraqi People Resist Occupation

By Mike Krebs

"We will give the American troops a few months to leave Iraq. If they do not, we will fight them with knives." – Protestor in Baghdad on April 18th

Despite the claims made during the second week of April that the US-led war on Iraq was "over," the resistance of the Iraqi people and their supporters against the war and military occupation of their country continues. This resistance is sharp evidence that this war is far from over. It also shatters any misconceptions that this war ever had anything to do with the "liberation" of the people of Iraq. In the week following the so-called fall of Iraq, we have seen not only a continuation of guerrilla warfare against the US-led Coalition forces, but also a series of mass demonstrations against the military occupation



Protest in Baghdad against the military occupation of Iraq, April 18th 2003

of Iraq.

Armed Resistance in Iraq

Since this "victory" was declared last week, Iraqi armed resistance has continued in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad. On April 13th, six US soldiers were seriously wounded in a surprise grenade attack near Baghdad.

On April 14th, a fire broke out at the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad. According to the US Central Command, the US Forces came under "significant enemy fire," and the firefight lasted for more than six hours. April 14th also saw Iraqi resistance in the form of an attempted breakout by Iraqi prisoners of war at a detention camp at Umm Qasr in the southeast of the country.

On April 17th, the US Central Command reported continued resistance in both North and South Iraq, including firefights in the cities of Mosul and Basra.

The beginnings of a mass movement against the occupation of Iraq?

As well as armed resistance, the week following the so-called "end" of the war also saw the beginnings of mass demonstrations against the US-UK military occupation of Iraq. Despite the repeated claims in

the media that the Iraqis don't know what's best for them, their conscious response against their country's colonial occupation has been swift. The first of many demonstrations in Baghdad against the US occupation of Iraq happened on April 13th. One Iraqi who participated in this demonstration, Ahmed Aziz al-Hadithi, told a reporter that "One day or another, honest Iraqis are going to force out the Americans, not for the sake of Saddam Hussein, but for the sake of Iraq."

Demonstrations against the military occupation of Iraq continued on April 14th in Baghdad, with Iraqis chanting "Down, down U.S.A! Don't stay, go away!" One Iraqi who was present spoke against the American initiatives to impose a new regime in Iraq to replace the old one, saying "We want to govern ourselves in our own country." Over 20,000 Iraqis also marched in Nassiriya on the same day against the military presence in Iraq, and at least seven Iraqis were killed in Mosul by US troops. According to eyewitnesses, soldiers opened fire when the crowd noisily interrupted the new governor, Mishaan Al-Juburi's pro-US speech.

On April 15th, thousands of Iraqis demonstrated in Nassiriya against the US-sponsored meeting about post-war Iraq. Demonstrations against US military occupation also continued in Baghdad and Kut. In Mosul, four more people were killed and eleven injured when US troops again opened fire on a crowd.

Since these first mass demonstrations, the number of Iraqi people on the streets against the occupation has increased, and daily demonstrations are occurring in different cities in Iraq. On Friday April 18th, at least 100,000 Iraqis took to the streets of Baghdad, carrying banners reading "No to Occupation" and "Leave Our Country." Protestors chanted "No to America, no to Saddam," and called for unity among Iraq's Sunni Muslims, Shiites and Kurds.

The US military's take on Iraqi resistance

None of this continued popular resistance came as a surprise to the US government, who knew quite well that their invasion and occupation of Iraq would be against the popular wishes of the Iraqi people. On April 14th, US Major General Stanley

McChrystal told reporters that "although the major combat operations are over," the US forces were now moving into a phase of "smaller, albeit sharper fights."

Who is the US military engaging in these struggles? If Saddam Hussein's regime is a thing of the past, are we really to believe that those who continue to resist are "Ba'ath Party loyalists" or "Islamic Fundamentalists," as the mainstream media has been claiming? Not according to US Colonel Sinclair. On April 14th, he explained that the current objective of his military force is to "kill all the people who need to be killed." He described those people as "Iraqis that are still trying to offer armed resistance. The rest can surrender or go home." Clearly, the US military knows quite well how broad the level of Iraqi resistance to the occupation is.

Supporting the Iraqi resistance to US-led military occupation

The continued armed Iraqi resistance, the demonstrations against both the military occupation and the US-sponsored plans for post-war Iraq, the Iraqi people's repeated denunciation of both Saddam and the Western occupiers: all of these show that the US and UK governments are clearly not simply waging a battle against isolated Ba'ath Party loyalists and for the 'liberation' of Iraq. They show that the Iraqi people do not welcome the invasion and occupation of their country, and that they will continue to resist until the US and UK military are out of their country for good.



Iraqi women with children brandish their guns as they shout anti-American slogans near Yousifiya, 30km south of Baghdad, March 25th 2003

We need to realize that the Iraqi resistance will continue so long as the unjust military occupation of their country continues. The colonization of the Americas started over 500 years ago, and despite countless defeats, the resistance of Native people against the theft of our land continues. Palestinians have been faced with military aggression and the occupation of their lands at the hands of Israel for over 50 years, and their resistance to this occupation is alive and strong.

It has been said many times that the current international anti-war movement is the "second superpower" with the potential to challenge US imperialism and domination of the world. The Iraqi people themselves, those who are actively using whatever means necessary to resist the occupation of their land, are a crucial aspect of this second superpower. As participants in

the movement outside of Iraq opposing the war and occupation, it is essential for us to support this resistance, to show our solidarity with the Iraqi people as part of a growing international movement against injustice and inhumanity.

When comparing the current anti-war movement to the movement against the Vietnam war of the 60's and 70's, we have to keep in mind that US imperialism would never have been dealt such a blow without the strong resistance the US faced from the Vietnamese people. We must never forget that when a people become the victims of imperialist domination, they are the most important players in any struggle to end that domination. The international anti-war movement cannot "liberate" the Iraqi people any more than the US-led coalition can: our most important task is to support their self-determination, and eventually their self-emancipation.

Iraqi Women and Children Under Fire

By Nasim Sedaghat

The majority of the civilians who suffered from the intense US-UK bombing of the people of Iraq were women and children. The US-UK military briefings are full of claims that this war was "not a quarrel with the Iraqi people", but the reality that is reported from hospitals is proving otherwise. Hospitals around the country reported that they were overwhelmed by the number of women and children casualties.

In their killing campaign against the Iraqi people, the US and UK have used cluster bombs and depleted uranium weapons, which are both banned by UN and international health organizations. Cluster bombs are extremely dangerous, not only at the time of dropping, but also later because they often only partly explode, and, when activated hours or days later, kill even more innocent civilians.

The US-UK also fired thousands of rounds containing tons of depleted uranium (DU) during the first 4 weeks of war in Iraq. Depleted uranium weapons are mainly being used around cities, towns and villages near the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, where the majority of Iraq's population lives (24 million).

Without a doubt, the soil around these areas is heavily contaminated. When Dr. Michael Kilpatrick, a top Pentagon health official, was asked about the health consequence of DU, he simply responded "There's going to be no impact on the health of people in the environment or people who were there at the time."

However, the claims of medical experts and medical scientists clearly differ from those of the Pentagon. A UN report shows that DU resides in soil, air, water and vegetation. Based on the 1991 Gulf War, during which US and its

allies used DU weapons, medical researchers worry that it could again affect civilian populations, especially children and women, if toxic materials reach groundwater used for drinking water and irrigation.

Many experts believe that DU water pollution is likely to occur over time in combat zones in Iraq. The health hazards for women and children will be immense. Hundreds of thousands of women and children who were exposed to DU during the 1991 Gulf War suffered from severe deadly illnesses like cancer. DU weapons contributed to hundreds of thousands of babies born dead or with birth defects. There was also a drastic increase of cancer in children under 5 years old after the Gulf War. This is a catastrophic health problem for women and children, even for generations born after this war.

21st Century Border, No Asylum from the Interests of Business: The Crooked Alliance Between the US and Canada Against Refugees

By Ivan Drury

"We are well on our way to creating a smart border for the 21st century; one that is open to business but closed to terrorists."

- Canadian Deputy Prime Minister John Manley

Two months after the 9/11 World Trade Centre attacks, Canada and the United States signed a 30 point "Smart Border" declaration under the premise of protecting the national security of the US. This agreement was drawn up and signed by Canada's Deputy Prime Minister John Manley and the director of the newly founded American Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Tom Ridge. This agreement marked the beginning of a cross-border, transnational offensive against immigrants and all migrant peoples, particularly people of colour, people of the third world, and most pointedly, refugees of these descriptions. This offensive is not a defense of a country (or countries) under siege, but as an expansion of American and Canadian influence over third world politics, resources and people.

The US Offensive on Refugees: Lists, Profiles, Interviews

On March 17th, three days before the US began its bombing campaign against the people of Iraq, the Department of Homeland Security launched "Operation Liberty Shield." This "multi-department, multi-agency, national team effort" focuses on the monitoring of border areas, ports, waterways and other infrastructure to guard against the passage of non-status people. Most importantly, Liberty Shield increases the US Government's power to detain asylum seekers to an unprecedented level. Liberty Shield mandates the detention of asylum seekers "From nations where al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda sympathizers and other terrorist groups are known to have operated." This includes thirty-three listed countries and two territories that the department has refused to list publicly in full "because it's law enforcement sensitive." The countries and regions that they have listed publicly include: Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Uzbekistan, Morocco, Malaysia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Djibouti, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Syria, Tunisia, Thailand, Yemen, as well as Gaza and the West Bank.

Indeed, every country in the world can be condemned as containing terrorist and terrorist sympathetic organizations that are hostile to the United States. It is consistent with the ongoing US policy of racial profiling that the specifically targeted countries

are all third world countries with large muslim populations and the people targeted are people of colour.

Detentions and Deportations

Operation Liberty Shield mandates that these "potential terrorist" asylum seekers be held in detention from the time of their arrival until their refugee claim is determined. The DHS does not state that women and children are to be exempt from this unilateral detention. This detention "for the duration of their processing period" (DHS) will mean that these people will be detained in prisons, jails and detention camps for a term of anywhere from three months to over a year. When the processing period is complete, the asylum seekers would be either admitted into the US or deported without ever having touched American soil. The US government does not allow asylum seekers legal assistance or any opportunity for legal aid, which means that most of these people will be held in detention without any legal representation. Considering that many of these people are survivors of torture and trauma, this detention will significantly compound their suffering.

In regards to the Operation Liberty Shield detentions, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights state; "Ironically, this plan will result in the US targeting for detention the very people who have stood up to, and in some cases been persecuted and tortured by, the same regimes that the US has singled out for condemnation."



John Manley meets with Paul Cellucci and Tom Ridge in the White House, March 2002

The US and the Department of Homeland Security have launched Liberty Shield in the spirit of the war and occupation of Iraq. They are specifically targeting people's movements that are hostile to American imperialist control of governments, countries and resources all around the world. Liberty Shield is consistent with the US military assault of the people of the world; they must control the flow of displaced and dispossessed people into the US if they are to control the countries asylum seekers are fleeing.

US internal refugee policy is an extension of their international

imperialist strategy. Throughout US operations in the Middle East, Canada's cooperation has not been as important for their interests abroad as this cooperation has been for the establishment of Liberty Shield and other anti-immigrant, anti-refugee operations at home.

Refugees in (and kept out of) Canada

In December of 2002, Deputy Prime Minister John Manley and the Executive Director of the US Department of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge, had the Safe Third Country Agreement passed by the Canadian Parliament. The agreement has not yet come into effect, but asylum seekers in the US, particularly Pakistani Muslims who are being forced to register with the US government, are flooding to the Canadian border in a panic. The Safe 3rd Country Agreement would forbid refugees to come to Canada through the US. The agreement recognizes the US as a "safe country" and says that if an asylum seeker arrives there, they must make their refugee claim there and cannot try to come to Canada for a less repressive refugee claim system.

In Canada, refugees are allowed to apply for legal aid, can receive welfare and social security benefits like health care while their claim is being processed, and now, unlike in the US, are not forced to spend their entire application process in detention. The Safe Third Country Agreement effectively ends these distinctions and forces US regulations upon Canada.

Janet Dench, the Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Refugees, said the Safe 3rd Country Agreement "is likely to give people incentive to cross the border illegally." She added, "The whole agreement is about Canada closing its doors to refugees and saying to refugees, 'you go somewhere else, we don't need you here.'"

In 2001, 60% of the 42,750 refugees who came to Canada arrived through the US. At the time the Safe 3rd Country agreement was drafted (May 2002), Manley noted that 72% of the refugees who had come to Canada so far

that year had arrived through the US. It is expected that the number of refugees coming to Canada through the US will increase as the US tightens its restrictions and increases its detention of asylum seekers. Rudd Lubbers, the UN High Commissioner on Refugees recommended that Canada not "water down its refugee system in the face of pressure from the US."

The US government is threatening to increase its border restrictions and tariffs on trade and goods from Canada if Canada refuses to increase its border restrictions on asylum seekers. The Canadian Government is distinctly choosing between a border that is open to the free flow of money and trade and one that is open to people. They are choosing trade.

The Criminalization of Refugees

With the momentum of the enacting of the repressive Immigration and Refugee Protection Act last year, the Smart Border, the Safe 3rd Country Agreement, the proposed Bill C-18, new Citizenship Act, along with the heavy repression of refugees in the US and accusations of Canada harbouring terrorists, Canada is being flooded with racist, anti-immigrant, anti-refugee propaganda.

On March 13th, Police and Intelligence officers in Ontario demanded funding from the Federal government for a special team to "hunt down" the suspected 30,000 "illegal" immigrants in the Greater Toronto region. In January, the Federal government began plans to document all illegal immigrants and move all detained asylum seekers in Ontario to a "super-jail" in Northern Ontario. The numbers of those detained in 2003 has already proven to be higher than years past. In 2002, an average 440 asylum seekers were detained all across Canada at any given time; in 2003 that average had risen to 543.

Sheila Fraser, the Auditor General of Canada wrote a report released in April on the supposed inadequacy of the detention system in Canada. She commented to the media, "Why would people go through the procedure of trying to arrive legally in this country if they can come in illegally and there's no consequence?" In fact, the consequences are severe. Non-status people in Canada live without health care, without any social safety net, without education or professional development opportunities. "Illegals" live without any rights, under constant fear of arrest, detention and deportation and work in some of the most highly exploitive working conditions for the lowest pay of anyone in the country. The Canadian Centre for Refugees released a response

letter to the racist report from the Auditor General:

Talking about thousands of people being "illegally in Canada" conceals the human face behind the numbers. Many of them have in fact done nothing illegal. They may be refugee families who have been wrongly refused refugee status, with no recourse because the government has not implemented the appeal for refugees. They may not be removable because they come from a country at war or so disrupted that the Minister has temporarily suspended removals. They may be women who have been trafficked into Canada and who are effectively being held in slavery in Canada. They may be people who are contributing positively to the Canadian economy and society. They may be people who are here because their family is in Canada.

Canada stands to gain more by investing in programs to regularize people's status than by spending money deporting them.

Open the Borders to All Asylum Seekers

In 2002, Iraqis topped the list of asylum seekers worldwide at 51,000 people displaced internationally. Over the last three years, Iraqis were the top of the list as well, with 146,000 recognized refugees around the world. As of March 11th, 2003, there are over 400,000 Iraqi refugees recognized worldwide. Of these people, there are hundreds of thousands more who are undocumented and unrecognized. There are still 5,100 Iraqi refugees in Rafha, a refugee camp in Saudi Arabia, who have been there since the first gulf war and for whom there is still no solution after 12 years.

As the role of the Canadian government is to act complicit with the US in the North American attack on the rights and securities of asylum seekers, it is the role and the responsibility of poor and working people in Canada to fight against these regressive legislations. We must fight the Safe 3rd Country Agreement, the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act, Bill C-18, and the Smart Border Agreement. The war on Iraq is the beginning of the US strategy to dominate and control the governments, resources and people of the world. It is crucial that we stand together here and now for the rights and self-determination of Iraqi people, in the Middle East and wherever in the world they are displaced. This is the work of the anti-war movement, of the labour movement, of the women's movement. All poor and working people in Canada must demand an end to all detentions and deportations, and demand that Canada open its borders to all asylum seekers now.

Refugees, Rights, Work and Democracy:

An Interview with Joe Chou, Chair of the Chinese Refugee Rights Council

By Ivan Drury

Joe Chou is the Chair of the Chinese Refugee Rights Council. He is a non-status person who lives in Vancouver. He has been in Canada for three years and his refugee claim has been turned down. He is waiting to hear from Immigration whether his appeals have been granted; if they are not then his choices will be essentially exhausted. Joe works at a grocery store and volunteers with the Chinese Refugee Rights Council.

We did this interview the night of Wednesday, April 9th, 2003 at the Independent Television office on Pandora Street. Joe was there with the CRRC to put together a Mandarin language public service announcement about the recent SARS scare.

Where did the Chinese Refugee Rights Council come from and what are you working on now?

In July last year, new immigrant laws took effect. Victor Wong, from Storefront Orientation Services (SOS) and the executive director of the Vancouver Association of Chinese Canadians (VACC) organized us to talk about the new laws. Throughout August, October and November, we talked about it. The group of us that took shape was mostly people from Mainland China. We decided that we should organize as a group to bring the issue under the new situation to the government.

The Chinese Refugee Rights Council (CRRC) was formed on December 5th, 2002. The group is made up of 99% people from Mainland China. Most of them have been in Canada for just over a year, but some have been here for as long as 6 or 7 years. Most people are 20 to 50 years old and are single, but some are married and some even have kids that were born in Canada. CRRC was formed to focus on lobbying the government because we know that through this new law, most of us have very little chance to stay in Canada. Only 2 – 5% of Humanitarian and Compassionate applications result in the person staying in Canada. Some of these people have skills, others have education and others have been

here a long, long time. Most of us work here and all of us benefit Canadian society. All of us deserve and should get status in Canada. We know that we must organize to lobby the government to get that status for all of us.

Before the committee formed, we took a survey of the Chinese Refugees that we had contact with and found that 95% of the Chinese Refugee community is employed. This percentage is higher than the employment percentage of people with status. We contribute to Canadian society.

What is your background with refugee issues? How do you relate to the struggle for the rights of refugees?



Banner hung during protest at Baxter Refugee Camp in Australia, April 18th 2003.

Basically, I have different political ideas than the government in China. If you ask what those thoughts are and how I came to have them, basically it's a long story. The main thing is democracy, for the people to have democratic decisions in the county. This is not the case in China. I said something in China and they didn't like it and I was fired from my job. People in China can't talk about things, even in serious meetings. In China, you receive serious punishment for speaking out. You get suspended, fired and worse. Some penalties are mild and some are serious. You get your rights limited; you can't apply for party membership, can't apply for some kinds of work, like social work, if you don't meet their requirements. They are against democracy.

I left China and came to Canada and applied for refugee status when I got here. I failed my hearing. The judge gave me some number of points, I can't remember how many, as to why I failed. The first one was that

my political problems were not good enough. The Canadian government doesn't care about my political disagreements, about my belief in democracy. They said that they didn't believe me. In China, you get a "Hukou" card that is your ID card and it tells you where you are allowed to live and work. The Hukou limits how you travel around the country. The Judge that I had for my hearing didn't know how the Hukou works in China. The determination of status is made by one person, and if they say something is not true, then it is not true.

After my claim was denied, I applied for an Immigration



Banner hung during protest at Baxter Refugee Camp in Australia, April 18th 2003.

Review Board review; another class to get refugee status. In December last year, I got a letter from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) that said because of the new Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act, the review I applied for didn't exist anymore. I had my appeal transferred to the Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA) department. They transferred my file there and I am still waiting for the decision. After that, I applied for a Humanitarian and Compassionate Application. I've been here for over three years, so I think I may have a chance. You never know if you'll get it, some cases look strong and fail and others look weak and succeed. They even say that, they say, "Your case looks strong." And then you fail. You never know.

What campaigns and demands is the Chinese Refugee Rights Council pursuing?

more support for us in Iraq than most of the 46 countries that are fully supporting us," noting Ottawa's diplomatic opposition to the war did not align itself with the government's actions.

The majority of Canadians do not support a war on Iraq, therefore the Canadian Government has had to find a way to involve itself in the process while maintaining a politically detached position. Whether it be letting U.S military aircraft carrying troops bound for Iraq stop to refuel and change crews in Newfoundland,

Victor Wong has been asked on behalf of the community to lobby the government to help failed refugee claimants get status. We are demanding that if a claimant has been in Canada for more than three years and have been working and have a good record, then they should get status. We sent a letter to Denis Coderre, the Immigration Minister of Canada, in December asking for three important regularization mechanisms:

1. Non-status residents with three years Canadian residency be eligible for permanent residence status immediately.
2. Non-status residents with less than three years be eligible for a ministers permit until they reach three years eligibility; and
3. A halt to deportations and removals.

There are 1,000 Chinese non-status people in Vancouver and 5,000 to 10,000 total non-status people in Vancouver. These three points would improve the situation for all of these people.

We didn't really get a response from this letter. Victor met with Rob Johnson, an immigration official at the office in Vancouver and he said that the law has just changed and they don't want to change it again. That's all he said.

What needs to be done politically to defend the rights of refugees in Canada?

Refugees should be respected the same as citizens in Canada, no matter what. If they're good people, workers, they have the RIGHT to stay in Canada. Judges and the laws over simplify

the case of refugee claimants. Nowadays, nothing is isolated and just local, its globalized. Things happen in other countries that are created and impacted by developed countries. The situations that refugees run away from are created by developed countries. People have the right to stay in Canada because they are leaving situations created by the developed country they're seeking asylum in.

Some Canadian people misunderstand Refugees because of a bad reputation that has been created, people need to understand this. Refugees want people to understand them but don't want to open up their case publicly because it's a risk. We are trying to get Canadian people to understand refugees. Refugees are good people who are good for Canadian society.

What will happen to you?

I have tried very hard since I got to Canada: working, study, improving my skills, language, learning the culture and customs of Canada, to contribute to society. This should help me. I think it's very reasonable that these kinds of people should stay in Canada. From a humanitarian or from the point of view of the benefit of Canada, these people should stay. I don't know what's going to happen to me, I just try my best.

Any closing comments?

Canada is a very lovely country; I mean the people, the society, and the social system, not the climate or scenery. Even if I leave this country, I still think it's a nice country and I wish Canadians and Canada a bright future.



Protesters march on Baxter Refugee Camp in Australia, April 18th 2003

'The Canadian Govt.' from page 5

the future." The U.S has said it would allow the UN to be play a "vital" role in Iraq, but this role would be limited to humanitarian aid.

During all of this, Canada has increasingly aligned itself with American actions, with Finance Minister John Manley stating that Canada would be willing to commit money to the effort regardless of whether the UN was awarded a leadership position.

With Canada committing increased troops in Afghanistan and demonstrating they will work with the United States regardless of UN participation, American leaders are now quick to point out the links between the two countries. "Canada and the United States are, frankly, inseparable," Powell told a gathering of foreign reporters based in Washington. In a recent speech addressing the issue, U.S. ambassador to Canada Paul Cellucci stated that, "ironically, the Canadians indirectly provide

providing increased troops in Afghanistan as the situation in Iraq escalated, or through its command of a navel force working directly with the United States in the Persian Gulf, Canadian involvement in the war on Iraq has been clear and sustained. What is most concerning is that the Canadian government has demonstrated its willingness to use the "war on terrorism" as a method of intervening militarily in other countries and in working with American foreign policy initiatives.

The Canadian government never planned to act with any peaceful intentions. The consequences of this for people in countries being targeted by America and its allies will be extremely severe if people in Canada do not begin to hold this government fully accountable for its actions. We must not believe the lie that the Canadian government has not been involved in this war from the beginning, and we must demand an immediate withdrawal of all Canadian troops from the Middle East.

'End the Occupation' from page 1

or bigger armed resistance. No people of no country in the world would see their country as being liberated by the force that has killed at least three thousand of their children, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers in a matter of three weeks. No people can feel liberated when tens of thousands of them have been permanently injured and disabled, with hands, legs, and eyes torn out of half-charred bodies stuck in hospital beds with unknown destinies.

No person can accept a "liberation" force that has destroyed hundreds of schools, kinder-gardens, hospitals, electrical power centers, bridges and homes. No human being shake hands with any occupying forces that used cluster bombs and depleted uranium weapons against civilians and contaminated their soil and rivers with highly toxic materials that will poison and mutilate for generations to come. No Iraqi will consider the US army a liberation force when they protect the Iraqi oil ministry with heavy arms, while standing totally indifferent while thugs and

goons loot the national museum of Iraq to pillage the histories and artifacts inside.

No liberation army humiliates and insults a proud nation with seven thousands years of civilization. No wonder the people of Iraq welcomed the US-UK forces with protests and demonstrations with hundreds of thousands young and old on the streets of Iraq. Everywhere the eyes turn, there are banners, large and small, professional looking and hand-scrawled, saying: "US-UK get out of my land", "No Saddam, No US", "Invaders should get out now." What people of Iraq are saying is: No thanks, we don't need your colonial liberation.

Political Defeat and "Nation Building"

Since the beginning of the occupation, Iraq has become a quagmire and permanent nightmare for the US and UK. Just after the invasion, the anti-imperialist struggle continued a hundred times stronger than under Saddam and before the war. What it really means is that Iraqis will not accept a client regime or puppet figure like Ahmed Chalabi, who is a crooked businessman

and a trained CIA man. The US and UK also miscalculated the political situation after their so-called victory, and completely misunderstood the political dynamism of the social forces in Iraq. Above all, the military invasion has created a sense of unity and solidarity amongst the oppressed people of Iraq. To deliver this message clearly to the US and UK, the first Friday prayers after the US-UK occupation were held in most cities jointly by Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims in each others mosques. The social and class forces that were suppressed under Saddam's regime were released by the political energy that is inevitable during and after any war or revolution. The US and UK were surprised and became hopeless through this powerful unfolding of political dynamism.

Three sectors and polars of Iraq started to move to the centre stage of politics: the Kurdish in the north, working people and poor people in the centre, and Shi'ite forces in the south. Although we are still witnessing the early stages of the formation of these political forces, their demands and articulate goals, it is clear that

they might leave no choice for the US but to appeal to politicians and individual leaders of the former regime for help. To retain control, the US will have to build a shaky puppet government in order to install law and order. As far as the US claim for "nation-building", Iraqi people will take it as a joke. It is a sign of the lack of rational mind and the arrogance of US the ruling class to want to start "nation building" in a country that became independent in 1932 and has been formally, structurally and constitutionally a republic since 1958.

Plundering Iraq

In order to start plundering Iraq, the US has no choice but to turn Iraq into a big military base. Expanding the US military presence in the last three weeks is simply a logic of occupation but because the occupying forces will become more visible to the general population, this, by itself, will increase the consciousness of resistance and fight back. Hence, the coming period will be characterized by fighting between these two antagonistic forces. Alas, the US ruling class is not wasting its time, and at the Iraqis' expense, is contracting

hundreds of US firms for the "reconstruction" of Iraq. The US army also stationed itself in all of Iraq's major oil fields in the north, Kurdistan, and in the south of Iraq. Practically, the US has to keep tens of thousands of its soldiers always intact and ready in the cities, outside of cities, in all strategic places, in Kurdistan, meaning (in an ever increasing hostile atmosphere): everywhere.

It is questionable whether the US can survive through this difficult situation. It is even questionable whether the US can consolidate its power and will on the people of Iraq in order to guarantee decades of plundering of their resources. The US has already failed to secure any perspective in Iraq, whether politically or economically. The US position is so weak that their intimidation and threats to Iran and Syria lasted not even one week.

The Anti-war movement

The anti-war movement that responded to the bombing of Iraq was a huge success, a historical success. It created the deepest and widest solidarity that ever

Continued on page 12

'US Out of Columbia' from page 3

Cuts to social services; massive lay-offs (including forcing 40,000 public employees to give up their jobs); tax reform for wealthy families and increasingly imposing sales taxes on working and poor people; price hikes in fuel and transportation costs; the limiting and reducing of pension rights; cutting worker's benefits and increasing retirement age; freezing wages and the raising of work hours by 30 percent without overtime pay: all in all, this puts the already catastrophic social instability of Colombia on the verge of total collapse.

Workers and Peasants fight back

Just three months after the election of President Uribe, the social tension, combined with ever increasing conflicts of civil war, reached a boiling point. In order to prevent social unrest and to limit the capacity of the masses to fight back against the government, Uribe declared a state of emergency. He limited constitutional, civil, and democratic rights guaranteed, however limited, by the constitution.

In response to this major attack by the new Uribe government, trade unions and major mass organizations including peasant organizations declared a national general strike on September 16, 2002. A million working people, unionists, peasants and poor people responded positively to this call. Colombian peasants, 80 percent of whom live in poverty, demanded comprehensive agrarian reform. Landless and poor peasants make up the majority of agrarian workers in Colombia, while fifty-five percent of total agricultural land

belongs to 2 percent of capitalist landholders. As a result of massive resistance, the government was forced to give some, but not all, concessions.

US Strategy

Colombia is strategically important for US interests in Latin America on two fronts, first militarily and second economically. Colombia is the door to South America. Neighbouring Venezuela, Brazil, Peru and Ecuador, it could easily serve as the area's main military ground and base to intimidate, militarily assault and generally crush resistance and confront the growing social instability of the people of the socially and economically turbulent region of Latin America. When considered with Panama, Colombia's northern neighbour, where the US has its largest military presence in Latin America, Colombia becomes even more important strategically.

Colombia ranks third in the world in terms of US military recipients. US military aid to Colombia increased six times since 1997 to an unprecedented 1.5 million dollars per day last year. Just recently, the Bush administration approved a military package of 94 million dollars, providing the Colombian government with 10 additional military helicopters and US military advisors [for] 4,000 Colombian soldiers to train[ed] as rapid-reaction forces. This package is in addition to the \$2 billion deal that the Clinton administration granted to the Colombian government in 2000. This deal, known as Plan Colombia, was made under the pretense of helping to fight the war against drug trafficking. In fact, the deal was made to assist the Colombian army in its further military campaign against two major Colombian guerrilla

movements: the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). FARC-EP and ELN, together with other smaller guerrilla groups, have a membership of more than 30,000, and control almost 40 percent of the country. The human casualties of this 40-year civil war have exceeded 35,000 civilians in just the last decade.

Shift in Strategy

After September 11, the U.S. government began comparing Colombia's armed groups to international terrorist organizations, like al-Qaeda. "The FARC are doing the same thing as global-level terrorists, that is, organizing in small cells that don't have contact with each other and depend on a central command to organize attacks, in terms of logistics and financing. It is the same style of operation as Bin Laden," said Sen. Bob Graham, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, September 29, 2001. The US ruling class saw the situation after 9/11 as a golden opportunity to wage a direct attack on FARC-EP, ELN and all oppressed people in Colombia. Shortly after 9/11, the US government shifted the "war on drugs" campaign to a "war on terrorism" in Colombia. The US defense department, the Pentagon, won permission for this campaign from Congress on the basis of authorization to "advise and assist" Colombian forces on the ground. This is similar to the military campaigns the US conducted in the Philippines and Indonesia.

The US has doubled its military presence in Colombia to 500, and together with the Colombian military, and the government-connected [ultra-rightist] paramilitary, "United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia" (AUC),

they have accelerated their terror campaign since 2002. They have killed 298 unionists, and more than 3,000 people are missing. Hundreds have been kidnapped or assassinated, and more than 3 million people have been displaced from their homes or villages. Outside of Colombia, the most important move by the Bush administration has been to push other governments in the North American continent to list FARC and ELN as terrorist groups. Essential to the US offensive in Colombia is to cut off the lines of communication and legal solidarity work between the people of Colombia and their supporters in North America*.

Oil and Terror

As we have seen in the Middle East and in the case of Iraq, the US is targeting the total market of Latin America in general and the oil market in particular. The US, in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world, is seeking the total hegemony over rival competitors like France, Japan and Germany. Behind the moves in Colombia is the control of South America's rich natural resources generally and oil specifically. The United States, with shifting to explore and also import oil from Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador, is opening an alternative resource for its oil consumption. At the present time, the US is importing 2 million barrels a day, or 20 percent of its total import from this region. The US is planning to increase this export three times more in the next two decades.

Occidental Petroleum, an American company based in California, is operating more than 200 wells in Colombia. Recently this company signed another contract to explore 9000 more square miles for oil. Considering the lack of security

and on-going civil war which these companies are confronting and considering that their facilities are constantly under attack by guerilla organizations, the US is training special forces whose main task is to protect this vital source of income for US oil corporations and the US government. Some areas like Canio Limon oil reserve produce 25 percent of Colombia oil exports. The security and safety of this area, which is operated jointly by Occidental Petroleum and Ecopetrol, Colombia's state-owned oil company, is extremely important. These 4000 specially US trained Colombian troops take care of this area with maximum assault and brutality against the people of this region. With other oil companies, like Texaco-Chevron and Canada's Petrobank, coming to this cheap market for plundering oil rich areas, the military presence will be of vital importance.

Colombia is a country with very rich resources that is trapped by a corrupt government and US imperialist domination. Its current social, economic, and political system has produced nothing but misery, starvation, unemployment, lack of basic health care, drug dealing and civil war. The first step to change this course would be to demand the complete US withdraw from this country. The second step is the cancellation of foreign debt. These two demands are what all poor and working people should support, organize and mobilize around and fight for. These are pre-conditions to move toward dignity and prosperity.

**For further information, read the interview in this issue of Fire This Time on page 3 with Eduardo from the Committee in Solidarity with Colombia.*

人类社会今天面临着种种威胁：战争，经济危机，饥饿，贫穷，犯罪。所有这些，都是由于资本主义者为了在人民身上榨取最大的利润而造成的。为了与这些人类的罪恶作斗争，我们应当建立一个群众基础，提高人们对资本主义制度做斗争的重要性的认识。社会正义斗争联盟的基本宗旨是要把贫困的劳动人民团结起来，不但是本地区的，而且是国际上的。我们应当认识到，没有积极的斗争，我们的目标将毫无意义。由于我们的团结，威胁到统治阶级的利益，他们必然会利用他们所掌握的一切工具，在我们内部产生敌对，并分离我们。

社会正义斗争联盟是一个政治组织。我们的责任是要在卑诗省内壮大贫困劳动人民的社会和政治力量。我们相信，唯一能有效地影响政府行为的途径是通过组织广大人民群众，在工作场所或大街上进行抗议和游行。我们将致力于发动和团结广大贫困的劳动人民反对自由党政府，反对他们的剥削劳动人民的立法和政策。我们将组织和团结低陆平原以及其他地区各社区的最受剥削的广大贫困的劳动人民。这些社区包括：不同种族的社区，移民，难民，所谓非法居留者，低收入工人，残疾人，同性恋者，原居民社区，失业者以及低收入家庭。我们反对任何行式的压迫和剥削：从性别歧视到种族歧视，从殖民主义到各种制度，信仰以及各种使人们相互仇视和敌对的行为。

我们的目标是要通过发动一场浩大的群动运动来打败卑诗自由党政府。这场斗争必须与国际上反对资本主义和帝国主义的斗争联系起来。虽然我们的工作重点在本地，但本质上我们工作的范围是国际间的。支持海外人民的斗争，可以削减资产阶级在国际上的霸权和力量，从而援助加拿大人民的斗争。国际间的团结合作对建立世界正义运动是十分必要的。卑诗省自由党的议程是世界新自由主义计划的一部分。与卑诗自由党作斗争，是与世界新自由主义和资本主义作斗争。因此我们清楚地看到，我们并非单独地斗争，全世界千百万的劳苦人民和我们并肩战斗。在资本主义者和帝国主义的全球化主义下，任何一个本地的斗争都带有国际的特征。每一个国际斗争是本地的，而每一个本地的斗争也是国际的。

社会正义斗争联盟从事，参与和支持各种进步运动和斗争，不论是当前的或是长期的，不论是本地的或是国内的或国际上的。我们的目标是通过教育，参与和直接行动，来消灭社会贫穷和社会不公正。我们寻求唤起每个人的觉悟，引起被压迫人民的社会思索和采取政治行动来达到社会公正。

- Translated by Joe Chou

Movimiento Fire This Time Por Justicia Social Bases de Unidad

Translated by Claudio Ekdahl

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.

Fire This Time Basis of Unity (Farsi)

انروز، انسان و انسانیت، در هر لحظه با جنگ‌افروزی، بحران‌های اقتصادی، تحطی و کرسنگی، قتل و -تبار- نه‌بند می‌گردد. هدف این جنبش - فدا شدن برای آزادی و برابری مردم - توسط سرمایه‌داران برای - آوردن حداکثر سود - به - بد - بدستی و تیره‌روی انسان است. برای خلاص شدن از این وضعیت، ما باید همه نیرو و توانمان را جهت ایجاد بنیادی از زحمتکشان و ستمکشیدگان در تقابل با سرمایه‌داری جهانی و نمایندگان و موسسات مسلط‌شان و همه ابزار و روش‌هایی که آنها برای تفرقه ما به‌کار می‌برند، متمرکز کنیم. اصول اولیه‌ای گروه ما بر اساس اتحاد و همبستگی فعالانه با مردم زحمتکش علیه فقر و بی‌سامانی، چه در سطح محلی و چه در سطح جهانی، تشکیل یافته است. البته، بر همه ما باید روشن باشد که بدون شرکت و حرکت فعال مردم، این اصول منتهی کلمات بیهوده می‌مانند. چرا که استمرار این مبارزه علیه منافع طبقات حاکم محلی و جهانی سرمایه‌داری است، و آنان بی‌شک از هر امکان و وسیله‌ای که در دسترس دارند استفاده خواهند کرد که ما را به جان هم انداخته و ما که تولیدکنندگان واقعی ثروت و پیشرفت جامعه را به دست دیگر سرمایه‌داران می‌دهیم.

Fire This Time - سازمانی سیاسی بود که بر اساس ارزش‌های اجتماعی و عدل اجتماعی توده‌ای از طوایف اتحاد مردم زحمتکش و فقیر برای ایجاد سازمانها و ارگان‌های توده‌ای آنان است. ما مدغمیم با راه‌های عملی، قابل‌امعان در جهت متوقف ساختن عملیات دولت لیبرال مرتزقه سرمایه‌داران، حقوق مردم در زمینه‌های اقتصادی، اجتماعی و سیاسی، و اقدامات نژادپرستانه سرمایه‌داری آن، برقرار ساختن ارگان‌های توده‌ای و مستقل مردم می‌باشد. ما با هر گونه استثمار و استعمار، و عقاید نژادپرستانه، سکسیم، ضد همجنس‌گرایی، و هر گونه ایده‌های که شکاف و بدبینی را در صفوف زحمتکشان و ستمکشیدگان تشدید کرده و مانع اتحاد انقلابی آنان گردد در اساس و بنیان مخالف بوده و علیه آنان مبارزه می‌کنیم. سازمان ما متعهد است که با شرکت در مبارزات کارگران، زنان، جوانان و تمامی ستم‌دیده‌گانی، که متحمل زبان‌های مالی و حقوق انسانی و دموکراتیک گردیده‌اند، صفوف آنان را مستحکم نموده و از این طریق، چالش و بدیل اساسی در مقابل سیاست‌های ضد مردمی دولت لیبرال بریتیش کلمبیا، که اقتدار ضربه‌پذیر جامعه، از جمله پناهنده‌گان، مهاجرین غیر سفیدپوست، زنان، جوانان، معلولین، بومیان کانادا، همجنس‌گرایان، بیگانگان و خانواده‌های نادرآمد را هدف قرار داده، ایجاد کنیم. هدف اساسی ما در این مرحله، اتحاد عمومی مردمی و حلیم برای برکنار کردن دولت لیبرال بریتیش کلمبیا است.

ما سرمایه‌داریست و علیه امپریالیسم جنبه. سازمان و ضرورتاً، از هر حرکت انقلابی بی‌الفاظی استعمار و امپریالیسم پشتیبانی می‌توانیم. چرا که همبستگی بین‌المللی، مبارزه همگانی لازم برای ایجاد یک حرکت جهانی در جهت برقراری عدالت اجتماعی را سهل و آسان می‌سازد. به ما پیوسته

- Translated by Nasim Sedaghat

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 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.

End the Police Harassment of the Secwepemc Peoples!

The RCMP Target the Native Youth Movement and the Skwelkw'elt Protection Centre Defenders

By Ivan Drury

On Tuesday, April 8th, the RCMP Emergency Response Team (RCMP-ERT) executed simultaneous raids of the homes of Native Youth Movement, Westcoast Warriors Society (NYM) members. Three houses, a trailer home and two workplaces were stormed, doors kicked in and searched for "weapons" and "incriminating evidence". These NYM members have been actively involved in the defense of Aboriginal Rights and Title in the Skwelkw'elt Territories known as the Interior of British Columbia.

Since the Sun Peaks resort, established in 1992 by Nippon Cable and Delta Hotels, began its government-sponsored \$70 million expansion project in 1997, they have been met with consistent and mounting resistance from the Secwepemc (Shuswap) people. The Sun Peaks Resort is situated on Secwepemc Territory known as Skwelkw'elt. The Secwepemc people have never given up the title, sold, released or ceded Skwelkw'elt Territory to the Canadian settler government. By Canadian law, these developers must first consult, obtain consent and accommodate the Secwepemc People's interests before the expansion of Sun Peaks can begin. Neither Nippon Cable, Delta Hotels nor any level of the Canadian Government have attempted to enter discussion or gain permission for the Sun Peaks development. On April 8th, the RCMP intervened on behalf of the developers of Sun Peaks to further the Canadian Government's agenda to destroy indigenous culture and resistance and to displace indigenous people throughout Canada.

In the struggle against this occupation, theft of land and destruction of resources, 54 Secwepemc people and their supporters have been arrested. On April 8th, two NYM members were arrested in the raid of their homes and swelled that count to 56.

In the April 8th raid, the RCMP seized

computers, papers, files, computer disks, camcorder cassettes, phone books, and email lists. At one raid, in Nuxalt Territory (Bella Coola), the RCMP took pictures of the inside of the home of Aloosta Nuxalkmc (an NYM Warrior), arrested another NYM Warrior, "Hawk" and held him without charges and then proceeded on to Nuxalkmc's workplace to seize two computers and more phone books.

At the Neskonlith Indian Reservation (outside Chase), the RCMP-ERT stormed the house of NYM members with M-16 machine guns and a blank warrant. They corralled everyone in the house together and searched them, forcing women to lift their shirts before the male officers.

In all of these police actions, the focus was the collection of information. This information, namely contact information and communications, has been targeted to enable the RCMP's monitoring and control of the native sovereignty movement and, specifically, the Native Youth Movement throughout Canada and North America.

These sorts of actions by the Canadian government and their police forces are not uncommon. The maintenance of the rights of business and developers over indigenous people extends back to the very beginnings of colonization and the birth of Canada. The RCMP are attempting to criminalize this resistance in order to break indigenous struggle and resistance movements throughout BC and all of Canada.

The battle between the Secwepemc Peoples and the Sun Peaks Resort is an issue of land and right to self-determination that is a key struggle for all poor and working people. The Federal government, the Provincial government and the RCMP are fighting to retain their control of the land, resources and politics in BC without any recognition of their own laws. All poor and working people must struggle in solidarity alongside the Secwepemc people for all charges to be dropped against Secwepemc Peoples

May Day, the International Workers Holiday

In 1884, in Chicago, the fifth trade union congress decided that from the first of May 1886 on, people would work 8 hours a day. From 1886 to 1889, there were many strikes in the USA on the first of May. May 1, 1886 saw national strikes in the United States and Canada for an eight hour day. In Chicago, police attacked striking workers, killing six people.

The next day, at a demonstration in Haymarket Square to protest the police brutality, a bomb exploded in the middle of a crowd of police, killing eight of them. The State of Illinois arrested eight anarchist trade unionists in attempt to frame up the workers who were fighting for the eight hour day, and four of these workers were executed. In Paris in 1889, the International Working Men's Association (the First International) declared May 1st an international working class holiday in commemoration of the Haymarket Martyrs.

May Day commemorates the historic struggle of working people throughout the world, and is recognized in most western countries, except the United States and Canada.

We would like to dedicate this issue of Fire This Time to the great working women and men of Iraq who, under whatever regime, with their work and effort, created life and wealth for people of Iraq. We salute the workers of Iraq who heroically worked under the extremely difficult conditions of sanctions, war, bombing and destruction by the US and UK, and continued to work and did not stop until their means of work were destroyed by the savage and uncivilized US and UK military machine. We will follow the tradition of their heroic resistance to the US and UK occupation of Iraq.

- Fire This Time

UPCOMING EVENTS

FIRE THIS TIME Public Meeting

April 28th at 6 PM
IWA Hall in Vancouver
2859 Commercial Drive
(Commercial and 13th)

Public Meeting on the War on Iraq and its Implications

Sunday April 27, 2003
3:30 to 5:30 P.M.

Killarny Community Centre
Organized by the South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy

Berenice Celeyta, Colombian Trade Unionist, to speak about resistance to privatization of public services to Colombia

Monday, April 28 - 12:00 noon
Maritime Labour Centre,
Boardroom # 2

Cost: \$10.00 per person (for the lunch).

Call Angela at the VDLC 254-0703 to reserve a place at this lunch.

Dr. Helen Caldicott - The New Nuclear Danger

Monday, April 28, 7:30 pm

St. Andrews-Wesley Church

Suggested donation: sliding scale \$5 to \$20

Open the Borders Rally

Saturday, May 3rd, 12:00

At the Peace Arch Border

Crossing

Buses will leave from: Grandview park:10:30,

Surrey Shuttle at 11:00 & 11:30, courtesy of Coast

Mountain Bus Co. and CAW Canada

Organized by No One Is Illegal

- Vancouver:

email: noii_van@hotmail.com

tel: 604-682-3269 box 7051

From Baghdad to Peace Country, a Sherry Lepage film.

Wednesday, May 7

7:30 pm

Plaza of Nations Theatre

Doors at 7:00 pm, admission is free.

Presented by The National Film Board, the Youth Millennium Project and StopWar.ca

Day of Defiance: Fight the Cuts!

Friday May 23rd at Noon

Burrard Skytrain Station.

For more info: 604-215-1434

lmcslj@resist.ca

Please Donate to the Fire This Time Newspaper!

Fire This Time receives no sustained funding, and we rely on donations from supporters to keep this newspaper going.

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'End the Occupation' from page 10

existed in the history of war and revolution. Since October, millions and millions of people came to the streets to fight against this unjust war. People who participated in these mass mobilizations came from all sectors of society. From the point of view of diversity, it was unique in the history of struggle.

For the first time, people of all continents and all worlds, whether first world or third world, protested on the streets and watched each others' action through hundreds of satellites and millions of televisions. The people of the world have never been so close to each other. This consequently elevated and improved the confidence of the masses in themselves and their sisters and brothers around the world.

Although this movement could not stop the war and destruction of Iraq, it decisively slowed the brutality of the imperialist forces, and forced them to be cautious about what they were doing. This gigantic anti-war movement truly forced the imperialist ruling class to change direction and become less

offensive.

This movement created a new radicalization and consciousness among the masses, and especially amongst young people. This is a new consciousness with potential anti-capitalist direction because it is developing on two powerful motions and dynamics: first, the anti-globalization movement, and second, the anti-war, anti-imperialist movement.

Overall, this movement changed the relation of forces on the world level more in favour of oppressed people. The anti-war movement is just at the beginning of its road. This movement can grow and become stronger if its organizers become more aware of the development of the political dynamism of anti-imperialist sentiment, and can transform it into a powerful mass movement for social change. To start the second phase and help the growing momentum, it is necessary to focus on the self-determination of semi-colonial countries and educate and mobilize masses everywhere on that basis, whether it is in solidarity with the people of Iraq, Palestine, or Colombia.