

FIRE THIS TIME

The Newspaper of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice

Issue 5 - June 2003

www.fire-this-time.org

FREE



The War on Iraq is not Over End the Occupation, Self-Determination!

By Ali Yerevani

"The war in Iraq is not over: There are extraordinarily complex politico-military missions to confront. This is particularly true in the north, where some substantial Iraqi forces appear to remain and where the political situation among various players -- Kurdish, Turkish, Iranian and Syrian -- remains complex, dynamic and opaque."

At first glance, many readers might think that the above sentence is from an activist or a progressive participant in the antiwar movement. In fact, it was taken from an article by Dr. George Friedman, which appeared in *The Stratfor Weekly* 10 April 2003, called "After Iraq: The Ongoing Crisis." Stratfor is certainly not a leftist/antiwar institution or group, but a professional capitalist institution, whose job is to analyze the social, political, economic, and even military situation around the world, then give advice to corporations and ruling class institutions on how to see and plan around these problems in

advance.

The point of quoting from Stratfor is that, if imperialist think tanks and their analysts admit that the crisis which lays ahead is huge, and that the war in Iraq will continue as long as the occupation is imposed, why do some trends in the antiwar movement speak and act as though we have lost the battle completely? The war is *not* over, not just because the US imperialist ruling class has a long-term strategy of dominating the world market or oil resources in the Middle East, but because the resistance of the Iraqi people to this occupation and domination has already created problems for the US and put them in an awkward position.

Iraqi Resistance Continues

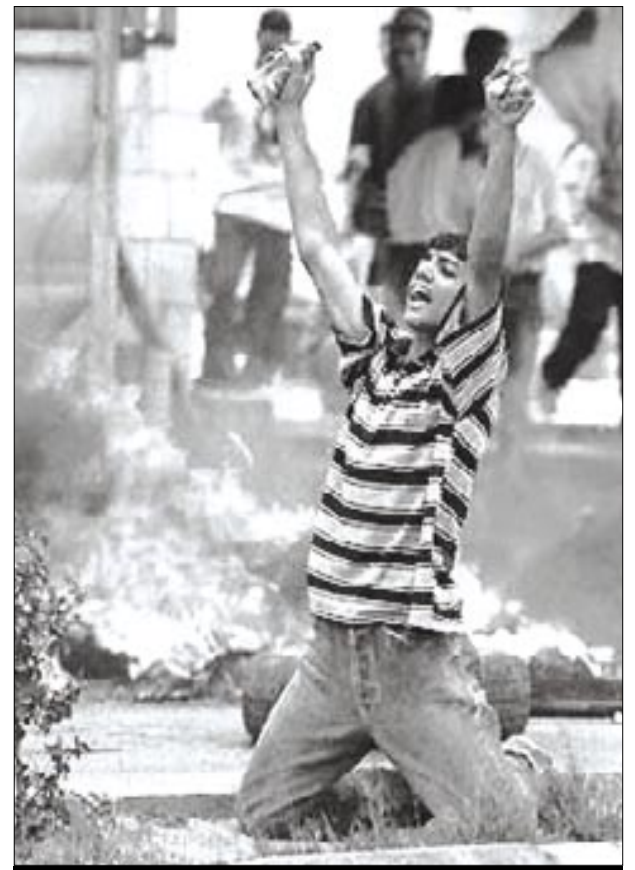
According to US military statements, both political and armed resistance, rather than declining since the occupation of Iraq, has actually gone up dramatically. On June 6, there was a report that one US soldier was killed and five more were injured in a grenade attack in Faluja (near

Baghdad). Two other US soldiers received gunshot wounds in another incident in Faluja. In total, more than 25 US soldiers have died since May 1, when George Bush announced the end of military operations and US "victory" in Iraq.

Since the occupation of Baghdad, there have been numerous demonstrations against the occupation in Baghdad and in other major cities. Some were up to one million, some up to tens of thousands, and the latest one in Basra on June 9 saw more than 100,000 people demanding to govern their city by their own elected authority and an end to the occupation of Basra and Iraq. The main slogans, which demanded "US out of Iraq" and "no to occupation," have been combined everywhere with the word "resistance."

In light of this new situation, the US army spokesperson said last week that military leaders decided to triple the number of soldiers within the different

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Asylum: Low Wages or Detention The Real Meaning of 'National Security'

By Ivan Drury

Every piece of immigration, refugee and border security legislation that has been passed since September of 2001 has mentioned or been based on the necessity of protecting "Canadians" from the threat of further "terrorist" attacks. These bills and laws (the Anti-terrorist legislation of Bill C-36, passed in December of 2001; the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act, passed in June of 2002; the Safe

Third Country Agreement of late 2002; and the now proposed Citizenship Act, Bill C-18) clearly define what "Canadian" means to the Liberal government, and which Canadians it seeks to protect. This definition excludes the very people who make up the majority of the workforce currently and increasingly in the years to come. The Canadian Government is seeking to create a type of apartheid, based along lines of race first and nationality or citizenship second, to control

and exploit the coming immigrant and refugee generations of workers.

In fact, the primary social force we must look at to explain the crackdown on immigrants and refugees is the growing need for immigrants for the Canadian economy. While Canada has always been a country of immigrants and reliant on immigrant labour, the workforce in Canadian cities is becoming increasingly older and moving closer to retirement as a whole. The situation is even worse in rural areas such as in the Prairies, where wages and livelihood have fallen to such a level that there has been a uniform flight of young people out of resource towns and areas to cities and university towns. All areas of the Canadian workforce are entering a time of dependence on immigrant and migrant labour as a cheap and exploitable pool of workers.

What "Canadian" Means to the Canadian Government

Earlier this year, Federal Immigration Minister Denis Coderre stated that by 2007 Canada will rely completely on immigration for its workforce. In May, George Abbott, the BC Liberal Minister of Immigration, announced the development of a program with the Federal Liberals

to get more "skilled", English speaking, young immigrants into Vancouver to fill the imposing gap of young workers. Meanwhile, the BC Liberals are planning to cut legal aid, essentially promising to deny legal aid to immigrants and refugee applicants, a move that would greatly restrict access to asylum for refugees and to legal immigration for migrants who cannot afford lawyers of their own.

The Ontario Tory government recently announced its re-election campaign on the backs of immigrants and refugees. They plan to force immigrants to settle outside of Toronto, to seek power from the Federal government to exclude "criminals and terrorists" from Ontario; to deny legal aid to refugee and immigrant claimants and to crack down on improper use of health services by "illegal" immigrants. Why is the same government that is crying for an immigrant work force systematically denying poor migrants and asylum seekers access to the legal wage market of Canada?

What "Canadian" Means to the Labour Market

According to Statistics Canada's 2001 census "the working age population [is] increasingly made up of older workers." The median

age of the population of Canada has reached an all time high; where the median age in 1966 was 25.4 years old, in 2001 it had risen to 37.6 years. Stats Can explains, "The increase in median age is one of many indicators that the nation's population is aging, a development that has implications for the labour force, economy, social services and health care systems."

While Stats Can released no statistics regarding the ages of immigrants, they did state that of visible minorities total in Canada, the vast majority are foreign born. They also stated that 18% of the Canadian population as a whole is foreign born, the highest it has been in 70 years. So while the working population of Canada is aging at an alarming rate, 73% of all "visible minorities" in Canada are under the age of 45 and 73% of all "visible minorities" are foreign born.

The Canadian workforce and the Canadian economy are already incredibly dependent upon immigrants. When Coderre refers to the coming dependence, he is actually referring to the coming dominance of the workforce by foreign-born people. In fact, he is referring to the present need for

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'The War is Not Over'

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regions of Iraq with the aim of stifling attacks on the US forces. This came after many violent demonstrations and several guerrilla attacks on US troops happened in Baghdad and in other towns and cities.

There is no doubt that this is just the beginning. In issue # 4 of Fire This Time, we said that the only way for the US to survive in Iraq is to deploy hundreds of thousands of soldiers in order to turn Iraq into a large army base, since the confrontation is inevitable and the criticism of the US occupation of Iraq is gaining more momentum every day.

Even US-designated figures and politicians within Iraq have raised their voices in criticism towards the US policies in Iraq. According to an AFP report, "the groups, selected to form the basis of the first government in the post-Saddam Hussein era, believe that the US is wielding far too much control in domestic issues, and allowing them little room for maneuver. Washington's naming of US advisors to supervise key ministries has provoked outrage among the different groups wishing to play a role in the future government. They have wasted no time in criticizing what they consider as an unjustified intervention in their nation's political life."

Jalal Talabani, the Kurdish leader and head of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, whose organization helped the US occupation of northern Iraq, recently stated that "the US plan to temporarily place Iraqi oil revenues in the hands of the Anglo-American coalition, as opposed to the UN, constitutes a threat to the nation's sovereignty. This demonstrates that the United States and Britain are ignoring the promises that we have heard on so many opportunities."

Shameful Lies and Scandals

Lt. Gen. James Conway, commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, was asked last week why his Marines failed to encounter or uncover any of the weapons of mass destruction that US intelligence had warned them about. He said plainly and professionally that, "We were simply wrong. It was a surprise to me then, it remains a surprise to me now, that we have not uncovered weapons." Of course what he meant was any presence of weapons of mass destruction. He said later, "believe me, it's not for lack of trying. We've been to virtually every ammunition supply point between the Kuwait border and Baghdad,

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the Canadian government and its business partners to set legislation that is able to control this growing immigrant population.

Immigrant workers, and workers of colour in general, work the lowest paid, most dangerous and least secure jobs in Canada. With the coming domination of the workplace by immigrants and people of colour, this systemic racism is threatened and the automatic positioning of people of colour at the bottom of the labour market is shaken up. To maintain the racist status quo of Canadian society, Coderre and the Canadian ruling class are seeking to further divide and specify restrictions on workers on the basis of not only colour, but of citizenship and country of origin. They are making this attack against all immigrants, whether nationalized or not, but also against all workers. They are carrying out this attack in the same way they carry out all attacks,

Safe Injection Site Opens in Vancouver

By Shannon Bundock

On April 7, 2003, the day "Project Torpedo" was launched by the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), an interim "safer" injection site and nighttime drop-in centre for drug users opened in the downtown eastside (DTES) of Vancouver. The peer-based site, which is run by the Harm Reduction Coalition, is staffed by volunteers, including a nurse. It was opened in response to the aggressive new policing strategy and the lack of basic services, both of which are threatening the safety of drug users in the area. The site is intended to be an interim measure to alleviate the ongoing high rate of drug overdose and infection resulting from people injecting in back-alleys and alone in hotel rooms.

According to the Canada HIV/AIDS Legal Network, in 1999 over one third of the estimated 4,190 people who contracted HIV were injection drug users. Over 60 percent of the approximately 4,000 yearly new Hepatitis C infections are related to injection drug use. The number of deaths from drug overdose is equally alarming. In BC alone, more than 2,000 people have died from drug overdose since 1992, and overdoses have been the leading cause of death among people aged 30 to 49 in the province for five years in a row. The crisis in the DTES is an explicit example of what is happening to drug users all across the province as a result of criminalization and lack of essential services.

but they're simply not there." This proves the shameless lies and fabrication of facts by the US and UK governments and their executives like George Bush, Collin Powell and Tony Blair, who were constantly up in arms in every single media about the "imminent threat" posed by Iraqi chemical or biological weapons, and if only this falls in the hands of terrorists like Al-Qaeda, etc.

What was so important about waging war on the Iraqi people? Why was it necessary to kill thousands of people, destroying thousands of homes, schools, parks, hospitals, roads, water systems, libraries and research centres? What uncultured, savage-minded people can commit this cruelty against one of the greatest human civilizations on earth, the same civilization for which Hammurabi declared the first

by targeting the most vulnerable elements of the working class, in this case: refugees.

The Myth of National Security

These attacks are being carried out under the guise of "national security" in the face of the September 11 attacks, and very much in partnership with the US's brutally repressive anti-refugee laws. All attacks that are leveled at refugees are done in such a way that they are immediately transferable to all immigrants.

The short-term goal of such legislation is to terrify and to control the immigrant population in Canada while establishing restrictions on what sorts of people are allowed into Canada as immigrants or refugees.

The mid-term goal is to create a heavily exploitable workforce of "illegals" or non-status people such as exists in the US at an estimated mass population of 10 million. The Center for Immigration Studies in New York estimates that 1 in every 10 people in

Safe injection sites and heroin maintenance programs are part of the first and most preliminary steps in addressing drug use. "Clearly, safe injection facilities are not the only answer to the complex problems associated with drug use," says Ralf Jürgens of the Canada HIV/AIDS Legal Network, "but it is unacceptable that preventable harms such as HIV infection, Hepatitis C infection, and overdosing continue at alarming rates. In the face of a significant health crisis affecting both people who use drugs and the wider community, Canada cannot sit by, refusing to implement this reasonable harm reduction measure..." Ultimately, harm reduction, safe fixing sites and heroin maintenance programs are a matter of basic health care. The independent establishment of a safe fixing site is simply responding to the crisis with the most basic survival level of health care.

Under the BC Liberals, drug users are facing continued and escalated criminalization from the VPD through "Project Torpedo". In a field study conducted in recent weeks, Human Rights Watch documented cases of police officers beating and otherwise mistreating drug users in custody, conducting public strip searches, and using petty allegations such as jaywalking to justify stops and searches. The report also documents a significant reduction in the use of needle exchange programs and other life-saving services related to drug users fearing abuse

and harassment from police. The most significant effect of attacking drug use through criminalization is the ultimate result of rising death rates among users. In the context of the BC Liberals' overall political strategy the attacks are directly in line with escalating assaults on all poor and working people in the province.

The safe injection site, which is still running, was set up out of necessity, and as Murray Turnbull, a member of the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users, said, "We are forced to do this safe injection site for ourselves by ourselves because all layers of the government are unwilling to do what they promised they would do."

Access to dignified health care for all people in BC, including harm reduction measures like safe fixing sites and heroin maintenance programs, is a basic necessity. Once we can establish health care programs that effectively meet the needs of all people in the province, including drug users, then we can move on to question what harm reduction and health care really means. All people in BC must demand immediate and dignified needle exchanges, safe fixing sites and heroin maintenance programs so that the most sick and beaten people in the province can stand up. Then we can all stand together and fight for the essentials of our survival: food, housing, fair and livable employment, and an end to the criminalization of drug use, drug users and poverty all together.

written code of laws and the first laws of justice in human history almost four thousand years ago?

Two other scandals that are under investigation are 1) reported of cases of torture, rape, and sexual abuse of Iraqi men and women in the last three months, and 2) the latest Washington Post and CNN report that the Bush government put pressure on the CIA so that its report on prohibited weapons in Iraq and that country's alleged links with terrorism would be in line with White House political interests.

Next Target: Iran

The Washington Post reported last month that the Bush administration has cut off contacts with the Iranian government, and appeared prepared to begin an aggressive policy of trying to destabilize it. Since its

swift victory in Iraq, the United States has increased the attack on its old foe Iran, which it accuses of hiding fugitive Al-Qaeda members, backing terrorism and trying to develop nuclear weapons.

Iran is definitely an obstacle for complete US domination of the Middle East. Iran is an independent country, and is pursuing its own interest according to its own national need. Iran is also a country with a population of 70 million and military a military force in the region.

But, above all, to many Middle Eastern people and Muslims Iran still represents the idea of anti-imperialism and resistance against the colonialist world. Not because the Iranian ruling class is revolutionary or

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This is the newspaper of the
**Fire This Time Movement
for Social Justice**

www.fire-this-time.org

June 2003

Issue 5

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

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This newspaper could not have been possible without the generous contributions from our supporters.

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Legislating Away Workers Rights: The BC Liberals' Attacks on Employment Standards

By Mike Krebs

In May 2003, the final changes made to the Employment Standards Act by the BC Liberals under Bill 48 came into effect. Bill 48 was passed in May 2002, and made sweeping changes to employment standards. These changes further undermined the rights of working people in BC and made it more difficult for workers to defend what rights they do have.

Although the provincial government claims that these changes promote "flexibility" for employees and employers alike, these laws simply put more power in the hands of employers to abuse workers, and actually mean less flexibility for the poor and working people who are under attack by the provincial government.

Keeping workers uninformed about their rights

Even though this legislation was passed during the 2002 previous parliamentary session and phased in during the past year, many working people remain completely unaware that changes were even made, unless of course they were faced with a boss who is clearly informed about the many new ways to exploit workers and deprive them of decent living standards.

One reason for this lack of information lies in the legislation itself. Under the old Act, employers were required to display a poster supplied by the Employment Standards Branch which provided information about the various rights of



Members of the Canadian Farmworkers Union picketing for better working conditions, 1984

workers (minimum and maximum hours per day, rules on overtime, scheduling requirements, etc.). Under Bill 48, this requirement was eliminated, removing what was a valuable tool for workers to know their rights when faced with a potential violation of employment standards.

It's a hard-knock life: bringing child labour back to BC

With the final changes to the Employment Standards Act now in effect, employers can hire children between the ages of 12 and 15 without any special permission from the Employment Standards Branch. Under previous employment standards, any employer who wanted to hire

someone under 15 had to apply to the Employment Standards Branch for a permit. Now, only a written note of permission from the child's parent or guardian is required. According to Graham Bruce, the BC Liberal Minister of

Skills Development and Labour, "the way government handled permits in the past was a clear case of over-regulation. We had complex rules that didn't do a lot to protect children's interests."

But how can making it easier for children to start work when they are 12 as opposed to 15 have anything to do with "protecting their interests?" Laws prohibiting child labour have been fought for all over the world for over a century to protect young people from businesses who wish to take advantage of their marginal position in society to exploit them for lower wages.

By introducing Bill 48 alongside the slashing of welfare rates, axing tens of thousands of jobs, cutting health care, and lowering the minimum wage, the BC Liberals have ensured that many families will have no choice but to hold down as many sources of income as possible. The BC Liberals' definition of "protecting children's interests" means creating a situation where more and more families are forced to send their children into the workforce to survive.

More hours, less pay, and an end to work scheduling

Some of the other important changes to the Employment Standards Act that were brought in through Bill 48 deal with minimum workdays and overtime pay. Claiming that the changes will increase "flexibility," the BC Liberals have lowered the minimum four-hour day down to two. This especially helps businesses in the service sector, who can bring people in for two hours to work during rush periods and then send them home.

Bill 48 also makes it more difficult for workers to qualify for overtime, and allows overtime to be calculated over four weeks instead of daily or weekly, if the employer and employee "agree" to a balancing agreement. Clearly, in most situations, when workers are faced with an "agreement" like this, they have no choice but to accept the terms their employer sets out for them or risk either a loss in hours or outright dismissal.

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Justice for Adil Charkaoui!

By Ivan Drury

An excerpt from the letter requesting support from the Justice Coalition for Adil Charkaoui

Adil Charkaoui, aged 30, a landed immigrant originally from Morocco and the father of a young son, was recently nabbed in a police and security operation on the streets of Montreal, and is currently being held in detention under a so-called CSIS "Security Certificate". Charkaoui is suspected of having links to members of Al-Qa'ida. However, there has been no evidence presented by the Canadian State to prove the allegation. Not providing evidence is a practice allowed under Canada's post-September 11th "security" laws. Turning commonly accepted judicial practice on its head, Charkaoui is considered guilty until proven innocent. The Justice for Adil Charkaoui Campaign formed in Montreal in a matter of days after his abrupt arrest. The Campaign - an alliance of progressive Muslim groups, refugee and immigrant rights organizations, and the Charkaoui family -- demands a fair trial for Charkaoui and for the immediate end of the "Security Certificate" under which he is being held.

Letter of support from Fire This Time

Adil Charkaoui is one of over 500 immigrants and refugees across Canada being held in detention and awaiting

deportation at this moment. Adil's case, however, is of great importance to the defense of the rights of immigrants and refugees. The federal Liberals have adopted a strategy that has been perfected in the US: a strategy of terrorizing immigrant and refugee communities of colour under the auspices of "national security."

Particularly targeted in this assault have been people from the Middle East and Muslims. The federal Liberals have passed bills such as the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Bill C-36, and the Safe Third Country Agreement as part of the re-birth of a distinctly racist Canadian order. This repression of migrant people finds its precedence only in the segregation and dehumanization of Indigenous people in Canada and the semi-slavery status of early Chinese immigrants.

The use of "Security Certificates" to arrest, detain, and secretly attempt to deport landed immigrants and refugees like Adil Charkaoui is not only racial profiling, it is the criminalization of immigrants, refugees, non-status people and, specifically, Arabs and Muslims in Canada.

Fire This Time condemns this attack on the rights and securities of Adil Charkaoui as an attack on all immigrants, refugees, and ultimately, on all working and poor people in Canada.

WE DEMAND:

1. That Adil Charkaoui be released immediately, along with all those who are being held under security certificates.
2. That Adil Charkaoui not be deported.
3. That Adil Charkaoui be allowed due process: the right to a fair trial, the right to know what he is charged with, the right to hear evidence against him and the right to defend himself in court.
4. That the secretive and anti-democratic Security Certificate mechanism be abolished immediately.
5. That Canada stop using scapegoats to prove to the Bush administration their commitment to security issues.
6. That Canada stop the ongoing racist harassment of Muslims and Canadians of Middle Eastern and Arabic heritage.

If you want to write a statement of solidarity and support for Adil Charkaoui please email it to - justiceforadil@riseup.net

For more information, see: www.montrealmuslimnew.net/adilfile.htm.

'Fortress America' and Deportation

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"America is not a fortress." - US President George Bush

The tightening of restrictions on immigration, refugee claims and border "security" immediately makes for more illegal entries and a greater presence of illegal immigrants in the country as a whole. In the US, a great deal of effort has been put into the restricting of access for migrants attempting to cross the Mexican border. Between October and mid-May of 2003, San Diego border patrol agents stopped 64,293 undocumented migrants, a number up 9.5% from a comparable period one year earlier.

An estimated 2,000 people have died crossing the Mexican / American border in the last five years. Three hundred and twenty illegal migrants died crossing the border last year and a hundred and twenty-three people* have already died since the beginning of the fiscal year of 2003 (October). This summer promises to make this one of the worst

years in history for such unjust and unnecessary deaths.

In 2002, the US accepted only 27,000 refugees, the lowest number in 30 years. Internally, since 9-11, the US passed the Patriot Act, created the Department of Homeland Security and launched Operation Liberty Shield to forbid passage to asylum seekers and detain and deport all those who were already on American soil. In the three months immediately following 9-11, the US quickly arrested and detained 762 asylum seekers and non-status people and declared them "special interest" to the FBI for suspicion of terrorist connections. All but one of these people was cleared of all terrorist connections. They were held in secret for an average of 8 months without being told what they were being charged with, and then finally charged with minor immigration violations. 505 were eventually deported.

The Department of Homeland Security enlisted mandatory registration for Pakistani Muslims (one in three of the

"special interest" detainees were Pakistani) and effectively pushed an estimated 3,000 Pakistanis to the Canadian border to claim refugee status there. All of this, plied with international conflict and imperialist aggression that is guaranteed to create millions of new refugees, has presented Canada with a reserve workforce that desperately needs somewhere to go.

Legislation in Action

Canada has responded by mimicking the actions of the US. Restrictions on those trying to get into Canada have been

imposed by the extra stationing of agents at foreign airports to check documents and deny passage to those who do not have passports and those who are found to be carrying falsified documents. This is being done despite the reasoning of why people might be carrying such false documents, in denial of asylum seekers fleeing torture or execution and instead sending them back to face the repression that Canada is required by the UN Charter to provide them asylum from. Deputy Prime Minister John Manley has passed the yet to be enacted Safe Third Country

Agreement to deny asylum to those attempting to enter Canada through the US. The Safe Third Country Agreement creates a situation wherein the 10 million non-status people in the US who are facing increasing harassment and repression will have no legal recourse in Canada and will have no choice but to sneak across the border and become illegal on Canadian soil.

The passing of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in 2002 removed the right to appeal

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How Bill 48 completely undermines Employment Standards

'Legislating Away Workers Rights' from page 3

As with the new two-hour minimum day, this is referred to by the Liberals as increased flexibility. But who exactly does this flexibility benefit? Does the legislation require businesses to give workers more days off when they desire it, or require guaranteed hours for workers if the workers need extra money? No, the government is only interested in making things more flexible for businesses and their ability to make money, more flexible for these businesses to extract as much profit as possible from each employee.

There is a similar loss in flexibility for workers to plan their lives around their work schedule. Section 31 of the previous Employment Standards Act required employers to post work schedules and give 24 hours notice of a change in shift. This section has been deleted in its entirety, meaning that employers are under no obligation to make weekly schedules for their workers. This is another loss of "flexibility" for workers that reduces job security for working people and makes it more difficult for them to plan their lives when they are not at work.

Attacks on farm workers

It is a fact that agricultural workers are among the most exploited workers in Canada. The majority are immigrants, refugees, and children who are paid based on how much produce they pick, as opposed to an hourly wage, and in most cases end up earning far below the minimum wage.

Many farm workers are hired through a contractor, who is paid by the farmer to hire the farm workers. In the previous Employment Standards Act, both the farmer and the contractor were liable for the wages of farm workers, meaning that if the contractor skipped town without

paying the farm workers, the owner of the farm could be held accountable for the farm workers' wages.

Under the new act, if the farmer uses a licensed contractor and has paid the contractor, the farmer is not liable if the contractor skips town. This of course means more instability and potential exploitation for farm workers, who will be left with no legal rights should they end up working for a "fly-by-night" contractor.

A further assault on the rights of farm workers was laid out on May 15th by a new set of changes made to employment standards. As of May 16th, farm workers are excluded from hours of work, overtime and statutory holiday pay. According to Agriculture Minister John van Dongen, these changes "recognize the realities of work in the agriculture sector and will level the competitive playing field for BC growers." Or, in his own words: "Ripening crops don't take weekends off."

The message sent by these changes is clear: for the BC Liberals and their agricultural business supporters, the rights and well-being of farm workers simply don't matter. By not recognizing minimum workdays, workweeks, or the right of farm workers to even enjoy statutory holidays, the Liberals are saying that farm workers are subhuman. This is a racist attack on the lives of what is already one of the most exploited sectors of the working class in this province. These assaults are also happening at a time when immigrants and refugees are under attack at the federal level through Bill C-18 and the various "anti-terrorist" bills. In this light, immigrants and refugees working in the agricultural industry are getting dually attacked, losing both their rights to minimum working conditions while at the same time being forced to live under the constant threat of deportation. This is clearly a benefit for

the agricultural sector, who are inheriting an even more marginalized population to exploit for poverty wages.

Enforcement of what little is left: the 'Self-Help Kit'

Virtually anyone who has worked in low-wage jobs can tell you that very few employers, even when there is a union involved, ever respect all of the employment standards regulations. In this context, it is important to realize that for the majority of working people in BC, the rights that are left after the axing of the Employment Standards Act do not even serve as a minimum, meaning that they will suffer work conditions that are even worse than what is legally allowed.

However, what is most important about the changes to employment standards is how difficult it has become for workers to assert what few rights they have left when faced with an employer who is breaking the rules.

The most significant change to the Employment Standards Act is the introduction of a "Self-Help Kit" for workers who are faced with an employer that is violating the regulations. Instead of going to an Employment Standards Branch and filing a grievance, then having the Employment Standards Branch investigate the situation, workers must now get a "Self-Help Kit" from the Branch, fill it out, then give this form to their employer. If the problem is not "resolved" at this point between the employer and the worker, then the worker is able to return to the Branch and request an investigation. But even then, the Branch can decide whether or not it will actually investigate the claim, and with cuts to staffing of at least 50% at the Employment Standards Branches, clearly the branch will be more likely to reject claims than accept them.

The provincial government brags that it is "getting tough" on violations by increasing the fines for employers who are caught breaking the rules, but these fines are meaningless because the new rules make it virtually impossible for workers to ever actually file a claim. Workers know quite well that trying to 'resolve' a



grievance with an employer without the intervention of the Employment Standards Branch is basically asking to be fired, and if employers could simply be asked by workers to not break the rules, there wouldn't be an Employment Standards Branch in the first place.

Essentially, the new Employment Standards Act leaves almost no legal tools for workers to defend themselves, and provides a blank slate for employers to use workers whichever way they see fit, with no regard whatsoever for workers rights. Employers can employ workers for as long as they want, as short as they want, and can hire children as young as 12. It is clear that this "flexibility" only serves the interests of employers and their need to squeeze as much profits as possible from the poor and working people of BC.

The broader context of the new Employment Standards Act

The amendments to the Employment Standards Act are horrible on their own terms, and the changes mentioned above are only some of the 64 amendments that were made to the act under Bill 48. However, it is important to see that they are only one of the ways in which the BC Liberals are attacking workers and driving down their living standards.

The changes to the Employment Standards Act are happening in the context of massive cuts to social services, the layoffs of tens of thousands of government workers, and the lowering of the minimum wage in BC under the \$6 "training wage." They are also happening in the context of high unemployment, inflation, and a weak economy that shows few signs of significant recovery in the near future.

This means a number of things for poor and working people

in BC. First, with tens of thousands of people being both cut from welfare and laid off from relatively well-paying government jobs, more and more people in BC are being pushed into low wage work. Second, the minimum standards are being lowered, meaning that more and more people are pushed to the margin while this margin is itself lowering, working more and more hours for less money. Third, by increasing the amount of hours an employer can get out of each worker, there will be less work to go around, which surely will lead to even greater unemployment, forcing more and more people to compete for poverty-wage jobs.

In the end, the changes to the Employment Standards Act are part of a larger strategy to create a larger pool of people in BC working for poverty wages with almost no legal rights whatsoever to protect them. Combined with the barrage of other cutbacks to social services, the privatization of government assets, and the attacks on the rights of workers to unionize, the effects of Bill 48 will be disastrous for working people in BC.

In this period of intensive attacks from the BC Liberal government and their big-business supporters on the livelihood of working people, it is clear that we must fight back to defend what few rights we have left against gross violations of basic work standards. To build our power as poor and working people, we must challenge these amendments, and assert what few rights we have left in order to make space for ourselves.

In order to improve the conditions of working people as a whole, we must start by defending at least a minimum set of standards for the most exploited workers by establishing full unionization of every workplace. We must also demand that the amendments to the Employment Standards Act be revoked. All the basic employment standards that the provincial government is taking away were fought for in the past, and if we hope to win decent wages and dignified working conditions for everyone, we must fight for them again.



Antiwar Rally in Montreal, March 15th 2003

US-UK Out of Iraq

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attempting to radicalize the people of the region, but because simply their rhetoric sounds great and effective in the presence and danger of US and other western imperialists. The US, in order to achieve hegemony in the Middle East, must reverse the relationship of forces that turned in favor of oppressed people of the Middle East and North Africa after the Iranian revolution of 1979. The US has to change this balance of forces, either with direct military attack, or pressure from outside. If this wrestling continues without an outcome, tensions will escalate into a new war in the Middle

East, but this time the bloodiest ever. With the latest UN security council resolution, it seems that the US has convinced European countries not only to accept the legitimacy of the occupation of Iraq by the US, but also to support and get involved in the US campaign against Iran.

End the Occupation

The US and its rival imperialists have started to turn their fierce competition into the war of who can get the biggest share of the world market. These wars, however, are not going to happen between these different imperialists directly, but will be about who can conquer

more third world countries by imposing war and occupation. As a result, in the coming future there will be frequent wars, more direct colonization, and more occupations. Therefore, the right of oppressed nations for self-determination is a central issue, morally, legally and politically. We working, poor and oppressed people in Canada must oppose these injustices by imperialist countries and demand, with all our sisters and brothers around the world, an end to the occupation of Iraq, and fight for the self-determination of all oppressed nations, whether it is in Iraq, Palestine, Canada, or Latin America.



The US 'Road Map for Peace' in the Middle East:

At best, the Creation of an Indigenous Palestinian Reservation

By Ali Yerevani

"My government will provide training and support for a new, restructured Palestinian security service, and we'll place a mission on the ground, led by Ambassador John Wolf."

- George Bush in Aqaba Summit

The message that George Bush is delivering to the Middle East and the world is clear: the road map he is drawing for Palestinians is a blueprint for a proxy government that will be friendly to the US. This government is designed to follow US-Israel colonial policies in the Middle East and particularly in those pieces of the West Bank and Gaza that the roadmap offers to the Palestinians. Clearly the message is that the US and Israel trust part of the Palestinian political establishment to compromise the goals of the Palestinian liberation movement. The US and Israel trust this faction of the Palestinian leadership to expect and get very little from Israel in the short or long run.

Mahmoud Abbas, the new Prime Minister of the Palestinian



Abbas, Bush, and Sharon at summit meeting in Jordan, June 2003

Authority said in the Aqaba Summit that he will continue to negotiate with the militants. "We will not allow anybody to drag us into a civil war," Abbas said. Although the road map promises an independent state at its completion, it will actually put Palestine forever under siege by Israel. The US and a section of the Palestinian political leadership will help maintain this siege by carrying out the fight against those Palestinian political forces which oppose the oppressive US and Israeli colonial policies in Palestine and the Middle East.

The US road map creates nothing but the largest prison camp in the world. It will return to the Palestinians not even twenty percent of their historic territory, all of which was lost to the

creation of the Israeli Zionist state in 1948. The size and geography of the piece of land that is to become the state of Palestine will compare, at best, to a larger Native reservation in Canada. The untold US-Israel plot is to enforce and intensify the internal struggle of Palestinians in hopes that this will end in an internal armed struggle of Palestinians against each other.

What is the "road map"?

The road map calls for a three-staged approach leading to an interim Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip next year, and the creation of a permanent state by the end of 2005.

In the first stage, the plan demands the appointment of a new Palestinian Authority cabinet and the creation of a Prime Minister's post. It also demands that Israel improve humanitarian conditions for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and dismantle any settlement outposts created under the Sharon government.

Later, it would require the Palestinians to write a

constitution. It also calls for a monitoring system led by the Quartet (US, Russia, European Union and the United Nations) to ensure that the two sides meet their commitments. It calls on Israel to withdraw troops from all areas occupied since the Palestinian uprising began in Sept. 2000 and to freeze all settlement activity.

The second phase, which would run through the end of 2003, into the beginning of 2004, begins with Palestinian elections in January and an international conference to form a provisional Palestinian state.

The third phase, due in 2004 and 2005, calls for a second conference and negotiations toward a final peace agreement.

In the context of the long standing and ongoing Israeli military occupation and Palestine's resulting intense political and social set-up, the endlessly complicated and long stages of the US road map reveal the whole process as a sham. It is easy to see that the faulty construction of the road map is a US imperialist

plot that will only lead to more bloodshed of Palestinians and also Israelis.

Although it might seem that there are some concessions to Palestinians, the matter of fact is that the whole process could be killed in the third phase (if not in the first or second) if any Palestinian party involved in this negotiation simply put the "right of return" for at least 700,000 Palestinian refugees on the table. The road map is nothing but an old imperialist trick: make the deal, buy time, kill it in the process.

Sharon Under Pressure

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon made a concession according to most political analysts. But if this is a genuine compromise, what are the pressures that made this butcher of Palestinians accept the road map, even momentarily? There are many indications why:

The US is trying hard to bring some calmness to the Middle East in an atmosphere which,

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One, Two, Three...Many Intifadas: Palestinian Resistance to a Brutal Occupation

By Shannon Bundock

The majority of national borders across the globe encompass people who are at one stage or another of invasion, occupation or colonization. This is true not only in the semi-colonial nations of the third world but also for Indigenous nations in Canada, the United States, Australia and other "advanced" countries.

World imperialism, currently led by the United States, wages wars against oppressed people in order to plunder resources, gain political advantage and establish control of the broadest areas possible. As a result the oppressed people of the world have had to rise up, fight back and demand their rights to self-determination.

One of the most brutal examples of imperialist aggression is illustrated by the war waged by the Zionist state of Israel against the people of Palestine. As a result, one of the most heroic and longstanding resistance movements has been that of the Palestinian people.

Zionism: A Colonial Ideology

The colonial nature of Zionism was clear to the Palestinians even before the establishment of Israel. This colonialism was recognized and celebrated by Zionist politicians even as Israel was just taking shape and before it gained independence from

England. According to David Ben-Gurion, first President of Israel, "in our political argument abroad, we minimize Arab opposition to us," but he added, "politically we are the aggressors and they defend themselves... The country is theirs, because they inhabit it, whereas we want to come here and settle down, and in their view we want to take away from them their country." Palestinian resistance to this idea and to the colonial migration and Zionist terrorist activity rapidly developed, and it was this resistance that helped lead to a Palestinian revolt from 1936-39.

By 1936 the increase in Jewish immigration and land acquisition, along with general Arab frustration at the continuation of European rule, radicalized increasing numbers of Palestinian Arabs. Thus, in April 1936, a series of smaller acts of resistance to terrorist harassment of Palestinians by Israeli terrorist gangs escalated into a major Palestinian rebellion. An Arab Higher Committee (AHC), a loose coalition of recently formed Arab political parties, was created. It declared a national strike in support of three basic demands: cessation of Jewish immigration, an end to all further land sales to the Jews, and the establishment of an Arab national government. In the end this revolt was brutally crushed by the British.



The Creation of the State of Israel

In 1948, along with the 1947 UN partition of Palestine, and in order to cement the establishment of Israel, Zionist forces launched major military operations throughout Palestine. The partition, which had handed Israel 54% of Palestine, was seen by Israelis as the go-ahead to seize as much territory as possible, and as a result they launched the 1948 war. After the war Israel had stolen 81% of the total area. By the time the British withdrawal had been completed, Palestinian resistance had been largely crushed brutally by the killing and expulsion of about 750,000 Palestinians. 85 percent of those who lived in the part of Palestine that became Israel were driven out of their homes.

At the end of this war Israel had gained control of all territory in Palestine except the West Bank, which was controlled by Jordan, and the Gaza Strip, controlled by

Egypt. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians lived in refugee camps in these territories as well as in neighboring countries. For the past 55 years the Palestinians have overwhelmingly refused to leave the refugee camps, despite the incredible sickness and poverty, as they have refused to give up their land, rights and humanity. They have remained to resist, to organize, and to strengthen their fight and return to their homeland.

The Expansion of Israel and Palestinian Resistance

From the time of the 1948 war until the present day Palestinians have faced increasingly brutal and strict repression in the form of massacres and military suppression, with the intention of ultimately forcing them completely off of their land. Following the war of 1948, the next major Israeli offensive for territorial expansion was the 1967 war and subsequent occupation of the Old City of Jerusalem and

whole of West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Golan heights.

The 1967 war had a major effect on the development of organized Palestinian resistance as it caused a rise, for the first time, of an independent mass movement for national liberation. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was initiated in 1964 and over time became the major internationally recognized representative of Palestinians. Other organizations, such as Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, began to gain momentum and have developed into solid organizations representing the needs of many Palestinian people.

The growing consciousness of Palestinian opposition to imperialist Israel has led to a call from the national liberation movement and the organizations representing it for a democratic, secular state under which both Jews and Arabs could live free from discrimination. Under Israeli occupation and the massacre of Palestinians it is overwhelmingly accepted that the only way for achieving this is through a popular movement and armed struggle. This armed struggle became commonplace in the years following the 1967 invasion.

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The Palestinian Struggle for Liberation will Continue...

An interview with Michel Shehadeh of the Free Palestine Alliance

By Albert Grigorian

Michel Shehadeh is a member of the famous LA8 (Los Angeles 8) case, in which seven Palestinians and a Kenyan were arrested in 1987 in the United States and kept imprisoned in maximum-security cells for 23 days under charges of "aiding terrorism". US government attempts to deport the members of the LA8 failed due to lack of evidence of wrongdoing throughout 16 years. In June 2001, an immigration judge annulled the charges against the LA8, ruling that they could not be prosecuted under laws that didn't exist when proceedings against them began. Alisa Solomon from the *Village Voice*, wrote in October 2001:

The action against the LA8, as they came to be known, is one of the hallmark cases in immigration law of the last 50 years. It has bred numerous law-review essays addressing the extent to which immigrant speech and political dissent may be restricted. Rejected by courts and decried on editorial pages from the Los Angeles Times to the New York Times, this case has long been regarded as an illustration of the dangers (not to mention the needless expense) of the hell-bent hounding of immigrants under absurdly broad definitions of "terrorism."

Over the years, a series of court rulings at various levels has repeatedly held that the LA8 do not deserve to be deported for having exercised their First and Fifth Amendment rights to free expression and association. Also, referring to mountains of material obtained through several years of wiretapping and other surveillance of the LA8, former FBI director William Webster said that none of the accused had ever engaged in criminal activity, and that if they had been citizens, "there would not have been a basis for their arrest."

Michel Shehadeh is the former West Coast regional director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), and he is on the national steering committee of the Free Palestine Alliance (FPA-USA). This interview was conducted with Michel in Los Angeles.

After 9/11, a series of attacks were waged against the civil rights of Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian immigrants, and recently a campaign of harassment, deportation, and terror began against immigrants and

refugees. Do you see any similarities and common goals between these attacks and the anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian witch-hunt campaigns of the 1980s, like the attack on the LA8?

I think the campaign of attacking, oppressing and repressing people, who at least are immigrants and especially those who support liberation movements abroad or are against US policies, have always been under some kind of repression. Only after 9/11 it just became so clear, so subtle and so direct. I wrote an article that was published in *Counter Punch* that traced the history of those kinds of operations and I called it the latest new war on terrorism. In the 1950s it was McCarthyism and before that in the 1920s it was the red scare and anti-communist movement, and later on in 1980s it was Reagan's war on terrorism. Now, the Bush, Cheney and the new conservatives are waging a war on "terrorism." They are the same policies and same kind of tactics that have been used before.

The scary thing about this one, however, is the tools that are available to the government. Today, new technologies are available to the government so it is able to monitor and control almost every citizen. Also media – that is completion – media has become the mouthpiece for the government. The weakness of the judiciary, which has never been politicized like this before, is playing a big role for the government. But also let us not forget the American public who, by hearing only one point of view, is becoming more controlled and more homogeneous than it used to be. Moreover, the weak left we are facing now makes the situation even worse. Even though the left was traditionally weak, it was never this weak. Although we have seen positive signs after the war on Iraq, the growth of the left with the movement was not able to organize the potential of the dissent movement in the US.



Michel Shehadeh

What were the Arab and Palestinian communities' responses to these campaigns, and what do you think about the response of their leadership against immigrant bashing?

We see similarities between what is happening to the Arab-American community and what was happening to the Japanese community in World War II. I could summarize the response within the community into two trends: first, there are those who want to join the US administration's plans and policies because they think that is the way to go to respond to the attack. Basically, their logic is that if we show that we are good people and we cooperate with the government, they will let us alone. Of course, the underlining of this philosophy is not what it looks like. Basically, the people whose interests are connected to that kind of thinking and approach lead this. On the other hand, the second trend is a progressive one, which says we have to ally ourselves with the movement in the US, like the grassroots, anti-war movement, and peace and justice movement. We need to be in a coalition with Arab, immigrant, and African-American communities so they can all have a united agenda in order to respond to these attacks. Unfortunately, the leadership of the Arab-American community that belongs to the first trend is out of control. That trend is trying to attack the grassroots leaders and the community activists who want to lead the community into forging coalitions with others so they can assert their rights.

Many progressive and leftist groups focus on oil as a primary goal of the US war on Iraq. In contrast there are others in

smaller numbers, like Fire This Time, who think that this war is the continuation of the war in Afghanistan, and are looking to the reality of today's world. The US is in pursuit of a much larger strategy; a part of which is easy flow of oil from the Middle East, and ultimately, to isolate and crush the Palestinian liberation movement which is the axis of all instabilities and revolutions in the Middle East. What is your overall opinion about this debate?

I add my voice to those who think that oil is not the only goal of the US war on Iraq but a component of it. If that was the case, they didn't have to go to war because they could control the oil as they always have in the past. I believe US imperialism, which has matured with the new-conservatism in power, was able to easily put the old designs and plans into effect by using the excuse of 9/11, which gave them leverage to act. Part of the plan, which was always there, was of course to crush the Palestinian resistance, and with the flow of the oil they could control Europe, Japan, and the rest of the world, which Iraq is a part of as well.

Also, imperialists want to control Iraq and all of the Middle East as a market. By going to war with Iraq, US could turn Iraq and others in the region to a complete consumer society like Saudi Arabia. Selling Iraqi oil in the world market will be a good source of revenue for the US corporations and multinational companies, by which they can make some goods and sell them to Iraqi people as well as people

in the region and the third world countries. So we can see that US geopolitics is not only one thing but part of a global strategy of control all over the world as a superpower that is matured and feels conscious about itself. In the past, the US used to pretend that whatever it did in the world is for the good of the people; nowadays, US rulers admit that they are imperialists and they'll do whatever they think is necessary without taking others into account.

How do you evaluate the successes and victories that the US government is claiming and what difficulties do you see for them to continue their occupation of Iraq?

This war of course was a military win and a quick one for United States, and a murderous defeat of the Iraqi people. This happened because the Iraqi regime was not popular, was not strong enough to stand against US military might, and did not have the necessary structure to fight.

But this doesn't mean that it will be easy maintenance for the US. The resistance is already there. Sometimes the occupation may seem successful in making life better for a while, but there is this internal rule that whenever and wherever there is occupation which comes with repression, people will always resist. Iraqis are tough people who in the past fought foreign occupation, and during 1917 they threw the British occupiers out of their country.

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Israeli Soldier pointing gun at Palestinian civilian in Hebron, October 2002

Chronology of the Zionist Occupation of Palestine

By Nasim Sedaghat

Zionism is a colonialist, expansionist and racist ideology. It functions to build a reactionary utopia based on the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their homeland in order to form a Jewish-Zionist state on Palestinian land. The state of Israel, since its formation in 1948, has killed more than tens of thousands of Palestinians and has expelled more than three million from their homeland through implementing colonial policies. The killing and expulsion has helped Israel to occupy more than 85 percent of Palestine.

The expansionist agenda of Zionists can be best understood through the words of Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel. In 1936, long before the formation of Israel, he stated, "The boundaries of Zionist aspiration include southern Lebanon, southern Syria, today's Jordan,

all of CIS-Jordan (the West Bank) and the Sinai."

It is clear that Zionism has a very racist attitude toward the Palestinians both inside and outside of Israel. Ze'ev Jabotinsky, one of the most important right wing Zionist advocates spoke of his hatred for Palestinians with racist slurs such as: "We Jews, thank God, have nothing to do with the East. . . . The Islamic soul must be broomed out of Eretz-Yisrael. . . . [Muslims are] yelling rabble dressed up in gaudy, savage rags."

The Zionist regime has classified the population of Israel into four groups; the first group, which enjoys full citizenship are the white European Jews, called Ashkenazic; the second group is the Sephardic Jews, who are mainly Arab Jews; next is the Ethiopian Jews, who are considered as third-class citizens; and the last are the Palestinians who have the

least rights within this Apartheid system.

It took a little more than one hundred years for the Zionist movement to completely take over Palestine. A review of chronological order will help to understand how this historical misfortune consolidated itself in Palestine:

1896

Theodor Herzl, an Austro-Hungarian Jewish journalist, published Jewish State, advocating the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

1897

First Zionist congress in Switzerland issues the Basle Program calling for a home for the Jewish people in Palestine and establishes the WZO, World Zionist Organization to that end.

1904-1914

Second wave (around 40000 strong) of Zionist illegal immigrants arrive in Palestine and increase the Jewish percentage to 6% of the total population.

1909

First Zionist Kibbutz (collective farm), establishment of Tel Aviv north of Yaafa.

1917

The British capture Palestine from the Ottomans during the First World War. In "Balfour Declaration" the British Government promises to establish a national home for Jewish people in Palestine.

1922

The League of Nations (forerunner to the United Nations) gives Britain a mandate to administer Palestine (previously ruled by the defunct Ottoman Empire), with the intention of making it an independent Palestinian state and a national home for Jewish people. When Britain takes control of Palestine, 93 per cent of the population are Muslim and Christians, and 7 per cent Jewish (that is, Palestinian Jews and settler Jews including Zionists).

1919-1923

Third wave of Zionist-Jewish immigrants (around 35,000) to Palestine.

1920-1935

A series of violent clashes occurs between some Palestinian communities and the more recently arrived Jewish settlers. Jewish underground guerrilla groups such as Irgun and Stern are formed to

fight for an independent Jewish state. The terrorist guerilla gangs harass many Palestinians and drive them off their land. Jewish people own about 5.5 percent of the land. They acquire land by buying land titles, from large, predominantly absentee landlords, to land that has been farmed by Palestinians for centuries.

1936

Palestinian resistance to the changes to population and land ownership brought about by the continued Jewish immigration in Palestine erupts into an open rebellion between Palestinian Arabs and the British forces. The latter crush the revolt, killing many Palestinians, and the British Government sets up a Royal Commission, under Lord Peel, to investigate the problem. It concludes that the British Mandate is no longer workable, and recommends that Palestine be partitioned into three zones: a Jewish state, an Arab state and a neutral territory containing the Holy Places.

1947

Jewish people own six per cent of the

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Michel Shehadeh

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What impact do you think this criminal and brutal war on Iraq had and is going to have on Palestinians in Palestine or worldwide, and how do you assess the intifada after the US war on Iraq?

At first it will be disastrous for the Palestinians. They will feel more isolated, and all the reactionary governments in the Arab world along with imperialists will have a better chance to pressure them to accept new plans to "solve" the Palestinian question. It will look very bleak for a time, but the Palestinian people have been in a worse situation in the past, they will continue their fight, and nothing can stop them. Let us not forget that if the resistance in Iraq develops, not only will it be a plus for the Palestinian movement, it will affect other parts of the region as well. When the Palestinian resistance developed in Beirut in the '70s and '80s, all the progressive Arab forces went to Lebanon to fight. Although the intention of conquerors in Iraq is to change or destroy history, culture, education, and infrastructure, I am always optimistic that not only will the designs to subdue the region fail, but the resistance will grow and it will even ignite other revolts in the region.

Since the beginning of the US war campaign on Iraq, there have been many ideas about how to start an ongoing campaign in order to build the most effective anti-war movement. There were tendencies that believed the best way was to adopt a dual strategy by organizing a struggle of equal weight for Palestine and Iraq all the way. There were others who were saying that it is true that they are linked but this time US imperialist itself is in action and the target is the whole Middle East, therefore the best defense for Palestine is to build a strong anti-war movement against the US military intervention in Iraq. What do you think about this heated discussion?

I am always with the clarity. I think dividing the issue of Palestine and Iraq is a liberal way of diluting the movement into "humanitarian" anti-war substance instead of an anti-imperialist anti-war substance. If we separate the war on Iraq from the oppression at home, the Palestinian issue, or other global

anti-imperialist movement, then we are limiting our struggle. There is always the tactical question of when to emphasize which issue in order to strengthen and broaden the movement without separating issues from each other, which is very important in every struggle. Clear strategy is a plan for a long term process to achieve our goal, and tactics are important to fulfill our strategy. When the US started its military attack on Iraq, the emphasis should have been on "US out of Iraq" and at the same time link it to other issues like Palestine. We should keep in mind that when the debate is among the left it could lead to crisis because the left should be clear on this. But when liberals open this debate, their intention is not to touch Israel; therefore they think the issue of Palestine should not be in the anti-war movement. Their interest is that of Zionists and the ruling class in the United States.

We saw this in the attack by liberals on the ANSWER coalition when the war was going to start. ANSWER used the slogans: "No war on Iraq and End the occupation of Palestine and self-determination for Palestine." Immediately after the war started ANSWER was attacked by some forces from the left for not bringing Palestine to the forefront of the movement and giving the slogans: "US out of Iraq", "Self-Determination for Iraq", "End the occupation of Iraq and Palestine".

Now that Iraq is occupied, do you think the anti-war movement should focus on the occupation of Iraq and raise the question of self-determination? Could we say that occupations of Iraq, Palestine, and indigenous people in North America are related since the core issue is land and self-determination?

We should be very clear on the issue of self-determination, because for instance, people may say US also wants self-determination of Iraq or Egypt or Arab world in general. In the movement, the matter of self-determination should be a very necessary component of the movement with a clear policy to say self-determination and freedom for Palestinian people, or Iraqi people, or native people and so on. We should be careful not to let imperialists put in a puppet system like the one in Afghanistan, and call it self-determination. Self-determination without freedom is nothing but nonsense.

Going back to the Palestinian issue, what do you think about the US "road map" for "peace" between Palestinians and Israelis? Is the peace between Israelis and Palestinians the beginning of justice? And is this really the way out for Palestinians? What should we learn from history?

What we learn from history is when some programs, like Camp David or the Peace Process or the Road Map, are being imposed on people, that is nonsense. It is not in the interest of the people and it never works. When imperialists like the US decide on a solution it is for nothing but more oppression and more exploitation; when the US thinks that Palestinians need a roadmap to "peace," that is a roadmap to hell. Basically anything that doesn't look at the Palestinian question in its root cannot be called a solution. For a solution, one should look at Zionism as the root of the problem. It is important to know that the problem should address not only the Palestinian question but the Palestinian and Jewish question. Since we cannot solve one question at the expense of the other, both questions should be solved simultaneously on the equal basis. The only way to solve this issue is by going with the trend of humanity, equality, freedom from oppression, and freedom from racism, and with the trend that the people in the region are requesting and not what the governments are planning. Real popular democracy, real freedom, and real self-determination in the region are the answer to the both questions. The only way forward for the people of Palestine and Israel goes through the creation of a democratic secular state in which everybody has equal rights, not based on ethnicity but on the human ground, without which we will go from one set of oppressions to another.

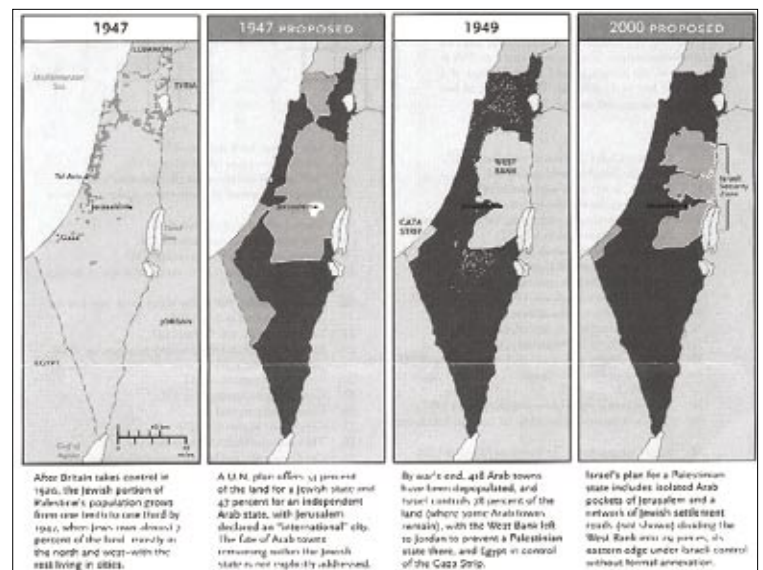
What is your opinion on the recent changes in Palestinian leadership? What impact will it have on the Palestinian movement in the long run if anything at all?

When Oslo happened, they brought the Palestinian Authority that not only didn't help the situation, but became disastrous. Recently US brought the "Road Map" that is also going to prove disastrous. The reality is that the Road Map and whatever tools come with it (the new leadership) is against the interests of the Palestinian struggle. Since the

old tools did not perform the way US wanted, the new ones took the place of the old. Although the Palestinian Authority from the beginning were the tools for occupation, we can find the differences between the two in the details of their plans and not in the substance. Even though Arafat was himself part of the occupation, due to pressure from Palestinian people and solidarity in the world, he did not agree 100% with US rulers so he was dumped. The future will show that in spite of changes in leadership, the Palestinian movement will grow, the struggle of resistance to end the Israeli occupation will go on, and the fight for a free Palestine with social justice will continue.

will not put aside the right of return, which is a true base for Palestinian struggle and freedom. What we see today is that colonialism is not a matter of the past, the imperialists are now carrying it out. The reason Zionism survives even today is that, by becoming part of imperialist's tool, it plays a decisive role in the world capitalist system.

As a long-time activist for human rights, social justice and the Palestinian liberation movement, in your opinion, what should be the ways and plans for building an effective solidarity movement with Palestinian struggle to end the occupation and free Palestine?



There is a debate that freedom of Palestine does not have to include the right of return because this issue will discriminate the Jews who live there. What is your response to this debate? Do you think the right of return should be conditional?

This debate should have been eliminated a long, long time ago because it belongs to the old colonial time of white supremacy in Africa and the third world. Now it is the same principle being accepted, when Israel is allowed to do away with the Jews' only right. When Israel says it has a right to have a Jewish majority, and people accept it as a fair right, it is outrageous. In the United States, the "pro-peace" movement is the real problem that in essence is a liberal movement. This movement supports the notion that Israel should be based on ethnic affiliation as a Jewish state. Unfortunately, not only the world, but also many on the left seem to agree with that notion. But no matter what happens, the Palestinian people

The movement has to be very clearly anti-Zionist both in its strategy and tactics. It should link the issues of the Palestinian liberation movement with human rights and domestic issues so people can relate it with the struggle at home. If we can show this relationship then we can build a real solidarity movement in the global context.

This brings us to the question of why we now cannot focus on Iraq and forget about Palestine, or vice versa. We should not focus on solely Palestine or Iraq and forget about issues of homelessness, workers' rights, womens' rights, gays and lesbian's rights, racism and police brutality and immigrants' rights. What we need is to not only link these issues, but globalize our struggle to confront the globalization of oppression, repression, suppression, and exploitation of the people in the world.

Thank you very much for the opportunity you gave to Fire This Time for this interview.

'Chronology' from page 6

land. The British Government announces that it intends to give up the Mandate, and to hand the problem of Palestine over to the United Nations. A UN special commission recommends that the land be divided as follows:

A "Jewish" state, which includes 52 per cent of the land. The population of this state would be 497,000 Palestinian Arabs and 498,000 Palestinian and settler Jews. An "Arab" state, which includes 48 per cent of the land. The population of this state would be 98.7 per cent Palestinian Arab (725,000 Arabs and 10,000 Palestinian and settler Jews). Jerusalem and the area surrounding it would become an "international zone". The General Assembly approves the Partition Plan by a two-thirds majority, largely through the influence of the USA. Palestinian Jews and settlers, who make up less than a third of the population, accept the plan, and all the Arab nations reject it. A civil war begins.

1948

The British Mandate in Palestine ends on 14 May and the new state of Israel is

proclaimed. Within hours, the armies of Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq attack Israel. They are defeated and by the time of the ceasefire in January 1949, Israel occupies 81 per cent of the territory of Mandate Palestine. Jordan annexes the West Bank including East Jerusalem. During the conflict, more than 725,000 Palestinians (a large proportion of the population) become refugees internally within the West Bank, Gaza and land now controlled by Israel, and externally in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

The UN General Assembly passes Resolution 194, which declares that Palestinian refugees have the right to return to their homes (on the condition of their willingness to live at peace with their neighbors) and that Israel should facilitate this at the earliest practicable date.

The United Nations Palestine Conciliation Committee (UNPCC) is established under Resolution 194 to facilitate the return or resettlement - and compensation of - Palestinian refugees based on their individual choices. However, after several years, the UNPCC cease to provide protection

to Palestinian refugees. This is due, in large part, to Israel's opposition to the return of refugees and also to the lack of international will to uphold basic principles of international law applicable to Palestinian refugees.

1956

The second Arab-Israeli war breaks out when Egypt nationalizes the Suez Canal. Britain and France, whose interests are threatened, lend Israel military support to attack Egypt. Israel captures the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula, but hands them back after international pressure.

1967

Tensions between Israel and its neighbors erupt into the Six-Day War. The armies of Egypt, Jordan and Syria invade Israel but lose the war. Israel occupies east Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights (belonging to Syria) and the Sinai Peninsula (belonging to Egypt). A further 200,000 Palestinians flee to camps in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, and another 335,000 people are internally displaced within the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In November, the UN Security Council passes Resolution 242 that calls on Israel

to withdraw from territories occupied in the 1967 war, and states that that there should be a just settlement of the refugee problem.

1970

UN General Assembly passes resolution 2767 that supports the right of Palestinians to resist the 1967 occupation of their land.

1973

Egypt and Syria war against to win back the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights respectively. Egypt partially succeeds and gradually relations between Israel and Egypt improve, leading to the Camp David Accords of 1978.

1982

Israel launches a full-scale attack of Lebanon, destroying many of the Palestinian refugee camps in the south. Many thousands of Palestinian refugees are displaced again. Israel enters west Beirut and does not intervene when Lebanese Christian Phalangist militia massacre 3,500 or more Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut. The PLO withdraws from Beirut and, no longer having a base

in Lebanon, relocates to Tunis.

1987-1993

The Palestinian uprising, first Intifada, spontaneously erupts when an Israeli settler's truck crushes a car, killing four Palestinians in Gaza. The Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza begin mass public demonstrations against the Israeli occupation. The Israeli army responds with curfews and closures. Hundreds of Palestinian civilians were killed.

2000

A visit by Ariel Sharon to the holy site of Al Aqsa, break down of peace talks, continued poverty and intensified repression all culminate and lead to the second intifada in September.

2002

Israel carries out a massacre in the Jenin refugee camp. Large numbers of Palestinians are killed and injured, homes are bulldozed and as a result demonstrations break out across the world in support of Palestinian resistance.

And the Al Aqsa Intifada continues...

The Past, Present, and Future of Palestinian Resistance

'One, Two, Three' from page 5

Self Defense on Many Fronts

Neighbouring Arab states were under constant and increasing pressure from US and Israel to quell Palestinian organizing in the refugee camps of Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. In 1970 growing organized Palestinian resistance was becoming a major threat to both Israel and the Jordanian regime. A major confrontation occurred in November 1968 when the government sought to disarm the refugee camps in Jordan. The threat to King Hussein's authority, and the heavy Israeli reprisals that followed escalating guerrilla attacks, became a matter of grave concern to the King Hussein. Finally the struggle came to a head with the Black September massacre of 8,000 Palestinians in Jordan.

This was undertaken with the support of Israel and the US. This support included a promise to intervene if the Jordanian regime was threatened by a popular Palestinian revolt.

As well as supporting other attacks, Israel itself directly attacked Palestinians in neighboring the Arab nations when the resistance gained too much strength. Between 1967 and 1970 Israel launched numerous raids on Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon, including major bombings of Cairo and "retaliation" raids and massacres of entire villages in Jordan. In 1972-73, Israeli terror increased in Syria and Lebanon, where the Palestinian movement was the strongest. From the end of the '67 war until the onset of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Israeli strikes against Lebanon alone took 10,000 lives.

Active Resistance

Without active resistance, Palestinians would have been psychologically demoralized and physically crushed. The resistance to attacks by imperialist countries and the attacks by the reactionary regimes, under which refugees lived, took form politically and militarily. In 1970 in Jordan, a few days before Hussein declared martial law and began attacking, the PLO organized popular committees and began fortifying the city. "People's Committees" were organizing throughout the city preparing for future organization and defense. Campaigns to build shelters, defend against Israeli bombings and increase literacy were all underway.

Three of the main objectives in the June 4th 1982 Israel invasion of Lebanon were to destroy the PLO; crush the Lebanese nationalist movement and disarm militias; and to impose a government that would serve Israeli military, political and economic interests. On top of intense Palestinian and Lebanese resistance Israel was also faced with mass rallies in Tel Aviv in opposition to the invasion.

One of the most significant aspects of the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance was their success in holding Israeli troops at bay for two months. As well as forcing negotiations for the evacuation of PLO fighters from Lebanon which symbolized the failure of Israel to destroy

Organized Resistance and Solidarity... the first Intifada

Major Palestinian resistance took form in the first Intifada (uprising) of 1987. The intifada, which established the Palestinian resistance on a higher level, was a response to the increasingly obvious expansionist and violent



A Palestinian throws a teargas cannister back at Israeli Military forces.

the PLO. However overall, the invasion resulted in set backs for the Palestinians, as the PLO was forced to abandon Lebanon as its base for organizing, and the Israeli forces, as they were unsuccessful in completely destroying the PLO.

The climax of the invasion came just as Israel was withdrawing from Lebanon. Israel had been surrounding West Beirut, which included a large Muslim population and the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, which were set up after the 1967 Six-Day War in Palestine. Ariel Sharon, Israeli Defense Minister, pulled out of West Beirut with the knowledge of and support for an impending Phalange attack on the Palestinian and Lebanese population. The Phalange, which was a right-wing, nationalist, Christian political party operating militias in Lebanon, immediately began an assault on the camps of Sabra and Shatila with the weak excuse that the PLO was suspect in the assassination of Phalange leader Bashir Gemayel. 3,500 Palestinians and Lebanese were killed in the massacre which was explicitly supported by Israel.

Despite the massacre and setbacks of the 1982 invasion and subsequent massacre, Palestinian resistance was not broken, as was to be seen in the years soon to come.

Organized resistance, despite facing significant defeats, was integral to the survival of a Palestinian movement. A significant aspect of the Palestinian resistance in Jordan was the fact that Palestinians were unified with the working people and peasants of Jordan against their government. This alliance and others like it served to strengthen the movement incredibly, and without American and Israeli support for the corrupt regimes, the balance of forces could very well have tipped in favor of the oppressed people's resistance.

nature of the state of Israel, frustration based on lack of progress in negotiations and intensified poverty. By 1987 there was a large and growing population of young Palestinians who had only known life under occupation, and when an Israeli truck swerved and killed four Palestinians, the reaction in the Gaza Strip was outrage, which led to an uprising with much initiative taken by young people.

The first intifada lasted until 1993, spread all across Palestine and into neighboring refugee camps, and took the form of a renewed sense of strength and resistance among the Palestinians. The intifada was not limited to young people throwing stones at tanks; it also included mass demonstrations, labour strikes, tax resistance, boycotts of Israeli goods, and the set up of mobile medical teams; all part of organizing against the Israeli settler state.

The intifada ended with the vain hope of peaceful settlements through the 1993 signing of the Oslo Peace Accords. Despite the halt of the first intifada, the effect of the uprising would be to strengthen the defiance of the Palestinians, an effect which lasted far beyond the intifada itself.

Peace Talks, Tanks, and the Second Intifada

By August 2000 peace talks between Israel and Palestine had completely broken down, after going through various stages of success and failure. What became clear was that Israel was prepared to go as far as it could push, even during the talks, to build settlements and further expand.

The second (al-Aqsa) intifada was triggered by the provocative visit of Ariel Sharon, who has since become Israel's Prime Minister, to al-Haram al-Sharif. Since then, Palestinians have been denied free access to the Holy Places in Jerusalem. In the past year, 692 Palestinians were killed and 15,833 injured by Israeli security

forces and settlers. According to reports, 809 Palestinian homes were demolished, including 25 in Jerusalem. At last count, 112,900 olive trees were uprooted from Palestinian land.

This intifada was a response to the growing ineffectiveness of the peace talks and the frustration the Palestinians were experiencing as they saw the state of Israel expand, further Palestinian oppression, and escalate the encroachment on their human rights. This intifada, which first took form in mass demonstrations, was met with an intense crack down by the Israeli army. Situations that formerly were met with rubber bullets and tear gas now faced live ammunition and a shoot-to-kill policy. In order to continue, the intifada began changing tactics. More small armed factions began to work to support the mass movement.

Since the Oslo process had created the Palestinian Authority (PA), there were now Palestinian police and security forces armed with rifles and AK-47's, and they used their arms to protect Palestinian demonstrators and to sometimes challenge the Israeli checkpoints and soldiers. The Palestinians were essentially facing an 'Israeli military' vs. 'Palestinian civilian' war; including enforced 24-hour

lack of social services on the Palestinians and, specifically, the intifada. It is clear that the state cannot function as it is fighting a continuing colonial war wherein the resistance is not being broken.

Israel will never have political or economic stability as long as they function as an active occupier. The economic crisis in Israel is growing and, as Finance Minister Netanyahu recently threatened to slash welfare and lay off 1000's of public sector workers, so is unrest among the Israeli working class. Unions are threatening to stage a summer of "industrial discontent" and the unemployment rate steadily grows. As they pump more money into the military while neglecting employment and basic welfare they will face a battle with their own people. Ultimately, economic crisis, on top of the powerful and heroic resistance of the Palestinians, will serve to be fatal.

International Intifada

On Dec 8 1970 the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 2767 which "recognises that the people of Palestine are entitled to equal rights and self-determination in accordance with the Charter of the UN." This was reaffirmed more strongly in UNGA 2787 of 6 December



Rally in Solidarity with Palestine in London, May 2002

"shoot-to-kill curfews", further bulldozing of homes and villages and massacres such as the Jenin refugee camp slaughter in 2002.

The second intifada is a powerful example of the strength and resilience of oppressed people against imperialism, and it serves to improve the confidence of the Palestinians and all oppressed people in solidarity with Palestine. Despite facing over four times as many casualties and deaths as Israel, and in the face of overwhelming odds, the Palestinians continue to fight.

Israel, which receives billions of dollars in aid from the US, still functions with an economic instability that threatens its survival. Israel blames much of the high unemployment rate and

1971. These resolutions were significant as they shifted the balance of powers more in favor of oppressed people by recognizing the right of Palestinians to resist the racist occupation and continued genocide undertaken by imperialist Israel.

The most powerful blow that can be struck against imperialism is one by oppressed nations against imperialist occupation and for self-determination. In solidarity with Palestine we must recognize and support their struggle against occupation as the struggle of all oppressed people globally. We must support the rights of the Palestinians for self-determination and right of return as this strengthens the position of all poor and working people globally.

Opposing the First Nations Governance Act: An Interview with Lana Lowe of the Indigenous Peoples Grassroots Movement

By Mike Krebs

The First Nations Governance Act, known as Bill C-7, is a Federal Act that was introduced in June 2002. After its 1st reading in the Canadian Parliament, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs finished reviewing the legislation on May 26th 2003. The legislation is now to be discussed in the Parliament before being passed, despite widespread opposition to the bill from both Natives and non-Natives.

On June 4th, there was a rally and march against the First Nations Governance Act (FNGA) in Vancouver. Organized by the Indigenous Peoples Grassroots Movement (IPGM), the rally was one of several direct actions that Native people across Canada have organized against the Act in the past month.

We interviewed Lana Lowe, an organizer with the IPGM, about the First Nations Governance Act. Lana Lowe is Slavey (Dene) and a grad student in the Indigenous Governance Program at the University of Victoria. She currently works as a researcher for the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

How does the FNGA affect Indigenous rights and treaty rights?

First of all, the FNGA doesn't recognize or address Indigenous rights. It doesn't address our rights to our territories or our political rights within our territories. It asserts Canadian sovereignty over our lands and our people. The fundamental assumption that this whole body of legislation stems from is that Canada has the power to determine what we should be doing to better our lives in our lands. So the FNGA really, in that sense, denies our rights and pretends that they don't exist.

As far as treaty rights, it's the same thing. Robert Nault, the Minister of Indian Affairs, claims that the FNGA doesn't affect treaty rights or Section 35.* But when you look at it, one of the principles in the Act is the shift in the legal definition of 'Indian' bands. I don't like talking like this, recognizing Canadian Law and saying 'we're Indians under the Indian Act,' because it is saying that this is what gives us our rights; but since we're talking about the FNGA, I guess it's necessary.

They're shifting the legal definitions of Indians and Indian



An organizer with the Indigenous Peoples Grassroots Movement addresses the crowd at Vancouver rally against the First Nations Governance Act, June 2003.

Bands to one that can be defined as a 'natural person,' which means Indian Bands can buy and sell property, mortgage property. So, for example, let's say your Chief decides that she wants to enter into a business, gets a loan from the bank, the business fails and she defaults on the loan. She then may have to give up reserve land as collateral. So, you see the erosion of what we have left as our land base.

In the FNGA, there's three sections to the Act that tell us how we should be governing our communities: leadership selection, government administration, and fiscal accountability. With the fiscal accountability, they're using terms like 'own source revenue,' which involves looking

at ways for us to try and come up with our own sources of revenue so they can reduce their fiscal responsibilities to us. So, say we get \$20 million to administer a Department of Indian Affairs program. If we have our own source revenue, then they take what we have away from the \$20 million that they were going to give us. So if we have \$10 million of our own revenue, they'll only give us \$10 million instead of the \$20 million. So basically, we're not getting any return, and they're getting off the hook.

So any attempt that a band makes to increase the amount of money it has will fail because if the band has any kind of development or projects that are profitable, those profits

don't go to the band?

Yes, we're maintaining a level of poverty based on what the government needs. They encourage economic development in our communities so that we can become self-sufficient, but they will not give us the freedom to look at our own needs and our own resources so that we can take care of ourselves. They want us living in this constant state of poverty, and there's nothing that we can do to get out of it because as soon as we start to get out of it they will take away whatever headway we make for ourselves.

How will the powers of the Minister of Indian Affairs be increased under the FNGA?

Under the FNGA, the minister of Indian Affairs has the power to enforce the rules and regulations of financial or fiscal accountability. That gives him the power to open our books, so to speak, and demand absolute accountability from our leaders on the spending of the government allotment to our people. They have the power to impose third-party management if they fail to meet their requirements and their regulations.

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Afghanistan, What Now?

By Leah McKenzie-Brown

Afghanistan was the target of the United States long before the attacks on the World Trade Centre in September of 2001. While the public was led to believe that the bombing campaigns and invasion of this country were to oust the Taliban (former allies of the United States against the secular government of Babrak Karmal), thus ridding the world of bin Laden supporters and subsequently "liberating" the oppressed people of Afghanistan, there is in fact little difference in the current make-up of the country with regards to oppression, women's rights, economic development or security and stability.

The Taliban ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 when the US invaded the country. However, it was three years before the invasion when support for the Taliban regime actually diminished. In 1998, the US State department issued a statement no longer recognizing the Taliban as a legitimate government in Afghanistan.

In 1998 the transnational corporation UNOCAL proposed a US-constructed oil pipeline from the Central Asian countries through Afghanistan. This pipeline would give the US optimum control of the region, bringing oil from the oil reserves in areas north of Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Russia to tanker ships in the Indian Ocean and markets in the Far East, India, Pakistan and beyond.

Afghanistan - as a country which neighbors Iran, Pakistan, former Soviet satellites (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), China and Kashmir - is a strategically important region for the US to have a strong presence militarily, economically and politically.

Although the Taliban, a faction of the Mujahadeen, was trained and armed by the CIA, the US army and the Pakistan military, it became noncompliant with the United States imperial policies upon



assuming power in 1996. Anti-US and Western sentiment had been growing in Afghanistan, and the Taliban's extremist and oppressive policies were making Afghanistan a highly unstable country. This anti-imperial sentiment, coupled with the situation of instability and the developing civil war, was contrary to what the US had been pushing since their involvement in Afghanistan in the 1970s. Within this new situation the US government and their corporate supporters saw the end of the Taliban's usefulness.

UNOCAL, having pushed the CentGas pipeline, justified their construction in a press release dated Sept. 14, 2001, as helping to "bring peace, stability and economic development to the Afghans, as well as develop important energy resources for the region". The "peace, stability and economic development" that the company brought was a campaign of cluster bombs and depleted uranium on the Afghan people, women and children suffering most, the deaths of hundreds of innocent people, an impotent puppet regime and a complete disregard for the human rights and human dignity of the Afghan people, which they "meant" to restore.

Afghan Women Still in Waiting

The idea that women's situations have improved substantially in occupied Afghanistan is a myth. For months prior to invasion the US corporate interests and their propaganda machine claimed that they were concerned about the abuse of women's rights in Afghanistan, and that the liberation of women in Afghanistan

was one of their major goals. In April, Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) spokesperson Temina Faryal stated, "with warlords controlling the countryside, assaults on women continue and religious tyrants are reasserting themselves". It was true before and it is true today that progress under imperialist intervention and colonization of that country are bound to fail, as these interventions are *never* in the interests of the people. Nine in ten women in Afghanistan still wear the Burka (a complete cover from head to toe) even under "civilized" American military occupation. Heavy segregation in schools prevents girls from receiving badly needed education (often they may only be taught by female teachers, who are scarce at best), and women still face harassment, violence, rape and home invasions inside and outside of Kabul.

Refugees, many of whom are women and children, face a terrible dilemma. Under constant harassment to return from the Iranian government, as well as new laws preventing the hiring of Afghans due to their lack of residence status, this year only 117,923 of the 377,759 returned refugees to Afghanistan did so voluntarily, according to Baku Today. United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates Iran still holds 2.35 million refugees from Afghanistan alone.

Liberation Under US Occupation

US installed President Hamed Karzai has little power outside of Kabul. Essentially, he is the ruler of the Kabul Valley and little else. Wealthy landowners and regional rulers control the rest of Afghanistan, brought back to power by the Northern Alliance with the support of Canada, the United States, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Vast amounts of power still remain in the hands of these reactionary regional leaders, each with their own militia and each with their own interests. The situation is so out of control that Karzai has threatened

to resign if the provinces don't start paying him revenues. Of the \$500 million collected in taxes last year, around \$80 million reached Kabul: 16 percent of all collected taxes. There is no loyalty to Karzai, and thus no central government in Afghanistan. The US-trained iron fist of the Taliban has given way to a handful of small and equally extremist regimes.

And so the United States, for all their claims at "liberation", are truly unable to bring safety, security and restructuring in Afghanistan. While politically Afghanistan remains in chaos so do all aspects of life in this country. In fact, Afghanistan's economy is completely dependant on foreign aid, which has destroyed what economy was left after years of strife. Grain—Afghanistan's staple crop—is worthless after the influx of grain through aid into the country. The farmland of Afghanistan is worthless except for the production of cash crops such as opium. Afghanistan now supplies 80% of Europe's drug trade.

When US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld visited Ismail Khan, the opium-producing warlord of the Western Afghanistan region of Herat, whom Human Rights Watch labelled an "enemy of the people", Rumsfeld called him "an appealing person, thoughtful, measured and self-confident". This statement shows US' disinterest towards the conditions of Afghan people, Afghanistan's independence, and prosperity for Afghans. But fallen rebuilding efforts aside, the fact remains that Afghanistan is an occupied land and that the self-determination and sovereignty of the people has been undermined. Whether through US-backed religious extremists or puppet regimes, the right of the people of Afghanistan to determine their own future has been prevented, a circumstance for which there is no justification.

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The Occupation of Iraq: What's Next?

Fire This Time holds successful forum against the War and Occupation of Iraq

By Leah McKenzie-Brown

On May 26th, Fire This Time held a public forum about the war and occupation of Iraq. The Forum was held in the Burnaby Public Library, and featured speakers from a diversity of political backgrounds. Joe Chou of the Chinese Refugee Rights Council, Rachel Taylor of Redwire Native Youth Media and Leah McKenzie-Brown of Fire This Time spoke about the occupation of Iraq and the need for self-determination of the Iraqi people.

Joe Chou began the discussion by drawing parallels between the colonization of Iraq and British rule in China, saying "Britain ruled China through the drug trade. We call it the 'Opium War'...China was weak. Imperialists don't invade strong countries, they invade weak ones. They are doing the same thing in Iraq. It has not been about liberation but about their own interests".

Rachel Taylor continued the discussion around the need for people to determine their own government, drawing attention to the colonization indigenous people still face at the hands of the Canadian government. "Self-determination means having control of your own resources" she said. "It is the opposite of occupation. It means control of your land, your interests, your economy." Indigenous defenders

of unceded territories face constant attacks by the RCMP as they protect their traditional lands, such as the Skwelkwek'welt defenders around the Sunpeaks ski resort. Rachel drew parallels between the Iraqi struggle and the struggle of oppressed people throughout the world.

Leah McKenzie-Brown focused on the need for the antiwar movement to continue its focus on Iraq, which at its height mobilized over fifteen million people world wide to oppose the war. Issues such as the changing support by the United States for Saddam's regime, the groundless excuse of Iraq having weapons of mass destruction and the strong resistance to the US presence in Iraq was central.

After the panelists spoke a discussion followed, in which the material reasons for the US colonization of the region, the betrayal of the Kurdish resistance in 1991 by the United States and other important issues were discussed. With about 40 people in attendance, the discussion was lively and educational, facilitated largely by youth and people of colour. Fire This Time hopes to continue holding forums outside of Vancouver to reach and network with all marginalized voices in the community, and to help build an effective mass movement against colonial interests and imperial agendas.

Drop the Charges Against the June 15th Defendants

By Ivan Drury

In February 2003, three main organizers with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) appeared at the first of their scheduled four months of court. John Clarke, Stefan Pilipa and Gaetan Heroux were charged with "participating in a riot," "counseling to participate in a riot" and "counseling to assault police." The alleged riot took place during the June 15th march on Queens Park in Toronto against what was at that time the Mike Harris-led Tory government.

According to an OCAP press release, "the case against Pilipa, Heroux and Clarke relied on antiquated and reactionary public order provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada. These had been seldom used since the attempt to crush unemployed organizing in the 1930s and the growth of industrial trade unions in the period just after World War Two." The charge "counseling to participate in a riot" is without precedent in Canada.

This trial, which threatened these three dedicated anti-poverty organizers with up to five years jail time, ended abruptly on May 11th. The deadlocked jury could not reach a decision after five days of deliberation whether a riot had even occurred that day.

The nine jury members threw up their hands and the judge declared a mistrial.

The charges as they originally stood were fabricated by the Ontario provincial government and its police to wash their hands of responsibility for violence at the June 15th demonstration. In fact, the violence was entirely initiated by the police, who were "protecting" politicians from the very people their policies were crippling, and whose repressive reforms created an environment in Ontario that left poor and working people with no choice but to resist. The people who rallied against the Tory government on June 15th 2000 were not the ones gutting social programs, making people homeless and attacking basic labour regulations.

Yet, the politicians responsible for the violence that rippled (and continues to shake) through Ontario on a daily basis were the ones who sat safely within the gates of Queens Park. The people resisting this violence were the ones who were attacked by the police, beaten and arrested.

The Tories selected three organizers of OCAP and laid fraudulent charges that would wash clean the hands of the Ontario government and place the blame for the problems of

violence in Toronto squarely on those struggling to end it.

At the end of May, Norm Gardner of the Toronto Police Services Board called for a retrial, and on June 17th, OCAP will be back in court.

The parallels between the attacks of the Tories under Mike Harris cannot be divorced from the agenda of the BC Liberal government today. In BC we have already seen the beginnings of the same police repression that poor and working people experienced in Ontario three years ago. We must stand against these unjust, undemocratic attacks.

Fire This Time demands that there be no retrial of Stefan Pilipa, Gaetan Heroux and John Clarke. The first trial made it clear that the charges had no basis, and that they stood more against the right to dissent than against the 1500 people who stood their ground when viciously attacked by the police.

The protection of the rights of dissent become most valid and vital when we are faced with government attacks that strip us of our basic rights of survival. The OCAP "riot" charges must be dropped immediately.

For more information visit the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty's website at www.ocap.ca.

Why We Must Oppose the First Nations Governance Act

'Opposing the FNGA' from page 9

When it comes to band leadership selection, right now we have some bands under the Indian Act with custom elections. The FNGA does away with the section of the Indian Act that approves of custom election, and imposes a leadership selection code that is already drawn up by the government, and it tells us how we are to select our leaders, how elections are to be held, and how long our leaders will be in power, all that stuff. We have two years to approve this code, and if we don't, then in two years it will be imposed by default.

The FNGA increases the band council's internal powers on reserve, so that Band Chiefs have more control. But at the same time the minister has more control over the band council.

I think this works in the favour of the Canadian government because the Indian Act councils are agents of the government in the end. It's an indirect imposition of ministerial power over our people through the Indian Act chief and council. It may look like the Minister of Indian Affairs is giving us Indians more control over our lives because they're increasing the internal powers of the band council, but really he's imposing a government that reflects his agenda, his interests.

Why is it important for Natives to oppose the FNGA?

I think it's important for us to oppose the FNGA because our leadership has failed to back us up on this one. They've dropped the ball, so to speak. They're too busy having their big bureaucratic lunches, saying 'no FNGA,' but they've failed to let the people know, first of all, what the FNGA is about, and second, how it's going to affect us and our communities.



March and Rally against the First Nations Governance Act in Vancouver, June 4th 2003

I find that embarrassing. We shouldn't even be calling these people our chiefs, our leaders, because they're not leading, they're out there playing politics, they're out there in Ottawa being bureaucrats. For two years there's been discussion about this Indian Act and no one in our communities has been informed. What kind of leadership is that?

They should have informed us about the FNGA, but they haven't because it does give them that little bit of extra power in our communities. They're not concerned about how it's going to affect our communities. They complain that they weren't 'consulted properly,' and they want to amend the FNGA, rather than trash the whole thing, rethink the Indian Act, and do something that gives us our freedom, our territorial rights.

It's time for us to step up as Indigenous people and stand up for our rights. I think that if we demand more from our leadership, then we need to start leading by example. It's one thing to say 'the leadership isn't doing its job' and it's another to say 'what am I doing to stop this from happening, this imposition of legislation over our territory?'

I think it's good to get out there into the community, raise some political awareness and get people thinking and talking.

Why is it important for non-Natives to oppose the FNGA?

I think if Canadians want to believe themselves when they say that they live in a free society, then they should be aware of what their government is doing in this land. I have faith in Canadians that they don't want to live in a colonial society.

I think that the regular Canadian should be opposing the FNGA because it's about the government imposition of legislation on the people whether we like it or not, and if it's going to happen to us, who's to say that it's not going to happen to non-Indigenous people?

With all these small communities losing their jobs because of corporate buyouts, with the resource sector going down and companies buying land up; it shows that the governments on this continent are hell-bent on taking our land, our labour, and selling it as cheaply as they can so that they can make the most amount of money. And it doesn't matter to them what we say.

So I think it's important that we all stand up and show that it does matter, that they can't just walk

all over us, pretending we don't exist.

Any closing remarks?

I don't usually do rallies, because in a sense it legitimizes the state by participating in their Western political system. But at the same time, the other option is to pretend that this legislation is not going through, that it's just a bunch of Canadian legislative garbage that I shouldn't pay attention to because 'I'm a sovereign Indigenous person, I don't need to pay attention to their shit'. But it does matter, it's being forced on us, so I think it's important that we are getting together, as Indigenous Peoples Grassroots Movement, because it's a forum for the people, it's a place for the people to stand up and say 'NO!'

The government is saying that we say yes to the FNGA, but we're saying no. We don't expect to destroy the colonial system with our rally, but it gives the regular Indian a chance to say no, and that's something the Canadian government didn't give us, that our chiefs didn't give us, so it's important to do this.

**Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution recognizes and affirms "existing aboriginal and treaty rights."*

after the occupation of Iraq, is increasingly tense and extremely hostile to the US. For this purpose the US needs, at least for a period of time, to ease the tension between Palestinians and the Israeli government.

The US also is seeking to buy creditability as a peacemaker in the eyes of the Arab masses. They must construct this image now in order to sell colonial policies in the Middle East later. This image is especially important if they hope to include the heavy involvement of the corrupt and sell out regimes of Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and King Abdullah of Jordan in their future plans in the Middle East.

Sharon himself is also under criticism for his failure to secure Israel from suicide bombings and armed attacks, which have become a nightmare for the Israeli population. The latest attack on Israeli soldiers by Palestinian gunmen at an army post near the Erez crossing in Gaza shows the vulnerability of the security system of Israel. This vulnerability exists in spite of spending of billions of dollars, building kilometers and kilometers of walls between Israelis and Palestinians and massacring thousands of Palestinians.

Not only has Sharon been unable to crush the heroic Palestinian Al-Aqsa Intifada (or Second Intifada) with all the tanks, helicopters and bulldozers at his disposal, but on the contrary, the Intifada has actually gained momentum. This is partly due to Israel's strong backing of the US occupation of Iraq. Palestinians can see very clearly that occupation now comes to the Middle East everywhere. The US and Israel have placed themselves on the same page in the eyes of millions of Arabs, and especially Palestinians, who feel and sense very correctly that the purpose of the occupation of Iraq is to enforce the occupation of Palestine.

Larger problems

Sharon and the Israeli ruling class are under tremendous pressure by their capitalist clients. How come?! Because the State of Israel has a capitalist system by injection.

Since 14 May 1948, the day it was borne, Israel could not survive economically even one day without billions of dollars of financial help by the US government, US corporations, Zionists and other Jewish charity organizations. Why? Since Israel has become a state based on terror and has limited resources, it has naturally created a deformed capitalist system which, in effect, partly depends on outside financial help and partly on domestic economical activity.

This is where Palestinian working people and especially labourers come into the picture. The Israeli government has always had dual oppressive policies toward Palestinians. On one side, Israel is occupying Palestinian land, expelling them from their homes, towns and villages to refugee camps, towns and villages outside of the 1948 and 1967 occupations boundaries and killing their kids, brothers and sisters to accomplish this. On the other side, Israel is using cheap Palestinian labour to create wealth and prosperity in Israel. Palestinians work in agricultural and light industries for minimum wages and averaging the least benefits in the country, if any at all, compared to Israeli workers.

Such hypocrisy, brutality and lack of dignity is comparable with what Fascist Germany did to millions of innocent Jewish people in Europe and what the Fascist Japanese did to the Chinese people and other Asians in the 1930's and 1940's.

The Israeli business and capitalist class will pay a big price, losing hundreds of millions of dollars with the closure of the West Bank and Gaza and the interruption of the flow of Palestinian workers into

Israel. In last two months this has become a devastating situation for business and industry in Israel. Not having Palestinian workers in Israel is the biggest suicide bombing for the Israeli economy. The Palestinian working class, whether inside or outside of Israel, are a big power that can effectively impact any peace process and negotiation.

The problem of problems, in the sense of the biggest headache in the Middle East for the US, is Iran. They don't generate revolution and radicalism anymore, since they became corrupt years ago. However, the Iranian ruling class, for its own survival and sustainability, tries to spread out its influence through any holes it can go through, whether with anti-imperialist rhetoric or religious appeal. This country of 70 million, organized in conventional army and Revolutionary Guard (as big as an army) and also millions of reserved militia (called Baseej -mobilization), and vast resources of oil, Gas, mineral and industry, is a foe of the US. Not only that, the Iranian revolution of 1979, which was one of the 20th century's greatest and truly classical revolutions in terms of mass movement and mass armed insurrection, left a great example of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism for all the nations of Asia, especially the Middle East and North Africa. Iranian workers, peasants and young people carried out a revolution, overthrew the Monarchy and kicked the US out of Iran. They completely changed the relation of forces in the Middle East in favour of oppressed people. It also enforced the momentum of the Palestinian liberation movement. The US has to change this entirely.

The occupation of Afghanistan and then Iraq were the first steps to probe toward this very important goal. Sharon has agreed completely with the US on this goal and rightfully sees that a Middle East with a friendly or at least non-hostile Iran means that he can more effectively deal with the Palestinians. So, like many Arab and European countries, he has subscribed to the US campaign against "dangerous" Iran with its nuclear bomb capability. Within this understanding, dealing with Palestinians, even on a short-term basis, would benefit Israel and its long run strategy.

What Now?

The Road Map is not a peace map for the Middle East or for Palestinians. This is a delay strategy for the time the Israeli government and its army need to prepare and restructure itself for the next round of attacks and sieges on the Palestinians. This delay will also provide enough time for the US to smooth out the process of the occupation of Iraq until a stable protectorate government can be installed. The road map gives the US the time and space it needs to build up its political and military campaign against Iran in order to bring change to this strategically important country, if not by military force, then by outside pressure.

Working, poor and oppressed people of Canada and the world share a common interest against these vulture countries, and must oppose the US and Israel imperialist policies in Palestine and the Middle East. We must demand an end to the occupation of Palestine, Iraq, and Indigenous land in Canada, US-Israel hands off Palestine, and US out of the Middle East.

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.

社会正义斗争联盟的群众基础和宗旨

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众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，我们并非孤单地斗争，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

'Afghanistan' from page 9

A Proud Anti-Imperialist History

The people of Afghanistan have a proud history of struggle against foreign intervention and domination. This foreign domination and intervention includes Canada, who committed troops first to the incursion on the region and more to supplement US troops leaving for the attack on Iraq. Since the occupation of Afghanistan, there have been numerous demonstrations at the University of Kabul against failed promises by the US and the Karzai government. As early as May 8th of last month, hundreds of Afghans took part in a spirited demonstration in Kabul against the continued U.S. presence in their country. News agencies described the protest as the first anti-U.S. demonstration since the country was invaded at the end of 2001.

On June 7th of this year, a suicide bomber blew up a bus which, according to the German Defence Ministry, was comprised mainly of German International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) soldiers. Four German occupation soldiers were killed and another 29 wounded in what was the first suicide bombing since the invasion.

The history of Afghanistan speaks to a long history of anti-imperialist resistance. During the second half of the 19th century and first decade of the 20th century the people of Afghanistan were in constant resistance against the Russian and British Empires for self-determination and independence. Following the Third Afghan War, which resulted in complete defeat of the British Royal Army in May 1919, Afghanistan gained the right to conduct its own foreign affairs. The treaty of Rawalpindi was amended in November 1921 to recognize Afghanistan's official independence.

In 1973, with the help of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), the backing of Soviet-trained Afghan military and a Moscow-nurtured Afghan political faction within PDPA, Mohammed Daoud ousted his cousin, King Zahir Shah. However, Daoud kept Afghanistan sympathetic to US interests, threatening Soviet influence, who then backed a separate client regime in 1977. In 1978 Daoud's government was deposed by a pro-soviet regime with the PDPA in leadership. Each regime began a series of reforms in the country: remnants of the monarchy were wiped out, 13 000 political prisoners released, trade unions were legalized, peasants were given parcels of land, and women could go to school.

In response to these reforms, feudal landlords, wealthy religious leaders and others who had lost their cast or class privileges started to organize different factions of Mujahadeen

armed resistance to these progressive changes. In December of 1979, the Soviet army, on the "request" of PDPA government, entered Afghanistan to help the government defeat this counter-revolutionary movement. It was during this period that the United States and CIA began, with Pakistan, to back the extremist Mujahadeen, who would later faction off into the Taliban.

The people's fight for sovereignty has been continuously hijacked by foreign powers. Both the Soviet Union and the United States were following agendas of naked self-interest; the Soviets to secure their borders against the US, and the US to overthrow the Soviet protectorate regime in Kabul and establish economic domination of the region. The brutality of the United States, Soviets, the Taliban, the Karzai puppet regime and the regional warlords is contrary to the values of the Afghan people, who historically have struggled for a society which represents their great culture and human dignity, opposing tyrannical regimes, whether domestic or imperialists.

Struggle in Progress

The consciousness of the people of Afghanistan has not been lost. Historically their consciousness manifests itself in the struggle for self-determination, through the ethnic nationalities, the poor and the oppressed. Nothing has substantially changed for the people of Afghanistan since US "liberation", and increased US presence has merely served to aid in the plundering of the resources in the Middle East as a new face has been placed on an old, corrupt regime.

When we, working, poor and oppressed people, stand in solidarity with the Afghan people, we stand against corporate interest, global hegemony of imperialists and for the right of poor and oppressed people everywhere to resist foreign domination and exploitation. Afghanistan was not the first victim of the US war machine, and it will not be the last. With the war in Afghanistan the US has started a new era of an old agenda of strategic wars. The US war on the people of Afghanistan has been a probe for the war on people of Iraq. When we stand up for the rights of the people of Afghanistan, we stand for global stability and peace, and the rights of working people and oppressed nations to determine their own governments. We stand in defiance to oppression, racism, exploitation and imperialism with all colonial and semi-colonial people.

We must demand the end of the occupation of Afghanistan: US, UK Canada and all multinational troops out of Afghanistan, and self-determination for the people of Afghanistan!

The Attacks on Immigrants and Refugees under the veil of 'Terrorism'

'Asylum' from page 3

refugee claim decisions and granted immigration officials the power to detain migrants for "a really long time." It also raised the bar of immigration to specify university educated, white, English speaking immigrants as the rule. The most reasonable means of immigration for poor people and people of colour has become the illegal.

The Power to Arrest and Remove Arabs, Muslims and other "Undesireables"

The Canadian government has already begun to restrict the rights and liberties of immigrants and refugees inside the country. They have begun to hold people on "security certificates" if considered to be of interest regarding terrorism or terrorist related connections. The security certificate allows the person to be held without the release of public information, without disclosure of the evidence against them and on no grounds but the suspicion of the court.

The security certificate is part of

Canada's internal battle against migrants, embodied in the Anti-Terrorism Act, Bill C-36, which was ushered through Canadian Parliament to be passed just 2 months following 9-11.** Raja Khouri, the President of the Canadian Arab Foundation called for an end to Bill C-36 at a press conference on May 15th. He said that the wide powers that CSIS and the police have been granted to arrest, detain, perform surveillance and freeze and confiscate assets of suspected terrorists have been exploited in a targeted racist attack against Arab and Muslim men in Canada. Khouri said that he has received reports from over 35 Muslim and Arab men who have been wrongfully arrested, detained and questioned since the passing of the bill.

The proposed Citizenship Act, Bill C-18, is the final legislation necessary for the Canadian Government to link all their attacks against refugees to immigrants with citizens who have been absorbed into the Canadian workforce. Bill C-18

would allow the immigration minister the power to annul the citizenship of a refugee if it is their *opinion* that the person acquired their citizenship through "prohibited grounds". These grounds would include "lying" on refugee application forms or the *impression* that the person may have a criminal conviction abroad. C-18 would allow the federal court the power to strip, annul and revoke citizenship without disclosure of evidence if the citizen is found to be "injurious to national security or the safety of any person". Neither of these processes of revocation have any judicial mechanisms of defense or appeal and the evidence would not even have to be admissible in a court of law.***

Bill C-18 would extend the fear of deportation known by all refugees and non-status people beyond even landed immigrants to people who have been granted permanent status and legal entitlement as Canadian citizens. Bill C-18 would finish the work of establishing immigrants as an

under class of Canadian citizens.

The Establishment of a New Canadian Apartheid

Apartheid exists when two separate groups of people who occupy the same area, within the same borders, under the same government, are afforded two separate sets of laws and regulations to live by. In Canada, as in South Africa and Israel, this separation has been constructed along lines of race. As part of their attempt to further divide Canadian workers and to cement the existing underclass of low wage, low paid immigrant workers of colour, the Federal Liberal government is constructing a new Canadian apartheid that holds immigrant workers to a different standard than locally born workers. This apartheid relies on the separation of workers from each other to succeed.

Beneath the cloak of the racist allegation that all immigrants are potential "al-Qaeda sleeper cell agents" is the unifying factor of these insults and repressive legislations: these are attacks on the rights and livelihood of

all workers. We must recognize the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Safe Third Country Agreement, the Anti-Terrorist Act and the proposed Citizenship Act as attacks that can unite us in struggle against them. The Liberals are attacking the most vulnerable workers in the country in an attempt to weaken the position of all workers through division. It is the responsibility of all workers, all poor people and all oppressed people to defend ourselves against these attacks by overcoming this false division to resist and defeat this racist legislation and this new Canadian apartheid.

**And counting. 123 deaths registered as of June 4, 2003, but sadly, there are more deaths reported daily.*

***See the short article "Justice for Adil Charkaoui!" on page 3 in this issue of the Fire This Time newspaper for more information on the security certificate and the example of one case in Montreal*

****See Fire This Time newspaper #2, #3 and #4 for greater detail of Bill C-11 and Bill C-18 and their effects on the rights of immigrants and refugees*

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fire This Time Presents

War, Occupation, Resistance: What We Have Learned

Antiwar Conference June 15th

2:30 PM – 8:30 PM, doors at 2 PM

Collingwood Neighbourhood House

5288 Joyce (2 blocks south of Joyce Skytrain Station)

Childcare Provided.

Space is limited, Pre-registration preferred. Call (604) 322-1764 or email info@fire-this-time.org to register.

Endorsed by: *Stopwar.ca, Youth-3rd World Alliance, Simon Fraser Student Society, and UBC Social Justice Centre*



International Struggle Against the Drug War

Speakers, Movies, Discussion, Strategy

Wednesday June 11th at 7 PM

327 Carrall Street, Vancouver

By donation (no one will be turned away)

Organized by the *Coalition for Harm Reduction*. For more information contact *David Cunningham* at 604-726-5789, or at lubby@resist.ca

Demonstration In Solidarity with Thai Drug Users

Thursday June 12th at 12 PM

Victory Square Park (Cambie & Hastings)

Organized by *VANDU*. For more info vandu@vandu.org or (604) 216-2776.

Night Owl Buses End the Curfew Now!

Thursday June 12th at 6:30 PM

Collingwood Neighbourhood House - 5288 Joyce (near the station)

Free Admission. Organized by the *Bus Riders Union*. For more information call (604) 215-2775 or email bru@resist.ca.

What do you think about this newspaper?

Discussion of *Fire This Time* # 5

Monday June 16th at 6 PM

IWA Hall in Vancouver
2859 Commercial Drive
(Commercial and 13th)

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