

FIRE THIS TIME



The Newspaper of the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice

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FREE

STOP THE RACIST WAR AT HOME AND ABROAD

By Ivan Drury

March 15th is the International Day Against Police Brutality, and this year there was an international call out for mobilization against the US led war on Iraq for the same day. This call came from an international gathering of anti-war organizers and coalition representatives in London on the first of March. Whether or not it was the intention of the organizers for this mobilization against war, the International Day Against Police Brutality is the most appropriate day possible for an international demonstration against imperialist military aggression.

Imperialists have been waging war against oppressed and working people since imperialism was known as colonialism and Empire meant hoisting a flag. It has been necessary for capitalists to hire police to beat and control workers and poor people since the division between workers and bosses was created. There is not now and there never has been a division between the local and the international in the attack on the rights, freedoms and securities of oppressed people by the ruling class. The entire notion of "national" versus "international" loses meaning when the US-backed Israeli army displaces, beats, tortures and murders

indigenous Palestinians in the occupied territories of Palestine, a country whose existence Israel does not recognize.

The Canadian government sent the army in to destroy the sovereignty movement of the Mohawk people in Oka, and the Secwepemc (Shuswap) people in Gustafson Lake. The Canadian army deployed military force to squash indigenous struggles for land and self-determination. On the west coast, the RCMP deployed the same tactics against the Secwepemc peoples in 2002 when the Skwelkwel'welt Protection Centre Defenders

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Anti-war March and Rally in Vancouver, February 15th

Budgeting the Bankruptcy of the People of BC Exposing the anti-worker, anti-poor agenda of the BC Liberal Budget

By Shannon Bundock

"With its first full budget in February 2002, the BC Liberal Government introduced a three-year plan with three goals: to restore sound fiscal management, revitalize the economy and put patients, students and people in need first. The plan is working." - "Budget 2003/04 Keeps B.C. on Track", BC Liberal website

The BC Liberals recently released their budget for the 2003/04 fiscal year. Again we are seeing cuts to social services and increases in private subsidies and tax cuts. It takes little investigation to see through the neo-liberal rhetoric and recognize the reality of what the 2003/04 budget will

mean: further attacks on poor and working people all across the province.

"Restoring Sound Fiscal Management and Revitalizing the Economy" According to the BC Liberals

What has been presented is a focus on "fiscal management" and "balancing the budget." Again the Liberals have taken the approach they did when first elected as they attempt to enforce a fear of social spending due to a "fiscal crisis". The method being used by the Liberals to justify the need for cuts to social spending is age old: manufacture and/or aggravate a crisis then propose aggressive measures to "solve" it. According to a report by the

Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), "The current 'fiscal crisis' is primarily the result of the government's massive tax cuts - tax cuts, we were told, that would pay for themselves. The government's radical spending cuts are reckless and unnecessary."1 These cuts, which are more accurately viewed as attacks on social services, are unacceptable and in no way necessary. In fact, according to the Auditor General, the budget was already balanced before the Liberals took office and the projected deficit for 2002/3 is due to a combination of recession and massive tax cuts. The "balancing" that is proposed for the 2004/05 fiscal year is simply a guise for more cuts to social programs, more attacks on poor and working people.

The Liberals are presenting the 2003/04 budget as a responsible approach to spending; justifying corporate tax cuts by calling them "Tax Changes for Growth and Diversification", subsidizing big business has become "Construction to Promote Economic Development" and "Revitalizing Our Forest Industry". Similar to the way the first tax cuts by the Liberals were presented to the people of BC, this corporate welfare is being rationalized through the claim that it will pay for itself by stimulating the economy. However, tax cuts

paying for themselves is not a likely prospect, as the first tax cuts the Liberals introduced were followed by the 2001 economic recession. In the upcoming year we can expect more of the same from the Liberals; further hacking away at our social structure, funding cuts that will result in job loss, reduced services, and lowering of living standards for many people in BC.

"The government's economic strategy boils down to tax and spending cuts, privatization and deregulation. It is more a leap of faith than a compelling plan for BC's future. In spite of all the rhetoric about "making BC open for business" there is no evidence that these strategies actually work-that they deliver the type of investment we want, or that they are worth the trade-offs in social and environmental protections."

- BC Solutions Budget 2003, Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives

What "Putting Patients, Students and People in Need First" Means to the BC Liberals

Despite the reality of the 2003/04 budget, in which Education, Advanced Education and Health Services are the only social program ministries that are not being cut, the Liberals are presenting it as a budget which is "putting patients, students and people in need first".

What Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals say about Healthcare

"There is nothing that will be more challenging to us in the years ahead than modernizing our health care system. Here is one thing that you should know: between 1985 and today our health care costs have tripled and the pressures keep on mounting. We have an aging population. Over the last decade health care costs increased between 7 and 8 per cent a year while our economy only grew between 1 and 3 per cent. Our pharmaceutical costs are going up 14 and 15 per cent a year. ... But our HEU, our health employees' union, is currently being paid 30% above the national average for public sector workers doing the same job." 2

A picture of the BC Liberal government's vision of "modernizing our health care system" can be pieced together when looking at how they've chosen to manage the economy of the province. Looking beyond what is said in Campbell's address and to the reality of attacks on the Hospital Employees Union (HEU), for example, provides a clear understanding of what the Liberals truly mean by the use of the word "modernize". To the Liberals it means modern union

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Bread and Roses...And Tuition: An Interview with UBC TA Picket-Marshall Elissa Strome

By Leah Mackenzie

Teaching Assistants at the University of British Columbia have been without a contract since August of 2002. In the past months, negotiations have broken down, forcing the TAs into a strike position.

The university has not only left the bargaining table, they have been actively manipulating public opinion through channels not open to the poorly-funded union workers, such as broadcast e-mails to all students outlining their "generous" position, as well as advertisements in the *Globe and Mail*. They are now seeking legal action against the picketers.

The strike is a struggle against the Liberal government, whose unfreezing of tuition has made it increasingly difficult for students to pay for their education. This year, the UBC will have seen two base tuition increases of thirty percent, and there is no sign of relief.

Elissa Strome is a TA picket marshal. This interview with her was conducted on March 12th outside Buchanan complex which, at the time of this article, was on its third day of pickets.

The day after this interview was conducted, the BC Liberal Government legislated the TAs back to work with a 20-day 'cooling off' period. The following day, the teaching



UBC students and workers picket in support of the striking TAs.

assistants organized a protest in defiance of the legislation, closing down all but one of the entrances to the university. As this paper goes to press, another protest was being organized for Friday March 14th.

To find out more about the CUPE2278 TA's bargaining position, visit www.cupe2278.ca

There was much build up in the initial days of the strike, with rumours that the entire university would be shut down, but it seems to have been tied up

in red tape. Can you elaborate?

Absolutely. Our strategy so far has been one of escalation. We started very small, picketing individual buildings for half days and building from there: more buildings, longer days—we're building to a climax. What happened with the red tape is that the university sought an injunction from the BC Labour Board, which stated that they didn't want us to picket any individual buildings on campus, that they only wanted us to picket the gates. They were asking us to shut down the entire

university—they were elevating the job action! The labour board did not grant this injunction.

There are two other unions at UBC involved in labour disputes, CUPE locals 2950 and 116. What kind of situation are they in right now?

2950 is the secretarial and administrative staff, who are now in a legal strike position, and they're doing pretty much the same as us: picketing individual buildings on a rotating basis and escalating at the same time. We are working very closely with them, so those are coordinated efforts. CUPE 116 represents the plant operations workers and the grounds workers on campus. However, they are not yet in a legal strike position because they are still in mediation, although they have taken an 85% positive strike vote.

Where does the strategy go from here? Are there plans to picket the entire university?

I can't really divulge the strategy but as you can see, UBC wants us out to the perimeter, which indicates to me that our strategy of doing individual buildings on a rotating and escalating basis is really quite effective. I've seen it on the picket lines that we are really getting through to people and it's working for us, so it would be a smart idea anyway to continue on this strategy.

What are the demands of the TAs and how is it going in mediation?

Our last date of mediation was two weeks ago when the UBC administration made us an offer of a 10% increase in wages. Wages is not our key issue, our key issue is tuition and the fact that tuition is being increased every year. We are the only employee group on campus that doesn't have any tuition protection, tuition benefits, tuition relief. That's what we are seeking. They keep offering us money in wages that can easily be clawed back in tuition increases year after year. We will not move from the bargaining table until they talk to us about tuition.

Do you think that a victory for the TAs could lend itself to a victory for other students in their attempts to lobby the administration?

Absolutely. I think that by us raising these issues and making the entire campus community aware of these issues, it really lends power to the other groups on campus such as the undergraduates, the Alma Mater Society and the Graduate Student Society as well. This is just the start of this university fighting back against the administration.

All United Against War on Iraq! US, UK, and Canada out of the Middle East!

By Ali Yerevani

Since January 31, when president George Bush declared that "this issue will come to a head in a matter of weeks, not months," the US army has doubled the number of soldiers in the Middle East to 280,000. It also has 5 aircraft carriers and more than 1000 tanks and warplanes in the area. As early as March 13, the US navy ordered warships carrying Tomahawk cruisers, which are extremely deadly weapons of mass destruction, to move to Persian Gulf ready to strike Iraq. The US death machine really started to roll towards the genocide of the people of Iraq at the beginning of March when Bush, the executive manager of this death machine, said that "the time for Saddam Hussein is running out." In addition, not surprisingly, on Friday March 14, Condoleezza Rice, the national security advisor of President Bush, uncovered the readiness of the US imperialist war machine to start the war as early as next week, saying "Now it is the time we bring this matter to conclusion." The warming up for war has already begun: since Thursday, the US and the UK have substantially increased air attacks on civilian and military targets in Iraq.

Did diplomacy fail or was it failed-diplomacy?

Under the pressure of opposition from people in the United States and around the world to war and the killing of mothers and children of Iraq, the US and UK presented a resolution to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), containing an ultimatum to Saddam to disarm or face

the consequences. All the US and UK imperialists wanted was a blueprint for war by the UNSC. US and UK diplomacy came to a halt and failed completely by March 13, when they found out that they did not have 9 out of 15 votes in the UNSC. This huge embarrassment and failure came about even though George Bush and Tony Blair spent one week in telephone conversations with the 6 undecided members of the UNSC. The UNSC has 15 members: the 5 permanent members, who all have veto power, are Russia, China, France, England and the US. There are also currently 10 temporary members: Bulgaria, Spain, Germany, Syria, Angola, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico, Chile and Pakistan. There have been frequent trips by the British foreign minister and the US' Collin Powell to those countries to bully or buy them out in order to ensure the 9 votes needed to pass a war draft resolution. France, Russia and China, all of which wield vetoes, oppose the draft, and they are backed by Germany and Syria. The remaining six, no-veto members - Angola, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico, Chile and Pakistan -- have yet to make their voting intentions known, although Chile, Mexico and Pakistan made it clear that they would not be voting Yes for war.

There were two fundamental reasons why this failed-diplomacy failed. One is that the imperialists rivalries of France, the US, and the UK alongside Germany, have not reached an agreement amongst themselves for sharing in the plundering of the wealth of Iraq and the Middle East, while also sharing some spoils of war with China

and especially Russia, which will be one of the biggest financial losers in an Iraq without Saddam. Second, the US and UK underestimated the pressure from below on the third world members of the UNSC. Struggling with bankrupt economics and deep anti-US-war sentiment in their backyard, the governments of these countries are even more scared that if they follow the US and UK, this will be their last hurrah before their governments go down. Obviously, if there was nothing wrong with their judgment, George Bush and Tony Blair would know that the PEOPLE OF THE WORLD ARE NOT IN THEIR SIDE.

Going to war

After the second resolution crumbled late on March 13, the US and UK, followed by Spain, decided to start a new diplomacy, which basically will be the diplomacy of war in terms of how, when, and where to start war. This diplomacy is also about how to manage the war in terms of public opinion and co-ordination of the war drive and its backlash. They will meet on Sunday March 16 in Portuguese's Azores Island, because "every diplomatic effort is exhausted," as the Whitehouse spokesperson said on March 14th. They

have to come up with the best rationale for why they are starting this war without UNSC approval and how to justify this illegal war on Iraq.

Ironically, or better to say, ridiculously, on March 14 the US president and UK prime minister declared that they are soon presenting a "road plan for peace" for Palestinians and Israelis through to 2005!

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Workers and Unionists Reject Imperialist War

By Ali Yerevani

The most important and encouraging development around the world has been the direct involvement of workers and the labour movement in building the anti-war movement. In many cities and countries, workers and unions went on strike or work stoppage or work slow down against the war on workers of Iraq.

Italian port workers will go on strike next week for the last hour of their shifts to protest against the United States using their work places to ship war equipment out to the Gulf. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) met in Athens and confirmed the opposition of the trade unions to the war, and requests that all possible effort should be made without going to war. To support this request, the EC has launched an appeal for work stoppages everywhere in Europe on the 14th of March at midday.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) also issued a declaration urging a stance against war. The statement opposed war preparations because they hacked peace. The Confederation has more than 158 million members in 231 countries, including many of the major Turkish trade unions.

On Jan 31, the Australian Construction Union, the CFMEU, the British UCATT, Construction Workers Federations of India and Bangladesh, and the Arab Federation for Construction & Wood Workers passed a strong resolution opposing the war on Iraq at the 5th National Congress of Construction Workers in India. IG Metall, Germany's largest industrial union is urging its 2.6 million members to stop work for 10 minutes on March 14 in a protest against the looming war in Iraq.

In Canada, The Canadian Labour Council (CLC) and almost all unions, including the Toronto Labour Council and Vancouver Labour Council, together with BC Federation of Labour and hundreds of other unions and their locals across

Canada, have condemned the US war drive. The CLC represents 2.5 million Canadian workers.

The Canadian Auto Workers National Executive Board last November adopted a statement last November, which states that "Our union stands committed ... and urges the Canadian government not to be drawn into the war against Iraq, into the same old violent and simplistic solution of war." On January 8th, the Canadian issued a statement with the content of "why CUPE should take a position on war with Iraq", "CUPE opposes war with Iraq", and "peace is a worker's issue, and a union issue". This CUPE demands the Liberal government to oppose the war on Iraq. Notably most peace or anti-war coalitions across Canada are strongly supported by the unions or formed jointly by unions and grass roots organizations.

The following unions have also all condemned the war on the people of Iraq and have demanded mass protest against this brutal and criminal act: the General Workers' Union of Algeria (UGTA) and National Council of University Teachers, Mines, Energy, Chemics & Allied Unions, representing 68 African unions in 6 countries, Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), Brazil, General Workers Confederation of Burkina Faso (CGT-B), FO - National Union of the Employees of the Education Department and Regional Federation of the CGT unions, India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), The National Union of Workers (Union Nacional de Trabajadores, UNT) and 40 affiliated unions, Frente Autentico del Trabajo (FAT), and 10 affiliated unions, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions with affiliates in 10 countries, Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), General Confederation of Peru Workers (CGTP), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).



Workers in Spain demonstrate against the proposed US-led War on Iraq, March 14th

The Growing International Movement of Youth Against War

By Thomas Davies

On March 5th, between 30,000 and 50,000 North American high school and college students participated in demonstrations as part of a worldwide call for students to unite against the war on Iraq. Actions like this are being held all around the globe, with students of all ages joining together to become a vital element of the movement to denounce and end aggression against Iraq and its people.

The North American contingent was coordinated largely by the efforts of the National Youth and Student Peace Coalition, and despite threats from high school

Coalition is due to be held at the London School of Economics to plan for further occupations and sit-ins.

Australian students also turned out in large numbers for the March 5th demonstrations. In Melbourne, 5000 high school and postsecondary students rallied outside the State Library before marching to the Parliament House, many still in school uniform. This nationwide student movement was solidified by the further participation of 25,000 other students from around the country who walked out of classes to join together against the war.

administrators regarding suspension and expulsion, the turnout was "larger than expected," according to the organizers of these "Books Not Bombs" protests. The actions undertaken by the over 320 North American campuses involved



High school students at anti-war rally in Wales, October 2002.

included marches, sit-ins, vigils, lockdowns, and other creative actions. Over 1000 students from the Central Community College in Seattle staged a "die in" to dramatize the young people who would be killed in a war in Iraq, while other students arranged street theatres and forums.

European nations also saw student and youth-specific anti-war actions, on March 5th and other days, organized by groups in England, Spain, Sweden, the UK, France, Bulgaria, Greece, and Switzerland. In England, there were significant student protests in London, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, and Cambridge, as well as many other demonstrations in smaller towns and cities. A national students meeting of the Stop War

In Vancouver, UBC students participated in the March 5th demonstrations, while their Student Society voiced its opposition to war on Iraq. A separate SFU Coalition Against War has been established, which participates in an inter-campus network organizing against the war.

International students organizing themselves in these widespread, student-specific demonstrations is an indication of a strong youth stance against the war on Iraq. Their willingness to participate not only in larger demonstrations and actions, but to learn, create, and act with each other, has made them an important and essential element of the global efforts against the war on Iraq.

Women Around the World say 'No' to War on Iraq

By Nasim Sedarghat

On Saturday, March 8, millions of women throughout the world marched, rallied, and celebrated International Women's Day (IWD). What made this year's IWD different from previous

years was that the women of the world connected this celebration with the international protest movement against the US led war on the people of Iraq. From Australia to Palestine, from Italy to Canada, women of the world mobilized to fight back against the US-UK led war on the women and children of Iraq. In the US, tens of thousands of women in Washington, San Francisco, New York and hundreds of other cities, towns and campuses took to the streets to honor IWD by protesting against the US war drive. The biggest rally was in Washington, where 7,000 people, among them many mothers and their kids and their grandmothers, gathered near the White House to condemn Bush's march toward war. In Canadian major cities and towns including Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and Victoria, thousands of women and men condemned the bloody US war drive on the people of Iraq.

Women's anti-war rallies were wide spread all around the world. There were protest rallies and events in more than 70 countries. In Argentina, housewives, trade unionists and grassroots organizations lead the demonstrations. In Venezuela, women marched against right wing and US government intervention. Huge rallies were

also held in Ireland, Niger, Peru, Japan and Spain. In Lahore, Pakistan, hundreds of women held a peace rally against the US war drive on Iraq and expressed solidarity with Iraqi women and children on IWD. There were also Women's Day Peace Vigil Events in England, Germany, Israel, Serbia and Montenegro, and Switzerland.

In the streets of Ramallah, Palestine, hundreds of Palestinian women and men demanded an end to the vicious occupation of Palestine and expressed their opposition to the US war on the people of Iraq. In Cairo, Egypt, dozens of women held a peace vigil. Previous to IWD, ten Egyptian women organizations issued a joint anti-war declaration that reads, "We are convinced that a military attack against Iraq will destroy a whole nation, including its women and children, and will result in an appalling humanitarian tragedy." It concludes, "Thus, we, Arab women say NO to the war against Iraq because we are certain that when armies invade, only destruction will prevail."



Women protest against war in Calcutta, India, October 8th 2002

years was that the women of the world connected this celebration with the international protest movement against the US led war on the people of Iraq. From Australia to Palestine, from Italy to Canada, women of the world mobilized to fight back against the US-UK led war on the women and children of Iraq. In the US, tens of thousands of women in Washington, San Francisco, New York and

Protection of What? Rights for Who?

A Report on the Fire This Time Forum on Bill C-11 and Bill C-18

By Leah Mackenzie

On Monday, March 3rd, Fire This Time held its second forum on the issue of Canadian immigration and refugee policy, specifically the ratified Bill C-11 and the pending Bill C-18. These bills further revoke the rights of immigrants and refugees in Canada at a time when racism and racial profiling is becoming increasingly blatant under the pretext of the supposed “war on terror”.

Held at the Whalley Public Library in Surrey, the forum featured five speakers, who discussed various elements of the Canadian government’s ongoing suppression of this country’s

most marginalized people.

Amy Huang of the Chinese Refugee Rights Committee brought first-hand experience to the forum. A refugee whose claim has been denied, Amy is still going through the grueling and humiliating process of immigration. She spoke about the prejudice refugees often face when employers become aware of their status, and the fear refugees face day to day of receiving a letter that their claim is up for re-evaluation. Of those who apply, only 20% of refugees whose claims are rejected may go through the appeal process. Most are fleeing persecution, imprisonment, destitution, or war.

Other speakers included Jaggi Singh of the Montreal No One is Illegal Collective, Ning Alcuitas of the Philippine Womens Center of BC, Mandir Benipal who is organizing a petition drive against C-18 in the Indo-Canadian community, and Ivan Drury of Fire This Time.

“Immigration laws have to be put into the context of globalization and commodification,” said Ning Alcuitas. “Immigrants are brought here as cheap labour.” One example Alcuitas used was the Live-in Caregiver Program, which she described as “a form of modern day slavery. Women have to live with and work for their employers for twenty-four months before they can apply for

Canadian status”.

Jaggi Singh gave insight into borders and the current unprecedented movement of people across borders. “The reasons are the same reasons that they have been for hundreds of years,” he said. “Wars, poverty and exploitation. At the same time, you have unprecedented barriers to people”. The rights of refugees and people migrating compared to the relatively unchecked movement of corporations across borders exposes what he called a “global apartheid”.

After the speakers, there was an hour of discussion at the forum. The majority representation of people from immigrant and

refugee communities facilitated a political dialogue that brought as much from the floor as from the speakers.

The forum was a success, with representatives from different communities sharing experiences and common difficulties with the immigration system. Political analysis and goals were also discussed.

Fire This Time’s next forum will be on Monday, March 17 at 6 PM. This forum will be about the BC Liberal’s \$6 training wage.

Excerpts from Ivan Drury’s presentation from the March 3rd forum are included below.

From Rights for Refugees to Struggle for Citizenship (And Back Again)

By Ivan Drury

In the preparation for this forum, I have leafleted and spoken on skytrain cars, in the tunnel joining the Metrotown skytrain with the mall and in the bus loop at Surrey Central just up the street. In these places, I have met the same confusion, hatred, and nationalism that I have known very well around me growing up in Richmond, Langley and Vancouver. This racism, fear, ignorance and divisive protection of privilege are the same ideas and attitudes that Canadian immigration policy is based on and depends on.

failure rate.

Despite the bureaucratic impossibility of the processes all these people were undertaking, that auditorium was full of hope, desperation and solidarity.

What must be made clear before we can move into any real discussion of what Bill C-11 and Bill C-18 really mean, before we can begin to build a movement to beat back these attacks by the Canadian government, and the international ruling class, is that it does not matter whether you have been in Canada for two years or two generations: you are entitled to the same democratic rights.

that will be created through this imperialist military aggression.

Bill C-18 had its first reading in Canadian parliament in November of 2002 as the proposed new Citizenship Act. If Bill C-18 passes into an Act, it will not only strip even more rights from refugees, it will question and re-define the entire notion of citizenship for everyone in Canada. Bill C-18 would give the government the power to take away, annul and deny citizenship from accepted refugees.

C-18 is proposed on the same national security rationale as Bill C-11 stood on to become the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act last year. The farce of using immigration acts to protect national security is not only racist, but also fraudulent. It exposed by briefly examining the “strategic detentions” element of the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act. This clause allows immigration officials to detain refugee applicants for “a long period of time,” according to Immigration Minister Denis Coderre, and was instituted to defend national security. The records of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) show that, in 2002, out of 440 people held in detention at any given time across Canada, only 5 were being held because they were suspected of being a threat to national security. Similar loopholes for abuse is written in to the proposed Bill C-18.

According to the proposed Bill C-18, Federal court would be able to revoke citizenship without disclosure of evidence if the presence of the citizen is found to be “injurious to national security or the safety of any person”. The secret evidence would not even have to be admissible in court of law and the decision would not be open to appeal. The Immigration minister would personally be able to annul the citizenship of a refugee if the minister considered their status to have been acquired



Discussion period at Fire This Time’s ‘War on Iraq’ Forum, February 17th 2003.

through prohibited grounds. These prohibited grounds include the impression that the person may have criminal convictions abroad or that they made their initial claim under a false identity.

Both of these “prohibited grounds” are common for refugees who often flee their home country due to repressive criminal convictions and are forced to come to Canada under an assumed identity. The most dangerous thing is that there is no burden of proof, the minister must only be “satisfied” that the person’s citizenship should be annulled. This process is not subject to judicial process and the minister’s decision is not subject to review or appeal.

Bill C-18 would grant the cabinet government the power to refuse citizenship if the “person has demonstrated a flagrant and serious disregard for the principles and values underlying a free and democratic society.” There is no definition of what that means and can only be assumed as directed at political dissidents. Again, not only is this power to refuse citizenship completely arbitrary because governments and the idea of what “free and democratic society” means is ever changing, but there is no due process and no appeal process for the people who are subjected to these cabinet decisions.

Bill C-18 would redefine citizenship and bring the

question forward: what are our democratic rights as citizens? Are we only allowed to vote or does citizenship afford us the right to fight for our rights when elected governments do not uphold them? Are we allowed to organize in our workplaces and in the streets to defend and expand our rights and securities? Refugees are oppressed people who are already forcibly intimidated into silence by the refugee system; Bill C-18 would extend that silence into their lives once finally awarded citizenship, maintaining their insecurity, their desperation and super exploitation because of the fear that they will be attacked if they raise their voices, struggle and organize.

The rights of refugees are the rights of all people. All workers and oppressed people in Canada must defend the rights of refugees to organize, to live with decent wages, decent and dignified standards of living and without fear of constant attack by the government. This means that we must defend individual refugees against deportation, and this is becoming ever more important as the government further restricts refugees’ access to status in Canada. We must also build a mass movement to change the consciousness amongst Canadians. Citizenship affords us the right and the responsibility to fight for the rights of all status and non-status people in Canada and throughout the world.



The panelists of Fire This Time’s ‘War on Iraq’ Forum, left to right: Shannon Bundock, Linda Morgan, Iltath Syed, Ian Rocksborough-Smith, and Ali Yerevani.

I recently saw the opposite of this racist nationalism in the Carnegie Centre at a meeting of the Chinese Refugee Rights Council. Sixty non-status people sat together to hear lawyers explain how to appeal the decision made to deny their refugee claim. These lawyers explained the 20% chance of being allowed to appeal the decision to deny refugee status and the even more desperate 5% chance of completing a successful Humanitarian and Compassionate application to be allowed to apply for permanent status from within Canada. They outlined the Pre-Removal Risk Assessment application that is currently boasting a near 100%

The obvious extension of this is that we must fight for those same democratic rights to be extended to all people internationally. This is becoming all the more important with the escalation of aggression that American and Canadian Imperialism is displaying towards poor, working and oppressed people worldwide. We see this aggression, not only in the move towards war on Iraq, but also in the tightening of regulations for the acceptance of refugees in America and Canada. As these imperialist countries have done throughout history, they are once again preparing to deny and refuse any responsibility or aid to the millions of refugees

Fighting the Province's Attacks on Native Rights: An interview with Redwire Magazine's Tania Willard

By Mike Krebs

On January 29th Suzan Martinuk, a well-known journalist, wrote an article for *The Province* newspaper calling for "economic assimilation" to save Natives from their "miserable culture." The editors of *Redwire*, a Vancouver-based magazine for Native youth, responded by filing a complaint with the BC Press Council against Martinuk and *The Province* for comments in Martinuk's column that "promote racism and discrimination towards people of Aboriginal heritage." As a result, two people from *Redwire* were given space to write an article for *The Province* giving their perspective on the issue, but weren't allowed to actually refer to Suzan Martinuk or her article.

Tania Willard, the editor of *Redwire*, then filed a Human Rights Complaint against Martinuk and *The Province*, asserting that Martinuk's article "incites discrimination and hate by promoting assimilation." This interview was conducted on March 11th, 2003 between Fire This Time and Tania Willard.

Why did Redwire launch a human rights complaint against Suzan Martinuk and *The Province*?

It was based on the article that Suzan Martinuk wrote called 'Natives need freedom from both government and band council.' The whole article was from a right wing perspective, using 'shocking' statistics about poverty and conditions on reserve to forward a pretty racist agenda. But there were particular sentences in the article that were really racist, like referring to the Native population's "social and economic pathologies inherent to its culture." Basically, we were sick of reading these articles in *The Province* always from a really right wing perspective about Native issues, so we thought that, this time, we're going to push and do something about it.

The perspective of Martinuk's article is really common, and I think those really inflammatory things she said are common too.

How does challenging the overtly racist comments like those made by Suzan Martinuk have an impact on the more frequent, yet more subtle, racism in the mainstream media?

Native Media Watch, which is a group that is based in Alberta, wrote a supporting letter to *The Province* and the BC Press Council with similar complaints. They have dealt with the mainstream media before like *The Calgary Herald* and Ric Dolphin. Dolphin was a writer who did a series on Native issues that was really inflammatory, basically saying that welfare shouldn't give Native women money so that they can't have more kids and stuff like that. Native Media Watch complained to the Alberta Press Council and really tried to take this author to task, and eventually they got Ric Dolphin fired. So we

thought that if we can actually push for that kind of change then maybe there'll be a change in the reporting on Native issues. Because in the end, they don't look good, and it's not just Native readers, it's a lot of non-Native readers who don't agree with the portrayal that they're giving of Native people.



Tania Willard

What do you think about the statistics on poverty that Susan Martinuk referred to in her article? Do they tell the real story of Natives living within Canada?

Generally, most of her statistics were accurate, but no, they didn't tell the story. They were numbers that she used to strengthen her basic supposition, which was basically 'Oh my god we should be afraid. There's so many Indians getting born, so many young Indians, and they're all mad and they're all poor and they're all crazy and we should be worried about this!' She wasn't telling the story of what a single mom on welfare living on the reserve is dealing with, or urban Native people living in poverty, what their life is like.

Martinuk doesn't talk in her article about the reasons why Native people are living in poverty. She doesn't address the history of Canada, the history of British Columbia, or how we have legitimate rights to a great quantity of the land and the resources in this country. She doesn't talk about the reservation system, the residential schools, how we've been shut out of the economy and shut out of Canadian society. Because to go into those reasons would take away from her alarmist, inflammatory article, which stated in one section that "Native culture is a mess and the only way to change it is to accept economic assimilation."

Do these racist portrayals in the media affect the ability of non-Natives to understand and support Native struggles for self-determination?

For sure, it's part of institutionalized racism. It's part of a whole system of government in Canada and BC, which is in place to repress Native people's rights to land and resources. Because Canada wouldn't have an economy if they didn't have access to our lands and our resources.

It's really hard for people who

have grown up without any real contact with Native people or with Native communities to understand the issues, because they are more likely to absorb what they see in the mainstream media. There are some aboriginal newspapers, like *Kahtou*, *Windspeaker*, *Raven's Eye*, and *Redwire*, but we don't have anywhere near the power and the distribution that *The Province* does. So people really have to search for information to understand the issues. They can't just open *The Province*.

What kind of feedback have you received on your decision to file the complaint against Martinuk and *The Province*?

When we forwarded out the article and the complaint we were making, we had over a hundred emails from Native and non-Native people supporting our complaint against *The Province*. We had a few people who defended Suzan because of her freedom of speech.

Yes, Suzan Martinuk has a right to her bullshit right wing opinion, but she doesn't have a right to call us inherently socially and economically inferior. She doesn't have a right to call for our "assimilation in a globalized world." Assimilation has meant the death of many Native people and our cultures and languages, so she certainly doesn't have the right to that. But generally, the overwhelming response was positive, with people supporting the complaint.

What are some of the major attacks from the different levels of government that Natives are currently struggling against?

Federally, the big issue right now is the First Nations Governance Act, which will drastically impact every reserve in Canada. Indian Affairs is really pushing to have these consultations all throughout Canada on this to bring people in. These consultations are completely under their control. People that are opposed to it, like the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, have very few outlets to get another perspective out there, to say 'Ok, this is what the FNGA is, these are the problems we have with it, this is what you should be aware of that the government is not telling you.' So Indian Affairs has this wide open opportunity to convince people to go for the FNGA. And they're of course using the argument that they're trying to promote transparency and get rid of band corruption. So people who are living with corrupt bands, which is a lot of people, start to say 'maybe that's what we want.'

But it's the federal government that's controlling that. They're just as corrupt and they're based on corruption, their entire government, so how can they then tell us how to not be corrupt? What kind of 'solutions' could they have?

Their 'solutions' are about dumping money into capitalist aboriginal business, about

dumping money into tourism that exploits aboriginal lands and resources. Those are their 'solutions,' they're not ours.

Provincially, the land issue in BC is one of the biggest things. There are the issues of Skwelkwew'welt and the threat of the Olympics, which will really mean more encroachment into First Nations territory for more resorts to attract more tourists, so more usurping of our resources.

All the Liberal government cuts to welfare, disability, and other social services are also really affecting Native people because we're the poorest.

What is the state of Native youth living in Canada?

I think there's a range, in terms of Native youth living rurally and Native youth living in urban centers. A lot of Native youth gravitate towards urban centers: Vancouver has a really high Native population. There's a lot of youth out there who live in small towns, who have no opportunities on the reserve, they're living in poverty, and they come to the city to try and be part of the excitement, get a job, make money. A high percentage of those youth end up on the street, in sex trafficking, and in drug trafficking.

It's because they're getting pushed off reserves because we have no future there. Like myself, I'm not on my reserve, because I would be doing nothing, I wouldn't have the opportunity to do something like *Redwire* on my reserve. Maybe in 10, 20 years, with the work people are doing now, those

kind of that in 1995, and for a couple years after that, but since they haven't been that active in Vancouver (they're still active in other parts of Canada and the US), there's been a hole in our ability to organize and to create awareness around self-determination.

Where is there common ground for Natives and non-Natives to work together in a unified movement for social justice?

I think there's lots of ways in terms of how people work within their own organizations, their own activist groups, their own associations. One of the most important things right now in BC is the land question. I think people are sometimes aware of that, and will invite a Native speaker, or will acknowledge the territory they're on, and that's an important step. But they don't necessarily base any of their political ideals around that or frame that idea about aboriginal rights and title within what they're pushing for, within what they want to change.

There have been times in the past where non-Native and Native people have worked on issues together, like the group that did the mock parliament around the Referendum. The Referendum really pulled diverse peoples together to work on that issue.

People need to educate themselves, learn about the history of BC and Canada and have an understanding, and let that understanding inform their activism. There's this weird



Protest at Skwelkwew'welt against the Sun Peaks expansion, March 2001

opportunities would be available, but as it is, they're few and far between, so we get pushed into city centers. So you start losing your identity more and more the less contact you have with your territory, your family.

What do you think of the response of the Native sovereignty movement in BC to these attacks?

I think that, in some ways, there's a hole in terms of Native people organizing right now. We really don't have that many organizations or associations of Native people that can really take action collectively, other than the band councils, or UBCIC. There's grassroots stuff happening, like at Skwelkwew'welt and Sutikahl, and we're hearing talk of the Native Youth Movement starting up again, but there's not a larger group or association. NYM was

backlash that happens where you're talking to activists, like "I don't want to hear about racism, can't we move on? That's history." Racism is not history, it's happening every day to Native people in Canada, and people need to come to that kind of awareness, that this is an ongoing issue, it's not the past. There's lots that you can do about it today.

Any closing remarks?

I'd like to see more groups supporting Native issues by standing in solidarity with Native people. When things like Gustafson Lake happen, when things like what's happening at Skwelkwew'welt happen, people need to make an effort to understand those issues, to educate people around them, and to take action in support of these struggles.

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，可以削弱资产阶级在国际上的霸权和力量，从而援助加拿大人民的斗争。国际间的团结合作对建立世界正义运动是十分必要的。卑诗省自由党的议程是世界新自由主义计划的一部分。与卑诗自由党作斗争，是与世界新自由主义和资本主义作斗争。因此我们清楚地看到，我们并非单独地斗争，全世界千百万的劳苦人民和我们并肩战斗。在资本主义者和帝国主义的全球化主义下，任何一个本地的斗争都带有国际的特征。每一个国际斗争是本地的，而每一个本地的斗争也是国际的。

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

- Translated by Joe Chow

امروزه، انسان و انسانیت، در هر لحظه با جنگ‌افروزی، بحران‌های اقتصادی، قحطی و کرسنگی، قتل و جنایت تهدید می‌گردد. همه این مصیبت‌ها ناشی از چپاولی مردم توسط سرمایه‌داران برای بدست آوردن حداکثر سود به قیمت بدبختی و تیره‌روزی انسان است. برای مقابله و ریشه‌کن نمودن تمامی این جنایات ضد بشری ما باید همه نیرو و توان‌مان را جهت ایجاد بنیادی از زحمتکشان و ستمکشیدگان در تقابل با سرمایه‌ جهانی و نمایندگان و موسسات محلی‌اشان و همه ابزار و روش‌هایی که آنها برای تفرقه ما به‌کار می‌برند، متمرکز کنیم. اصول اولیه‌ای گروه ما بر اساس اتحاد و همبستگی فعالانه با مردم زحمتکش علیه فقر و بی‌سامانی، چه در سطح محلی و چه در سطح جهانی، تشکیل یافته است. البته، بر همه ما باید روشن باشد که بدون شرکت و حرکت فعال مردم، این اصول مشتق کلمات بروی کاغذ بیش نیستند. چرا که استمرار این مبارزه علیه منافع طبقات حاکم محلی و جهانی سرمایه‌داری است، و آنان بی‌شک از هر امکان و وسیله‌ای که در دسترس دارند استفاده خواهند کرد که ما را به جان هم انداخته و ما که تولیدکنندگان واقعی ثروت و پیشرفت هستیم را به یل‌دیگر بدبین و دشمن سازند.

Fire This Time، سازمانی سیاسی بوده که بر اساس آموزش‌های سیاسی و عمل مستقیم توده‌ای، خواهان اتحاد مردم زحمتکش و فقیر برای ایجاد سازمانها و ارگان‌های توده‌ای آنان است. ما معتقدیم تنها راه عملی و قابل اجرا در جهت متوقف ساختن حملات دولت لیبرال بریتیش کلمبیا به حقوق مردم در زمینه‌های اقتصادی، اجتماعی و سیاسی، و اقدامات نولیبرالیستی سرمایه‌داری آن، برقرار ساختن ارگانهای توده‌ای و مستقل مردم می‌باشد. ما با هر گونه استثمار و استعمار، و عقاید نژادپرستانه، سکسیم، ضد همجنس‌گرایی، و هر گونه ایده‌ای که شکاف و بدبینی را در صفوف زحمتکشان و ستمدیده‌گان تشدید کرده و مانع اتحاد انقلابی آنان گردد در اساس و بنیان مخالف بوده و علیه آنان مبارزه می‌کنیم. سازمان ما متعهد است که با شرکت در مبارزات کارگران، زنان، جوانان و تمامی ستمدیده‌گانی، که متحمل زیان‌های مالی و حقوق انسانی و دمکراتیک گردیده‌اند، صفوف آنان را مستحکم نموده و از این طریق، چالش و بدیلی اساسی در مقابل سیاست‌های ضد مردمی دولت لیبرال بریتیش کلمبیا، که انتشار ضربه‌پذیر جامعه، از جمله پناهنده‌گان، مهاجرین غیر سفیدپوست، زنان، جوانان، معلولین، بومیان کانادا، همجنس‌گرایان، بیکاران و خانواده‌های کم‌درآمد را هدف قرار داده، ایجاد کنیم. در یک کلام، هدف اساسی ما در این برهه، ایجاد جنبشی مردمی و عظیم برای برکنار ساختن دولت کنونی لیبرال بریتیش کلمبیا است.

ما انترناسیونالیست و علیه امپریالیسم هستیم. بنابراین و ضرورتاً، از هر حرکت انقلابی بین‌المللی علیه استعمار و امپریالیسم پشتیبانی می‌نماییم. چرا که همبستگی بین‌المللی، مبارزه همگانی لازم برای ایجاد یک حرکت جهانی در جهت برقراری عدالت اجتماعی را تسهیل و ممکن مینماید. به ما به‌بیوندید

- Translated by Nasim Sedarghat

'Stop The Racist War' from Page 1

camp was broken up and thirty-seven people were arrested. The Canadian government did not have the authority in any of these situations to attack, brutalize and arrest Native people on their territory. Yet, all of these actions are deemed to be "necessary" to defend the colonial interests of the national government and the business interests they represent (such as Sun Peaks ski resort on Skwelkwek'welt). Traditional imperialist war is similarly illegal and far beyond the jurisdiction of imperialist government intervention, yet it is celebrated as similarly necessary. In 1998, a reporter asked former US secretary of defence, Madeline Albright, "Half a million Iraqi children have died... (as a result of the US led UN sanctions)... is it worth it?" Albright replied, "Yes, we think the price is worth it." This rationalization of the worthy sacrifice of the lives, health, rights, freedom and self-determination of working and oppressed people finds voice in Canadian foreign policy as loudly as in "Indian affairs" and in police dealings with urban communities of colour and with "drug ghettos" like the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. Wherever capitalist and imperialist classes attack people, they are always attacking ruthlessly in defence of their own interests, in defence of corporate business, in defence of private property, in defence of empire. No government, not the US, Canada, the UK, Israel nor the UN and NATO coalitions that

represent them have the right or jurisdiction to beat, torture, arrest or kill oppressed and working people of the world, whether they happen to live within the borders of these states or not. Joanne Csete, the Director of the Human Rights Program for the Human Rights Watch compared police brutality in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver to human rights abuses in some third world countries; "This is the kind of abuse that causes people to escape their country and seek asylum in Canada," she said. With the Downtown Eastside hosting the highest concentration of both poverty and urban aboriginal people in Canada, this daily police brutality cannot be separated from racist, colonial war. As the city of Vancouver prepares to flood the Downtown Eastside with more police to complete the "enforcement" arm of the four pillars program to regain profitable control of the real estate market in the downtown core, the US is preparing their war machine to regain control of the oil fields and the profitable political environment of the Middle East. We know that when we organize effective opposition to the imperialist agenda, the imperialists react with force. It happened in apartheid South Africa with white European death squads, it happened to Malcolm X, to the Black Panthers, it happened at the LA Riots, it happened at the "Battle in Seattle" with the National Guard. It happened in Quebec City, it happened at the Woodwards Squat, at the Britannia Police Riot, it happened



Seniors and Students Rally in Victoria, February 2003

in Oka, Wounded Knee, Gustafson Lake and Skwelkwek'welt. It happened in Vietnam, in North Korea, in Pakistan, in Cuba, Angola, Guatemala, El Salvador, Columbia, Nicaragua, Peru, Venezuela, Palestine and it happened and is still happening in these places and in Iraq. It is all police brutality and it is all war. As the New York Times recently reported, there are now two superpowers at play in the world: the United States and the people in the streets of the world. With the US acting unilaterally as the police of the world, it is clear that only the international

anti-war movement has the power to police the police. This movement cannot afford to make distinctions between the borders of the ruling class. The movement must recognize the international nature of imperialist war and rise to defend the rights and lives of everyone in the world. This international movement must be able to focus and prioritise its efforts against imperialist war and brutality to beat back the most urgent and serious attacks of the ruling class on working and oppressed people around the world. Attacks that both threaten the security and self-determination of a broad number

of people and set foundations and precedent for further imperialist aggression must command priority in the coordinated struggle of the international anti-war / anti-capitalist / anti-police brutality movements. Imperialist governments and corporate business attack us in accordance with their interests, and we must stand together in accordance with ours to stop the racist wars at home and abroad and further the rights and power of the people who make up the "second superpower" of the world.

A Visitor's Tour Through Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women: Linking our Struggles, Breaking the Isolation

By Lora Mcelhinney

It's been three years that i've been going into the burnaby correctional facility for women, visiting with joint effort monday nights, driving or sometimes walking through the gates and noticing that they've repaired the sign that used to read 'burn by correctional facility for women.' the train runs by on an embankment above, beyond that is the fraser river and it is quite a pleasant walk if you want to explore the wooded trails around the area.

one of our friends inside was allowed a temporary absence daily for a short while to go jogging along the river with one of the staff. you pass the open living minimum security unit and approach the secure maximum security unit. there maybe red tulip petals to eat or cottonwood fluff balls or just the orange reflections of lamp lights in the puddles. once another friend of ours, inside, was assessing us. "you'd never make it," she says to me. "i can tell by your eyes."

"what happens if you don't make it?" i ask, knowing you don't get expelled from prison. "you get sent down to seg."

but that was a few years ago now. the place has less of the oppressive feel of our educational institutions and more of a specific feel of its own. as we check our materials for our workshops or gear for a show, as we pass through the four centrally monitored and locked doors, you wonder who will be there. what will be the news, who will be in seg, how the community will have shifted since last time, where it will be.

it is quite amazing to see the women's community inside the prison. how people share traditional teachings and songs, talk about the goings on outside,



catch up with those who have just come back in, tell old stories, play jokes, analyze relationships inside, outside, politicize their experiences inside and out, compare institutions, compare guards, compare weeks, compare years.

i remember a professor once told us something about his perspective from the front of the class, that we were all in his view, that we were under surveillance, and he made the comparison with the structure of a prison that all institutions were set up in the same way. he was referring to the writer foucault. i pointed out that we could all see him from twelve different perspectives and he could be sure that sometimes some of us would get together maybe even by accident and compare our perspectives, make stories of what we saw, enlarge and humorize, build on the other's story or analysis. sometimes it would make us a little angry. this is one of the keys to unsettling oppressive power. the prison institution knows it and tries to separate people and break

down the flow of communication and creativity.

another key to unsettling oppressive power is to break the isolation between groups. this is joint effort's mandate: to link the women's community inside with the women's community outside. we bring women in for workshops, for performances and just bring ourselves in as supporters. we also have been doing film nights at the blinding light and have held forums and workshops to raise awareness of conditions of women inside prisons in canada.

there is an assumption that prisoners in canada have fair treatment, but women prisoners especially have no real health care, have less educational and training opportunities, even less now with the cut backs, and though you can't get an aspirin, almost every person is on paxil or some other anti-depressant. this goes along with the general assumption that if women break the law, deviate from the norm in any way, they must be crazy.

a woman who should have been in icu in a hospital was brought into the prison and died there the same night a couple of months ago. this was just after some of the most obvious provincial cuts to the institution and with all the changes, the uncertainty as to where women are going when the prison closes, and this woman's death people were understandably shaken. it is really important that we don't let these changes progress unnoticed as they have historically in other totalitarian regimes. it is really important that we see this as part of the continued history of genocide on this land.

if you would like to come in to the prison to do a workshop or performance or would like to mentor someone on the inside one on one with a skill or artistic discipline, please let us know then or contact us at po box 78005, 1755 east broadway, vancouver, b.c v5n 5w1, check our website at <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/august10/jointeffort.html> or leave us a message at (604)682-3269 ext.3019.

'Budgeting the Bankruptcy' from Page 1

busting through privatization and contract breaking. It means attacking the oldest and largest union in health care in BC, a union with 46,000 members in over 400 health care facilities and agencies. It means moving hospital laundry services to Alberta to be done privately for substandard wages. It means that HEU members, formerly providing those services, are left jobless and unprotected.

"As it stands, today's status quo health budget means more service cuts, facility closures and the loss of thousands of skilled and experienced workers from health care's front lines," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt.

The attacks on healthcare do not stop with hospital employees, however. Working and poor people in BC have been faced with hospital closures, increases in Medical Services Plan premiums, and reductions in services provided through the MSP. Now the 2003/04 budget documents show the government is forcing health authorities to take money out of patient services to absorb the costs of contract settlements the Liberals themselves imposed by legislation. Some of the results include no restoration of rural health care services, decreased access for seniors to long term care beds, and the cutting of the Pharmacare program.

Along with cuts to healthcare the BC Liberals have "put people in need first" by implementing changes to the Ministry of Human Resource's Employment and Assistance Benefits, changes which have served to save the Ministry over \$144 million in just the first round of cuts. This initially included the implementation of a "3 week wait" policy when applying for welfare, the lowering of the childcare

subsidy income threshold, the elimination of the flat rate earnings exemption and maintenance exemption, as well as the reduction of shelter and support allowances for those on welfare. The changes in the welfare regulations have resulted in a process that is even more arduous and painful, and as a result fewer people are qualifying for assistance.

In both the cases of welfare and healthcare we have seen how the Liberals have managed to squeeze money out of already skeletal systems. This has been an attempt to weaken the poor and working classes of this province. Cutting social spending is not just about saving money, it is about maintaining a climate of fear and instability among working people to ensure that we don't have the time, energy, or resources to fight back. The new budget is a continuation of the assaults that have been leveled against poor and working people in BC ever since the Liberals took office. In order to fight against the attacks we must fight against the neo liberal agenda as a whole. We must condemn each attack the Liberals throw at us, whether we are directly or indirectly affected. We must condemn the BC Liberals new budget as it further strips away our services and rights and puts further power and resources into the hands of the ruling class. By fighting for the rights of all poor and working people we gain strength and come closer to defeating the BC Liberal government.

¹ *Towards a Solutions Budget for BC* – Published by Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives Feb. 2002

² From the State of the Province Address by Premier Gordon Campbell - Feb 12th 2003

War on Iraq War on the Third World Third World War Fire This Time holds successful forum against the war on Iraq

By Ivan Drury

On Monday, March 3rd, 2003, at the Burnaby Public Library, Fire This Time held a free public forum opposing the American war drive against the people of Iraq. The standing room only atmosphere, as the room overflowed its sixty-person capacity, gave a sense of urgency and importance that was appropriate in the discussion of impending war.

Linda Morgan from the Campaign to End the Sanctions Against the People of Iraq (CESAPI) opened the forum with a video about her trip to Iraq. Her talk gave a sense of the humanitarian sacrifices that the people of Iraq have been subjected to since the UN sanctions took effect ten years ago and the horrifying compound effect war would have on these long-suffering people. Ithra Syed from the Palestine Solidarity Group spoke about the strength and dynamism of the anti-war movement. She said, "The movement is becoming stronger than any organizers anticipated." Ian Rocksbrough-Smith, a student organizer and writer for the SFU Peak Newspaper, spoke about the historical basis for the war on Iraq through the looking glass of American imperialist intervention in the Middle East.

The last speaker, Ali Yerevani from Fire This Time started his talk by saying that the US has not yet started its war

against Iraq because of the strength of the anti-war movement. He said, "All that has been said about 'no blood for oil' and 'this war is about oil' is true and undeniable. However, oil is not the only factor for this brutal and disgraceful war. The recent American military killing machine in the Persian Gulf is part of a bigger strategy that the US has been pursuing in the Middle East and throughout the world for the last two decades." Yerevani emphasized, "If the demand for oil in the US was to reduce to half, the US would still attack Iraq. Understanding this is the key to understanding the strategy of the United States in the world today."

Overall, the forum presented the war on Iraq as the common denominator to come together around and unite to fight against the imperialist war machine. The discussion at the end of the forum was rich with the experience of the people in the room and the sort of dialogue necessary to build a mass movement capable of stopping the war on the people of Iraq. Fire This Time will continue to put on public forums in different parts of the city to further this momentum and build this movement.

See pictures from this forum on page 4.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, just a couple of days before the war starts, these vulture governments thought of the Palestinians. Neither of these two governments said anything about the killing of more than one hundred Palestinian women, men, and children, or about the bombing, rocketing, and demolishing of dozens of homes, shops and public places since Feb 15.

Why now Palestine? The answer is that they know the Palestinian people, who have managed a heroic resistance to the Israeli occupation of their land and the massacre of Palestinians in the last 70 years, are not going to sit there to watch their Arab sisters and brothers being slaughtered by the United States and England. Palestinians have demonstrated that they are conscious of the world, and as soon as war on the people of Iraq starts, they will intensify their struggle against Israel and the US-UK imperialists. Not only that, the US and UK know that people in Middle East are deeply angry with their hypocrisy and colonial policies toward Palestinians. Another war means the extension of war on Palestinians to Iraqis, and the occupation of Iraq means reinforcement of the occupation of Palestine. This desperate and tokenistic gesture toward Palestinians will not silence Palestinians, and will be another failure for these imperialist powers.

War or assassination?

Dropping million of tons of bombs on millions of women, men and children in Iraq, sending thousands of Tomahawk cruisers and other missiles which each can kill hundreds of people; this is a mass assassination, not war. This war can be rationalized only by the war mongering and blood thirsty ruling classes of Europe and America. Otherwise, considering that just to begin this war costs 100 billion dollars for the US and UK, what rational mind can justify and accept spending one million dollars for each single Iraqi that will be killed? While half of the world population lives under one dollar a day, half of the world population do not have access to clean water, and in US itself at least 10 million children does not have basic health care, and at least as many mentioned suffer from malnutrition? What insanity and criminality to wage war on people that already have suffered more than 12 years of sanctions imposed on them, and have already lost 1and a half million of their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and children under the undeclared war of sanctions. What rational mind can

accept that a country like the US, with its history of massacring millions of people in Korea, Vietnam, Japan, Africa and Latin America, could possibly bring justice and democracy to Iraq by killing hundreds of thousands more people, destroying their infrastructure and civilization? This is an insult on collective intelligence of all human beings.

Growing pain, growing consciousness

The US and the UK are losing ground, despite the fact that their war machine is building up and their criminal military assault on the people of Iraq is nearing. The consciousness of the world builds up. The protest movement against war and US military intervention is rising to unsurpassed levels. In the past months, millions of people have filled the streets of Pakistan, India, Japan, Bahrain, Iran, Syria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Iraq to protest the US war drive.

This opposition has also spread among working and poor people in the Western Hemisphere. All over the world, people are protesting the exchange of blood for oil and the US goal of becoming the world's police. Every month since the explosion of these mass mobilizations, millions of people have filled the streets of major cities across Canada and throughout the world.

February 15th marked the largest international demonstration in recorded history. More than 30 million people throughout the world raised their disagreement with the US killing machine. In Canada, 150,000 people in Montreal and more than 35,000 in Vancouver, along with tens of thousands of working people in more than 30 cities opposed this bloody war drive.

Like the imperialists' war drive, the anti-war movement needs a long-term strategy. If the movement against war on Iraq and in the Middle East is to expand and become an anti-war majority of working people in Canada, the focus must be directly against the war in Iraq. "No War On Iraq" and "Stop War On People of Iraq" is a common denominator that everybody can be in agreement with.

We need to understand that any successful movement must have a mass character, and we must adopt methods and demands so that the vast majority of the population can get involved. The broad range of people and groups can express their views in the rallies and other forms of protest. Our strategies must be ones that help the movement to grow and not weaken the movement. Any related war issue must be



UPCOMING EVENTS

Fire this Time Presents:
FIGHT THE \$6 TRAINING WAGE!

Free Public Forum:
Monday March 17th at 6 PM
Burnaby Public Library, 6100 Willingdon
(Two blocks West of the Metrotown Skytrain Station,
near Willingdon and Kingsway)

Speakers:
Raj Cohan, Canadian Farmworkers Union founder
Fred Muzin, President, Hospital Employees Union
Stephanie Evens, former \$6 training wage worker
Mike Krebs, Fire This Time

A free public forum on the BC Liberals' \$6 war on immigrants, women and youth.

FIRE THIS TIME Public Meeting

March 24th at 6 PM
IWA Hall in Vancouver
2859 Commercial Drive
(Commercial and 13th)

Vigil Against War

Sunday March 16th
7 PM-Midnight
Vancouver Art Gallery Fountain
(Georgia and Howe)
There will be an ongoing vigil from Friday at noon until Sunday at the US Consulate, which is located at 1095 W Pender (East of Thurlow).

Canadian Conference on Preventing Crimes Against Humanity

Friday March 21st - Saturday March 22nd
At the Longhouse First Nations House of Learning, UBC
1985 West Mall, Vancouver
For more information contact
aplconference@ubc.ca.

All-Region Anti-war Meeting

Sunday March 23rd at 7 PM
Queen's United Church
529 Queen Street
(Queen and 6th)
New Westminster
For more information contact
hajon@sfu.ca

A meeting to coordinate the expansion of Stopwar.ca throughout the lower mainland to include all regions and communities.
Check out the Coalition's website at www.stopwar.ca

Whistleblowers: A Free Public Forum

Thursday March 27th
7:00 PM
Vancouver Public Library
350 West Georgia St
(Georgia and Hamilton, Vancouver)
For more information, call the CCPA at (604) 801-5121.

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PO Box 21607
Vancouver BC
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foremost evaluated based on whether it will help broaden participation. The issue of diversity is also important. We need an antiwar movement that includes a diversity of oppressed people, whether it is gender, sexual orientation, nationality, race or culture. This way we will stop this war.

Movimiento Fire This Time Por Justicia Social Bases de Unidad

Translated by Claudio Ekdahl

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

interés de la clase predominante, los cuales utilizarán todos los medios a su disposición para mantenernos divididos y hostiles entre nosotros mismos. Fire This Time es una organización política basada en la acción y comprometida a construir poder social y político de la gente pobre y de trabajo en British Columbia. Creemos que la única manera de desafiar con eficacia y amenazar al gobierno y su agenda corporativa es con la organización de masas de gente activa en lugares de trabajo y en las calles. Estamos dedicados a movilizar y a unificar a gente pobre y de trabajo contra el Gobierno Liberal, sus legislaciones y políticas en contra de los pobres y trabajadores. Estamos comprometidos a organizar con trabajadores y gente pobre de las comunidades más atacadas y explotadas del Lower Mainland y más allá: comunidades de gente de color, inmigrantes, refugiados,

"illegales", trabajadores de bajo-salario, gente lisiada, homosexuales, comunidades indígenas, gente desempleada y familias de bajos ingresos. Nos oponemos a todas las formas de opresión y de explotación: desde sexismo al racismo, de la homofobia al colonialismo y a el resto de instituciones, de pensamiento, de creencia, de acciones y de los comportamientos que humille y degrade a gente para crear hostilidad y división entre nosotros. La meta del Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social es construir un amplio movimiento de base para derrotar al gobierno Liberal de BC. Nuestro trabajo es proporcionar las herramientas necesarias para unificar y para activar a la clase obrera en BC., para construir un movimiento amplio de base, fuerte y eficaz para oponernos a los Liberales de BC. y sus ataques contra la gente pobre y trabajadores. Este movimiento debe ser integrado en el contexto revolucionario más amplio

de la lucha internacional contra el capitalismo e imperialismo; aunque nos enfoquemos principalmente en política local, esencialmente el alcance de nuestro trabajo es internacionalista. El apoyo a las luchas de la gente oprimida en otros países debilita la hegemonía y el poder de la clase capitalista en otras tierras y por lo tanto debilita su mando local, ayudando así en las batallas de la gente oprimida en Canadá. Además, la práctica de la solidaridad internacional solidifica la cooperación, esencial en la construcción de un movimiento del mundo por justicia social. La agenda del Gobierno Liberal es parte de un programa de reestructuración global conocido como neo-liberalismo. Luchar a los Liberales de BC. es luchar contra el neo-liberalismo y capitalismo global. Debemos ampliarnos en esto, implícita y explícitamente para hacer las conexiones relevantes a nuestras domésticas luchas diarias,

para superar la división geográfica, y dejar en claro que cuando participamos en la lucha, no luchamos solos, sino junto a millones de trabajadores y de gente pobre alrededor del mundo. En la globalización capitalista - imperialista no hay lucha local que no tenga un carácter internacional. Cada internacional es local y cada local es internacional. El Movimiento Fire This Time por Justicia Social apoyará y trabajará con otros movimientos y luchas progresivas ya sea por demandas inmediatas o a largo plazo, localmente, nacionalmente e internacionalmente. Nuestra meta principal es abolir la pobreza e injusticia por medio de educación, participación y acción directa. Intentamos alcanzar un nivel colectivo de conciencia que permita a la gente oprimida, pensar socialmente y actuar políticamente para alcanzar justicia social por cualesquiera sean los medios necesarios.