



# COMMUNITY INSURRECTION

Building Communities of Resistance

ISSUE NUMBER TWO  
WINTER 2006



construyendo comunidades de resistencia

# INSURRECCIÓN COMUNITARIA

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Issue Number Two  
Winter 2006

*Insurrection: righteous resistance to, revolt or rebellion against oppressive positions of authority.*

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Community Insurrection is a publication of the Anticapitalist Community Forum (ACF). While the opinions expressed are those of the authors, we hope they all contribute to a conception of life without capitalism and oppression. The ACF can be contacted as follows:

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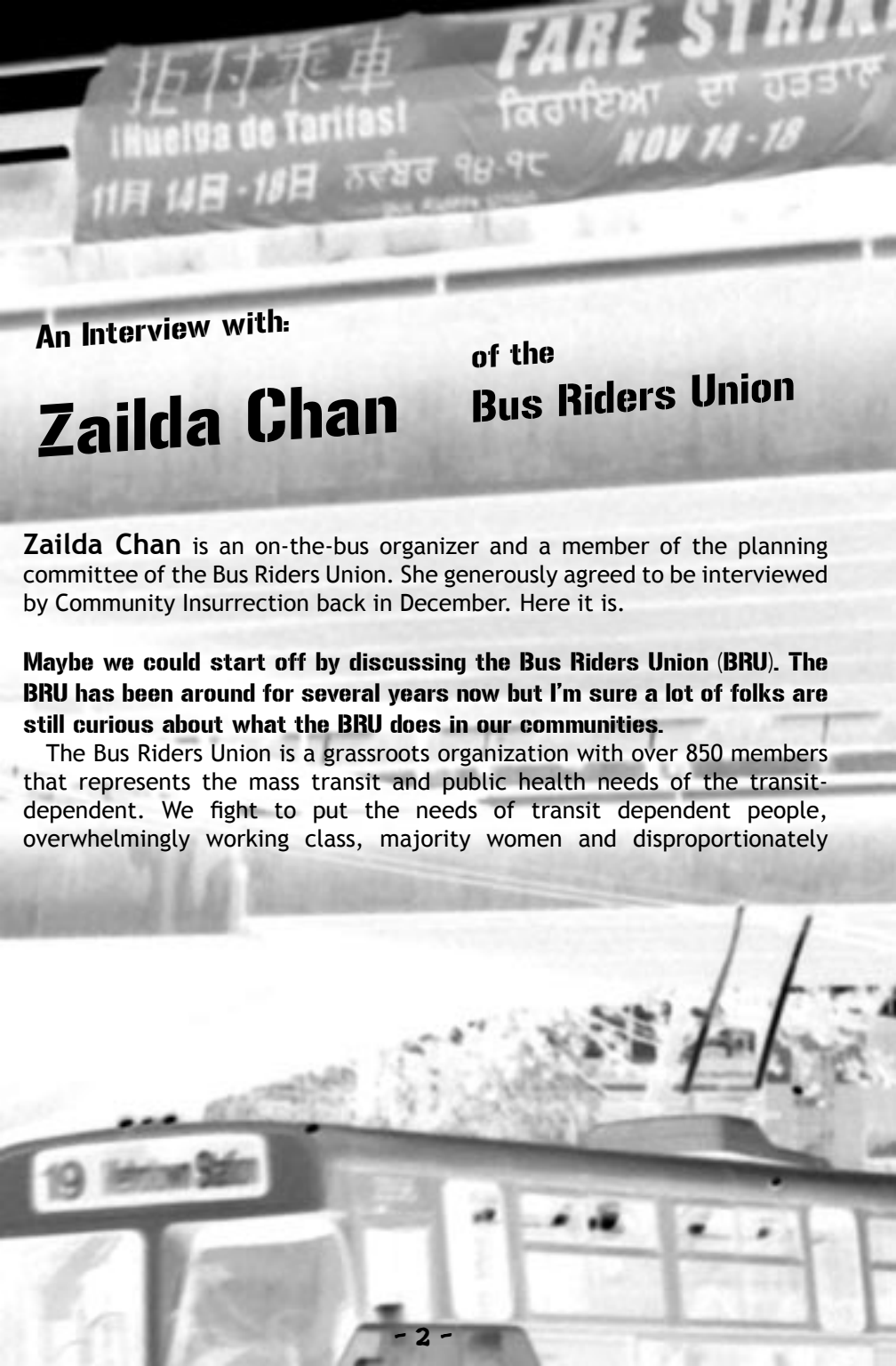
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## What is the Anticapitalist Community Forum?

The Anticapitalist Community Forum came together early in 2004, under the name “Vancouver Area Anticapitalist Convergence”, to create a community space wherein people could learn, discuss and debate about issues surrounding social justice in an explicitly anti-capitalist setting. Not only was the forum intended as a means of sharing skills, ideas and information among interested people; the hope was that such a forum would allow for further interaction and better communication amongst groups and organizations already involved in struggle. Increased space for interaction, it was believed, would help facilitate the growth of larger projects and campaigns as well as inspire the further development of anti-capitalist communities in the lower mainland and coast salish territories. With this in mind, we held five community forums over the course of several months in 2004. Participants spent many hours developing the basis of unity you will find in this issue. This magazine was one of the many ideas and projects that arose from discussions in the forum. The vision for the magazine was that it would act as a paper version of that physical space and reinforce the principles and ideas arising from anti-capitalist communities and organizing. We hope the magazine will be engaging for both activists as well as people beginning to develop their own political analyses of their experiences.

The zine working group would like to thank participants, contributors and supporters for their patience in seeing this second issue of “Community Insurrection” come to fruition. We would also like to thank the Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group (SFPIRG) for their financial support. Comments, criticisms, letters to the editor and submissions for our next issue can be sent electronically to [acf-van@resist.ca](mailto:acf-van@resist.ca) or to our mailing address. Deadline for submissions/ contributions towards the next issue of Community Insurrection is May 1st 2006. In order to make the next issue happen, we would greatly appreciate donations, which can be sent to the address to the left. As always we need and appreciate your help with distribution of the zine. The zine itself as well as instructions for download can be found on our website at <http://www.resist.ca/~acf-van>

~The Anticapitalist Community Forum zine working group



An Interview with:

**Zailda Chan**

of the  
**Bus Riders Union**

**Zailda Chan** is an on-the-bus organizer and a member of the planning committee of the Bus Riders Union. She generously agreed to be interviewed by Community Insurrection back in December. Here it is.

**Maybe we could start off by discussing the Bus Riders Union (BRU). The BRU has been around for several years now but I'm sure a lot of folks are still curious about what the BRU does in our communities.**

The Bus Riders Union is a grassroots organization with over 850 members that represents the mass transit and public health needs of the transit-dependent. We fight to put the needs of transit dependent people, overwhelmingly working class, majority women and disproportionately

people of colour at the centre of public policy. We are a multi-lingual, multi-racial, anti-racist, anti-sexist, women-led organization that seeks to build a democratic process for bus riders by building the power of poor, working class and historically oppressed groups and nationalities such as women, Aboriginal people and people of colour at a grassroots level. We strategically prioritize the leadership of women, particularly women of colour and Aboriginal women, because our location at the intersection of class, race and gender has the greatest potential to overturn the system and create a society based on principles of justice and health for all.

As transit-dependent people and from weekly direct-contact organizing on the buses we know that bus riders experience the daily indignities of high fares, cuts to service, long waits, overcrowded and run-down buses, lack of wheel chair and stroller accessible buses, lack of written and spoken transit information in languages other than English etc. that act as barriers to accessing basic needs such as jobs, education, public services, social networks and socio-political participation in our communities. Our role as organizers is to do political education on the bus and in our communities to listen to and validate bus riders experiences, build our understanding of the root causes of our situations, and rouse their enthusiasm and sense of justice by moving them into a mass-based organization where we take action collectively within a long-term vision of social transformation.

**Recently the BRU held a weeklong Fare Strike in the lead up to the city elections. What were some of the motivations behind the action?**

First, it is important to position the Fare Strike within a local and international context where public services such as water, education, electricity and transit are being privatized here and throughout the world. We know that such neoliberal policies impact the poorest communities and Third world nations and [benefit] the elite ruling class as well as imperialist nations like the US and Canada.

Our one-week fare strike held from November 14-18 was a form of collective action and civil disobedience come about as a result of 9 months of organizing on the bus under our current campaign "Lower the Fares Now! For Community Health and Social Justice". This campaign evolved from the "Stop the Fare Increase" campaign, where the Bus Riders Union succeeded in stopping the 3rd increase in 5 years from going ahead. That was later overturned at a TransLink meeting despite overwhelming disagreement from bus riders. In addition to our core work of organizing on the bus over the last year, we have held several public meetings, many presentations at TransLink meetings about the impact of high fares on poor and working class communities, and launched a postcard campaign urging TransLink directors to lower fares. Our campaign was endorsed by the Hospital Employees Union (HEU), Vancouver School Board, Vancouver city council and many other community organizations. We also held a sit-in at Vancouver city hall to expose the role of Vancouver city councillors

(who claimed to be progressive) in perpetuating TransLink's neoliberal policies and to hold them accountable to their false promises made at election time. This collective action of civil disobedience resulted in the arrest of six BRU organizers.

So the Fare Strike took place at a mobilization phase of our campaign, where negotiations with TransLink had already been exhausted. We needed to change our tactics with the objectives of heightening conflict with TransLink and hitting their bottom line, opposing and exposing their neoliberal agenda and moving people into collective action to build unity amongst the working class - all of which are necessary to create the right conditions so we can win concrete gains in the future.

**What did you find the response of bus riders to be like?**

Over 5,000 people participated in the Fare Strike. We received phone calls and emails from many bus riders asking how they could participate in the strike and who told us stories of how they fare-striking on their own. There was growing support that carried on until the end of the week. We saw the leadership and militancy of women, particularly women of colour, emerging in this action as they were often the most supportive of this civil disobedience, and most determined to get back on the bus when they encountered an unsupportive

***The action left many of us inspired and energized to keep fighting to win concrete gains in the short-term and for total transformation in the long-term.***

bus driver, and even publicly defended BRU organizers during the few times we were asked to get off the bus by drivers.

**So would you say it was a success?**

I think the Fare Strike was successful in many ways. Our active members whose ages range between 13 and 60 became front line organizers. They handed out leaflets and talked to bus riders about the fare strike. In this way, the action was important in building the confidence, leadership and organizing skills of people who have never before been involved in any form of political action. We saw a lot of our on-the-bus crew organizers stepping up and taking a lot of initiative engaging drivers, giving direction to new organizers and handling difficult situations very well. We were also successful in moving thousands of bus riders into action - even 9 months after the fare increase, which was a great challenge because we needed to create the momentum ourselves to ensure mass participation. Overall, the action left many of us inspired and energized to keep fighting to win concrete gains in the short-term and for total

transformation in the long-term.

**It sounds like the BRU is doing really well. What's next?**

We're going to be assessing our campaign and all the work we've been doing this year. We think it's necessary to step back, assess and evaluate our work - both lessons and successes to make sure that we are working strategically to win gains in the now and as we continue to build the movement in the long-term.

**Thanks a lot!**

Thank you for interviewing us!



*-BRU members converse with each other during their occupation of city hall*

# When War Arrived

by

Oswaldo Perez Cabrera

When war arrived I was already resigned to die. Tired of fighting against and for dead ideals; tired of the indifference of people who only get worried about the world when something disastrous happens in their houses, and then they want to change it and they want everybody to look at their disgrace. I am resigned to see what there is on the other side of life. When war arrived I was tired of waiting and praying to a deaf energy. That tiredness that beheads the soul and makes it hyperactive. Your body produces a substance that heats you up inside. First, it produces anxiety and rage. Impotence overpowers you and you want to escape to another country. You feel trapped, chased, hunted, you don't know what to do and then you are resigned. You think that destiny will handle things and what is the point in fighting wars that are not yours and even if they were, what is the point in fighting a war for more power? What is the point of escaping from war? Until when are you going to run? Until they reach you in a different country. Even before war arrived, I saw children fighting in these estranged wars and I realized how rotten the system is and I questioned,

why should we stay in this gloomy world? Then you realize that the real hell is in this life; sometimes I think that maybe I died and this is my punishment. That is why I decided to wait for war without any hurries or fears, without any taboos or mercies; the war came to show us what the human with a blind soul is capable of doing.

In what moment my childhood became an antique...

When the war arrived the sky dressed up in a reddish orange veil, it cried with tears of blood that were dripping from the clouds only to filtrate through the belligerent cracks and the slivered craters created by the human metal. When the war arrived I was smoking the roaches of bitterness standing at the foot of my gnawed door. The trees started to disintegrate, becoming toxic deserts. Sand transformed into diminutive weapons and the environment finished becoming hostile. Solitude began to eat up all the nearby towns where depending on which god is guarding you, you become an enemy or an ally. But at the end, the war will arrive for everybody, leaving nothing and no one left to govern. With war the apocalyptic winds arrived, obliterating everything. Peace, I will find at last. It just depends on how long it takes this immense cloud of dust that approaches at a storming speed and darkens everything in the middle of the day to get me. I see it coming nearer with a sonic sound that bursts my eardrums, my skin burns and a blast will leave my carbonized corpse like a sculpture of dust, one more monument for the stupidity of men.

In what moment did our childhood become macabre?

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*Oswaldo Perez Cabrera is a Mexican freelance writer living in Vancouver. He is the director of La Vanguardia de Vancouver, a monthly cultural publication. He is involved with the Vancouver Latin American Film Festival in September and hosts The Morning After Show at CTR 101.9 FM. He also believes Bush is a sort of dumb Antichrist.*

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Contribute to the next issue of *Community Insurrection*. We are currently taking submissions, in any language, of the following for the next issue:

- articles and essays
- poetry and short fiction
- comics and graphic art

The deadline is May 1st. Submissions can be sent electronically to [acf-van@resist.ca](mailto:acf-van@resist.ca) or by mail to Box #157, 345 East Broadway, Vancouver, V5T 1W5.

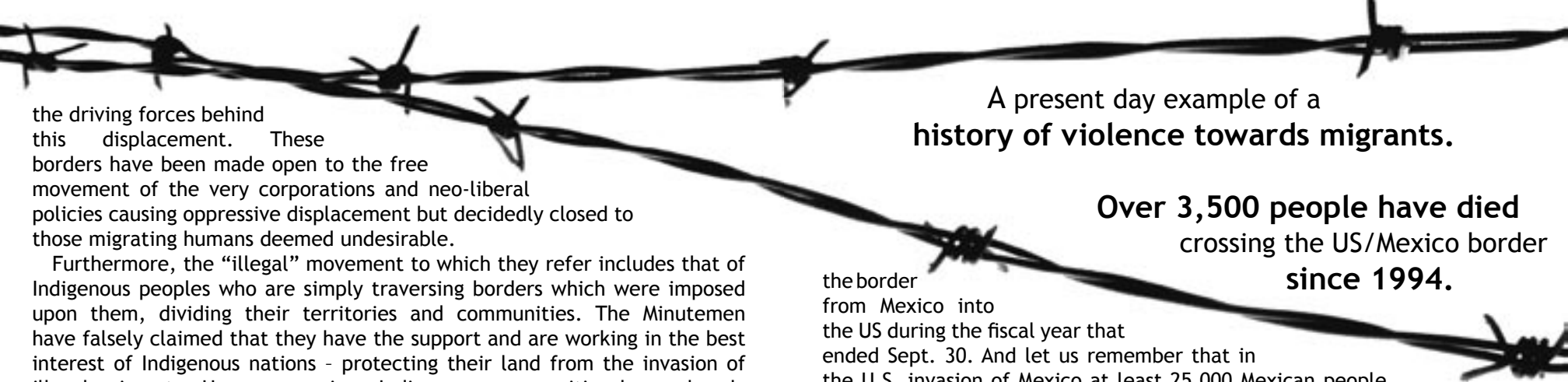


## TIME IS UP FOR THE MINUTEMEN! Statement by No One is Illegal-Vancouver

**No One is Illegal-Vancouver** denounces and completely opposes the Minutemen Project. We oppose all such vigilante attacks against our communities. On October 1, 2005, the Minutemen launched their campaign on the U.S./Canadian border. They have already been met with clear opposition from community groups on both sides of the border. We affirm that this opposition will continue to grow and that we stand united against and will not tolerate any such activity on the Canadian side of this border.

Since April of 2005, the Minutemen have engaged in the targeting of racialized communities under the pretext of preserving U.S. security. The Minuteman Project has arisen out of a history of vigilante groups patrolling the U.S./Mexico border against "illegals" and "potential terrorists". The post 9/11 climate has perpetuated the false association between migrants and terrorism. A new anti-terrorist paradigm guides enforcement and immigration matters are now contextualized within the "war on terrorism" where the result is an increased number of abuses of migrants and racialized communities. The very basis of racial profiling is the double standard by which individual members of communities are stereotyped and legislation is passed and legitimized to criminalize their civil liberties and human rights. The Minutemen Project is based on this very false consciousness.

Members of the Minuteman Project have been shown to have clear ties with white supremacist groups such as the National Alliance, yet they have attempted to distance themselves from the allegations of racially motivated actions by stating "ethnicity, race, religion and all such factors are incidental and ... irrelevant in the debate over illegal immigration". However, any just account of the migration of peoples of the Third World needs to recognize that ethnicity, race and religion have been central to the political, social and economic repression which are



the driving forces behind this displacement. These borders have been made open to the free movement of the very corporations and neo-liberal policies causing oppressive displacement but decidedly closed to those migrating humans deemed undesirable.

Furthermore, the “illegal” movement to which they refer includes that of Indigenous peoples who are simply traversing borders which were imposed upon them, dividing their territories and communities. The Minutemen have falsely claimed that they have the support and are working in the best interest of Indigenous nations - protecting their land from the invasion of illegal migrants. However, various Indigenous communities have already denied such claims.

Finally, they have openly stated that they are concerned by the “tens of millions of invading illegal aliens who are devouring and plundering [their] nation”. The Minutemen have labeled migrants as being “people who wish to take advantage of a free society”. The reality is that the U.S. and Canadian economies take advantage of the cheap labour of such migrants - who work farms, cook food and clean homes- yet they remain invisible and under constant threat of inhumane immigration policies and racist backlash. By equating the movement of migrants to an “invasion”, they have clearly attempted to foster anti-migrant sentiment - furthering the threat of violence against already marginalized communities.

Therefore we, along with numerous civil rights organizations and community groups in the U.S., are gravely concerned by the impunity with which such a group that has clearly stated racist views and alliances has been allowed to carry out armed border patrols. It is not lost upon us that there exists an obvious political and social double standard, by which communities of color have been increasingly subjected to arbitrary detentions, racial profiling and charged for being terror suspects on secret evidence or no evidence, while vigilante groups whose work actually harms and terrorizes communities have been either openly or tacitly supported by government officials.

Besides the deployment of border patrol units, the Minutemen have put out national calls to recruit “informants” on “illegal aliens”, their employers and anyone engaged in what they term “identification fraud”. Their statements have promoted an environment of constant insecurity for those who are already the most insecure individuals of marginalized communities - people who suffer the greatest poverty, racism, inhumane working conditions and lack of social services; people who face exploitation on every front.

The Minutemen are a present day example of a history of violence towards migrants. Over 3,500 people have died crossing the US/Mexico border since 1994. US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said at least 464 migrants died crossing

A present day example of a  
**history of violence towards migrants.**

**Over 3,500 people have died  
crossing the US/Mexico border  
since 1994.**

the border from Mexico into the US during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. And let us remember that in the U.S. invasion of Mexico at least 25,000 Mexican people were murdered for the land the Minutemen patrol today.

Since the North American Free Trade Agreement’s (NAFTA) implementation in 1994, the economic consequences of the neoliberal trade policy has created a multifaceted crisis that now dominates the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border. Economically violent policies like NAFTA force people off their land and out of their communities- over 1.5 million Mexican farmers have lost their farms as a result of NAFTA- to migrate towards the Northern economy to work in low-paying sectors of the economy that heavily rely on their hyper-exploitable labour.

The simultaneous militarization of the border through Operation Gatekeeper has drastically transformed the fragile desert land over the past decade. Black helicopters and unmanned drones patrol the desert by sky, searching for human beings with infrared cameras. Families living in Nogales, one city divided by the border, see a large concrete and steel wall topped with barbed wire everyday. Gatekeeper was developed with help from the U.S. Department of Defense’s Center for Low Intensity Conflicts and has been implemented in three phases. Each has raised the risks of migrants dying, yet Border Patrols confirms that the added dangers have not slowed the migrant foot traffic.

“Through my eyes, the problem is that what occurs on the U.S.-México border is one of the grossest human rights violations in the history of the United States,” states Ray Ybarra, American Civil Liberties Union spokesperson, “Here in our backyard, human beings have to face death and hatred.”

In a petition filed a year before last with the Organization of American States, the American Civil Liberties Union of San Diego & Imperial Counties and the Oceanside-based California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation have charged that the U.S. government has flagrantly abused human rights by resorting to a strategy at the border designed to maximize physical risks, which cannot be reconciled with the obligation to protect life, be it an undocumented person’s or a citizen’s.

The end result of the Minuteman Project will be an even more militarized

border; more migrant deaths, and more fear in our communities. We are disturbed by the fact that the Minutemen have stated their larger goal is setting “not only an example for other Americans to follow, but a precedent we hope will have a lasting effect on how border security is viewed for generations to come.” Canada and the US have already developed a militarized and integrated, so-called Smart Border Policy, including the Safe Third Country Agreement implemented in December 2004 and known to many as Fortress North America. We cannot forget our basic moral underpinnings as to how we treat other human beings.

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*The No One is Illegal campaign is in full confrontation with Canadian colonial border policies, denouncing and taking action to combat racial profiling of immigrants and refugees, detention and deportation policies, and wage-slave conditions of migrant workers and non-status people.*

*We struggle for the right for our communities to maintain their livelihoods and resist war, occupation and displacement, while building alliances and supporting indigenous sisters and brothers also fighting theft of land and displacement.*



A Look at the:

## ANTI-POVERTY COMMITTEE

The Anti-Poverty Committee is a volunteer group comprised of working poor and unemployed people. Throughout our 5 years of struggle against the Liberal government we have held the Downtown Eastside as our base of strength and support. And it is from here, now, that we struggle to maintain what little housing is available and fight for more.

With the wrecking balls of Olympic gentrification in full swing our current campaigns are to work with community groups, union locals and poor people in establishing a grassroots resistance to the mass closures of hotels and repressive welfare legislation. In forming the Save Low Income Housing Coalition we have brought together unions, women's center, sex trade workers and drug user groups into a united campaign to raise the rates of welfare.

The APC strategy within the coalition is to mass mobilize welfare recipients in the welfare offices to demand 'crisis grants'. By creating a bureaucratic disruption on a mass scale through filing and appealing crisis grant applications we hope to create the opportunity to force the ministry of human resources to raise the rates of shelter allowance as opposed to relinquishing the money in small, hard-to-obtain pay outs.

We have been successful with such strategies in the past. By employing disruptive methods while maintaining a large base of union and community support, we were able to stop the "two years out of five" welfare cuts from happening. This took dozens of organizers, hundreds of welfare recipients and thousands of supporters.

Our victories are won because they are fought by poor people. In our struggles for day-to-day survival we have no leaders to steal what little we gain. Our lives are the front lines of the class war and it is from here that we fight for strength and dignity.

-APC

UNITED WE WILL WIN!





# Vancouver y las soledades de los exilios existentes e imaginarios.

by **Oswaldo Perez Cabrera**

Vancouver es vidrio. Vidrio color edificio. Vancouver es agua, mucha agua. Vancouver es montaña y bosques inconmensurables, pero también es marihuana y soledad. Sobretudo soledad. Y es húmeda, una soledad húmeda que embarga la ciudad y que vive bajo la sombra de la duda, una metropoli húmeda como si viviéramos entre las piernas de una ninfómana, el agua casi siempre viene desde arriba en forma de pequeñas caricias frías. Miles de astillas de espejo que caen reflejando las nostalgias de los exilios y las tierras abandonadas o retratan los sueños de ciudades futuras. Mil dolores pequeños.

Los callejones se llenan de charcos canallas que son pisados inmisericordemente. Vancouver es la libertad que equilibra el sentido del distanciamiento. Libertad de fumar marihuana en las calles y los mismos sexos tienen uniones legales. Es el sexo multicultural, coitos en diferentes lenguajes y combinaciones obtusas. Es la libertad de ser estafalario. Vancouver es la ciudad que espera la destrucción entre sus placas tectónicas. Para los moralistas la Sodoma, para los hippies el paraíso. Las drogas que se quedan atoradas en el puerto y se distribuyen entre los rincones abruptos de la parte este de la ciudad en donde las sombras se escurren por las sucias trastiendas entre adornos de preservativos usados y jeringas infectadas con enfermedades mortales. La pobreza se asoma entre promesas políticas

y programas sociales, pero el sol entra chiquito entre las grietas donde se esconde el crack imaginario. Paranoias en do menor. Esquizofrenia en tonos mayores, voces que se entremezclan con las de las autoridades represivas.

Contradicciones de la libertad. Vancouver es la tierra nativa con aires intoxicados de cerveza y brillo de luna etílica. El opio de los antepasados. La Tierra robada a la naturaleza. La última sonrisa femenina viene siempre acompañada de agua salada, vamos acumulando kilómetros e historias, capítulos inconclusos, círculos no perfectos, luces que no se apagan, televisores que se encienden solos, fragmentos de vida capturados en papel mate, ondas que circulan por las soledades de Vancouver, mi voz en un altoparlante desconocido, el sabor de la vulva femenina que se va junto con el monte venusino canoso con mi esperma borracho, líneas calientes con psíquicos, la yerba que siempre fluye, hambrientos y sedientos en preámbulos apocalípticos, la letra impresa revoluciona, el ciberespacio nos unirá a todos en contra del imperio del mal. Más o menos así va la vida. Vivir del aire; con las mujeres de Vancouver que se lamen las heridas de la soledad y la incapacidad de formar una relación estable con los hombres necios de regiones frías; y nosotros tan disfuncionales. Yo sigo en mi cueva blanca con ilustraciones mate, rejas entre el callejón y el humo del puro. Hasta que el vino reemplace la sangre.

# ANTI-IMPERIALIST FOOD

by Kyle Robert

A life lived in the pursuit of peace can sustain every friend and every family member, surrounding them with the strength and support that we need to make it through the days. No matter the struggle of humanity one is concerned with, be it womyn's rights, anti-imperialism or gay rights, everyone needs a helping hand and someone to love, because we are just that, human. Another essential part of life that connects every person and every animal in the world is our food. The anarchists, the single mothers, the grandparents who have distaste for government structure or the politicians clinging to their quest for power are all likely to agree that they want their food supply to be safe for consumption. The fact that everyone needs safe food, no matter their background, can serve as a means to connect every struggle for social justice in the world.

In a place like Vancouver we can see that companies enforcing the use of genetically modified foods stand above the city blocks surrounding us the people. The fact that businesses such as Monsanto are selling terminating seeds, that don't reproduce themselves, to villages in India and other third world communities and the truth that there is a homogenization of once diverse seed strains taking place at the hands of Monsanto is enough to make me wonder, can we really trust these people when they tell us that modifying foods genetically is safe? It is coming down to the need for the people, in imperial nations who house companies such as Novartis, Agrevo and Monsanto, to stand up to these businesses and those who control them with boycotts, protests in the streets and education about genetically modified

foods. The world's food supply should be celebrated, cherished, protected and enjoyed by every person and creature in the world and will be if we stand up to imperialist companies now, for our right to safe food. It is imperialist businesses such as those listed above who are threatening the hope for a future where compassion and cultural diversity come before what has been called 'the poison of revenue.' Community gardens and organic companies who keep prices low are all a starting point for making safe food available for everyone. There are a lot of products for sale today that do not benefit humanity in any way and it's my belief that this production is simply a way for the wealthy, power hungry companies of the world to occupy consumers and to enslave producers and workers at all levels. This ensures that the temporary materialism in the lives of the ruling class is handed down from generation to generation. The outrage of the masses of workers who have been lied to about how safe the world's food supply is and about how free our lives are under wage slavery transcend any ruling class prospects of human greed with a burning desire for a better world. If every food company out there, no matter how small or how big, can make the desperate need for organic seeds apparent to themselves and to the rest of us; and if they can protect the organic seeds they have, then everyone will benefit. This can only happen if each one of us from every social struggle and every angle of outrage and concern can support one another in the search for a safe global food supply and the defense of a culturally diverse world. Teach-ins, such as the Envisioning Peoples Struggles Conference that took place during June of 2005 in Vancouver are amazing ways to connect our struggles. Also, protests in the streets and boycotts of multi-national companies who support unsafe and oppressive food market practices are needed in a big way right now for us to educate ourselves.

It is of great importance for the peoples engaged in the struggle for environmental protection and safe food to recognize and utilize the connection of class struggle that is intertwined in the destruction of the environment by companies and nation states that perpetuate class war, and to confront racism within environmental movements. Racism is intertwined with environmental destruction. In America, the decimation of the vast land that was once thriving and wide came at the hands of the upper class, beginning with European colonization and the racism that exists during the settlement of Europeans



in North America. If we look to a quote by Red Cloud, Chief of the Oglala Sioux, we can hear the reality of the dominating class and their followers in the United States and in lands exploited around the globe, “They made many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one; they promised to take our land, and they took it.” And today, land is still being taken in the interests of profit at the expense of the environment, in North America, in Haiti, Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan and many more places around the world by the global elite and by fascist states who really do not care about the livelihood of anyone outside of their parliament, white houses, estates and palaces. It is because of capitalism and class struggle that organic food is so hard to come by at cheap prices, because the multi-national food companies are run by the rich white upper class who are friends of imperial government and who would rather stay as rich as possible than make safe food available to everyone. The fascism of the upper class of nation states the world over must be confronted by the movement for environmental and social justice in the world, and it is this movement that must be united if the world in the future will be a place where we can truly enjoy the nature that we are all interconnected with, and therefore the nature which connects us to one another.

The sun, and the food which it gives life to, are at the centre of our existence and need to be celebrated and protected. Every struggle for social justice revolves around our desire for a better world and it’s my hope that environmental protection can serve as a way to connect all of our avenues, leading to an earth where peace and diverse cultures thrive and are protected.

For more info:

[http://www.sirc.org/gate/gm\\_food.html](http://www.sirc.org/gate/gm_food.html)  
Social Issues Research Center  
199-2003

Stolen Harvest  
Vandana Shiva  
South End Press  
2000

‘The poison of revenue’  
Malefaction  
Where there is power there is always resistance  
G7 Welcoming Committee  
2003

Red Cloud quote  
Propagandhi  
Potemkin City Limits  
G7 Welcoming Committee  
2005



*Kyle Robert is a youth from Burnaby who has had his eyes opened by authors such as Bakunin, Charles Bukowski and Michael Albert and vows to stand against fascism in all its forms. {D-RANGED}*

## “Killer Coke” Struggle Comes to Vancouver

by Chinmoy Banerjee



The growing struggle against Coca-Cola came to Vancouver with a public forum on October 29, organized by the South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy (SANSAD) with the support of Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group (SFPIRG) at Simon Fraser University. The event added to other happy developments in recent days: Students at McMaster University had voted to end the exclusive contract with Coca-Cola at their university the previous week, and on October 26 the student movement against Coke declared the day the beginning of the first International Week of Action Against Coke and for Human Rights.

SANSAD is launching a campaign in the Vancouver region to inform the public regarding Coke’s record of human rights violations, environmental damage, and attacks on unions, in order to stimulate opposition to Coke on university and college campuses and to mobilize public opinion against Coca-Cola.

The offenses of Coca-Cola, which make it one of the ten worst corporations in the world, are well known to those who are already engaged in the struggle against corporate globalization, but are largely unknown to the general public. Nor is the labour movement in Canada -- though it is supportive of the struggle of Sinaltrainal, the union engaged in struggle against Coke in Colombia -- informed about the popular struggle against Coca-Cola in India. SANSAD’s project is to remedy this information gap in the Vancouver area and contribute to the consolidation of the opposition to Coca-Cola.

Though it is necessary to isolate Coca-Cola for its abusive practices, the opposition to “Killer Coke” is larger than its target, since Coca-Cola’s operations are only symptomatic of the current regime of transnational capital. As Gary Teeple of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Simon Fraser University pointed out at the SANSAD forum, since WWII, and particularly since the 1970s, the world has increasingly moved toward the creation of instruments to promote and facilitate the operation of transnational capital, enabling the privatization of resources, subsidized by the nation state, which is also entrusted with the responsibility of policing domestic private property relations. Privatization by the national state increasingly provides exclusionary rights to most aspects of life, including water, producing profit for the few at the expense of the majority and the environment.

Alfredo Porras, a trade unionist in Colombia who had been imprisoned

on false charges and subjected to assassination attempts at the instigation of Coca-Cola, corroborates Teeple's analysis with concrete experience. For instance, the development of a neo-liberal regime in Colombia, within which Coca-Cola funds the election of right wing parties, enables the company to bypass the employer-employee relationship by engaging contractors for the supply of labour and using the armed paramilitary to break attempts by unions to organize. To ensure a docile work force it hires teenage workers to deliver its products. It pollutes the rivers with caustic soda used to clean its bottles. A country rich in fresh water resources is burdened with the pollution of its water. Any attempt to challenge Coke's abuses is met with the violence of the state.

Harsha Walia, a South Asian activist and writer who has participated in the struggle against Coke in India, points out that Coke has drained the water where it has bottling plants to the extent that water-rich Kerala is short of water at Placimada, where Coke has a plant; that fifty villages in water-scarce Rajasthan are in a state of drought because of Coke's water consumption; that near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh the water table has gone down 15 feet; that Coke has been able to buy an entire river in Maharashtra, and that it has polluted land and water with heavy metals. A protest against Coke in Varanasi was brutally suppressed with four deaths and the arrest of more than three hundred.

But, on the positive side, there is strong resistance to Coke in India: For four years the Placimada plant has had a 24-hour vigil every day at its gate and for the last year and a half it has been shut down because the local village government refused to allow it to extract 500,000 liters of water a day. Although Coca-Cola won a decision by the Kerala High Court on September 7, the Government of Kerala—in an unusual move for a government--has taken the matter to the Supreme Court. In Tamil Nadu, although the state government has allowed Coca-Cola to build what would be the largest plants in India, the people have been demonstrating against the plans. In both Kerala and Tamil Nadu, local elections have shown the people's support for those who oppose Coca-Cola.

To oppose Coca-Cola, then, is not simply to oppose one player in the market, thus enriching other players and legitimizing the market as such. It is to target an exemplar of the regime of transnational capital in order to develop our consciousness about this regime and empower people in resistance to it.

Close to home the situation at the University of British Columbia (UBC) is paradigmatic: UBC signed a contract with Coke in 1995 and, subsequently, many water fountains on campus were turned off or allowed to sit in disrepair, in order to compel people to buy Coke products.

It is time to end this contract and affirm people's right to free, public water, produced economically by our taxes. The fight against Coke is not only a fight for the rights of labour and for human rights; it is also a fight for water, and a fight against the neo-liberal regime of transnational capital.

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Chinmoy Banerjee is a member of the South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy.



## REFLECTIONS ON CANADIAN CULTURE

by ashlee christoffersen

*The following is a response to a racist email that was sent to one of the editors/ writers here at Community Insurrection. This email claims variously to be a reprint of an article published in a Toronto newspaper, or based on an American or Australian editorial, and has been widely circulating on the internet. Apparently it is a shortened version of an article written in the days after 9/11 by some white guy in Georgia, US. It was recently printed as an editorial in the local newspaper in Port Alberni, BC. Our editors believe this email is representative of anti-immigrant sentiment in Canada and BC and hope to trouble some myths around Canadian identity in response.*

### **From Racist Email:**

I am tired of this nation worrying about whether we are offending some individual or their culture. I am not against immigration, nor do I hold a grudge against anyone who is seeking a better life by coming to Canada. Our population is almost entirely made up of descendants of immigrants. However, there are a few things that those who have recently come to our country, and apparently some born here, need to understand...

We are happy with our culture and have no desire to change, and we really don't care how you did things where you came from. This is OUR COUNTRY, our land, and our lifestyle.

### **Response--some issues to consider:**

- "Canada" is founded upon the colonization of indigenous peoples; "national identity" and "Canadian culture" are predicated on the idea of white

as the original inhabitants of this land...which we aren't. This is not "our land".

- Canadian national identity and culture have been constructed in opposition to the perceived characteristics of "other" cultures: we're good, moral, modern; they're bad, immoral, backward; these are racist ideas that have been and continue to be used to justify imperialism and colonization of indigenous populations and peoples all over this earth.

- When people say "Canadian culture", they usually (without always knowing it) mean British (and more specifically ruling class English) Protestant culture, while people with English background make up a minority of the Canadian population (less than six million people).

- Historically, English folks have been in positions of political and economic power in Canada and imposed aspects of their culture on the rest of us. Women they called "public health nurses" were even sent around to non-English people's houses to show them how to do things "properly", i.e. how to cook English food and adopt ruling class English standards of cleanliness.

- Over time the idea of Canadian culture equaling British culture has become powerful enough that it seems like common sense. But this has only happened because the cultures of other people in "Canada", especially people of colour and aboriginal people, have been and continue to be violently repressed, misrepresented, appropriated and manipulated by white people and the state.

- Dominant "Canadian culture" is not representative of the population. For example, the official statutory holidays reflect colonial British cultural values.

- Some might argue that this is fair because non-British immigrants came to what we now know as Canada much later. However, a little known fact is that the very first immigrants to BC were Chinese. African-Americans, indigenous people from Hawaii, and folks from Japan and India (to name a few examples) have been in "Canada" for a long time, despite continuing violent racist efforts to make Canada a white country.

- Some might say "but now we have multiculturalism". But even the idea of multiculturalism assumes that there is a "main", "first" or "dominant" culture, accessorized by cute and un-threatening "multicultures".

***From Racist Email:***

We speak ENGLISH/FRENCH, not Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese,

Japanese, Russian, or any other language. Therefore, if you wish to become part of our society, learn the language!

***Response:***

- We speak Inuktitut, Cree, Ojibwe, Italian, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Portuguese, Punjabi, Hindi, Russian, Farsi, and Urdu to name only a few. French and English are merely the chosen official languages through which the dominantly French/English colonial government communicates and administers its colonial policies. These official languages were chosen because they reflect well those holding power.

- The government has cut funding for language training programs for new immigrants and moreover immigrant women were only very rarely given access to these programs; few immigrants enjoy not being able to speak English when it results in such abuse and economic marginalization.

***From Racist Email:***

IMMIGRANTS,  
NOT Canadians  
MUST ADAPT.

***Response:***

- If the Canadian state was not built upon and thriving on racism, then dominant culture would change to reflect the populations that are actually living on this land. Land that is first and foremost is indigenous land. The racism that exists is evident in the fact that white immigrants quickly become "Canadian" while people of colour, including those whose families have been here for hundreds of years, are still imagined as "immigrants" by white folks.

## OUR COMMUNITY LISTINGS

The idea behind the listings is to serve as a posting space for groups and individuals within the anticapitalist community.

If you would like to announce an event or an opportunity, submit further community media sources, or know of an organization that might like to be added to the contact list please send us an email.

Likewise, if you have other ideas for the use of this space or have any comments, please contact us.



**Email:** [acf-van@resist.ca](mailto:acf-van@resist.ca) **Mail:** Box #157, 345 East Broadway, Vancouver, V5T 1W5 **Web:** [www.resist.ca/~acf-van](http://www.resist.ca/~acf-van)

As noted earlier, to make the next issue happen, we would greatly appreciate donations. It costs approximately \$1 to print each of these magazines, so even a small contribution of \$5 or \$10 makes a big difference. Please consider it. If you do, donations can be sent to the above address.

## SOME OPPORTUNITIES

**The Obaa Show** is a public affairs show by and for women of colour, on Vancouver Co-operative Radio (CFRO 102.7 FM). We feature music and talk about issues such as immigration, sexism, body image, health, the local arts scene, etc.

We are seeking volunteer producers / hosts who can commit to minimum 1 timeslot per month. No radio experience is necessary, we will train. If you think you might be interested in joining Obaa check our website at [www.freewebs.com/obaa](http://www.freewebs.com/obaa).

“The Obaa Show” on Vancouver Co-operative Radio  
CFRO 102.7 FM  
web: [www.freewebs.com/obaa](http://www.freewebs.com/obaa)  
email: [obaashow@hotmail.com](mailto:obaashow@hotmail.com)

**Towards a Just and Lasting Peace:** An international anti-imperialist conference against imperialist war and plunder will take place June 16 to 19, 2006. Organized under the auspices of the International League of Peoples’ Struggle (ILPS)

Participating ILPS organizations based in Vancouver are leading the preparations and organizing of this conference. We need your skills and commitment! For more information or to volunteer, please contact the conference organizing group at (604) 215-1905, email [ilps\\_canada@shawcable.com](mailto:ilps_canada@shawcable.com) or visit <http://ilps2005.tripod.com>

The conference will be an international gathering of anti-imperialist, democratic, and progressive mass organizations and individuals to achieve the following objectives:

- Discuss and analyse the current situation of imperialism, war, plunder and crisis, particularly its impacts on oppressed peoples and nations, and its aggressive character in pursuing militarism, fascism and wars of aggression.
- Examine the situation and prospects for building a just and lasting peace for oppressed peoples and nations by using case studies of movements for national and social liberation as they strive to resolve the root causes of conflict and war.
- Plan actions, campaigns and other methods of exposing and opposing the systemic causes of war, plunder and crisis, including building support for movements for national and social liberation.

## SOME ORGANIZATIONS

No One is Illegal  
Phone: 604-682-3269 ext 7149  
Web: noii-van.resist.ca

Email: noii-van@resist.ca

Bus Riders Union  
Phone: 604-215-2775  
Web: bru.resist.ca

Email: bru@resist.ca

Grassroots Women  
Phone: 604-682-4451  
Web: www3.telus.net/grassrootswomen

Email: grassrootswomen@telus.net

South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy  
Phone: 604-420-2972  
Web: www.sansad.org

Email: sansad@sansad.org

Anti-Poverty Committee  
Phone: 604-682-2726  
Web: apc.resist.ca

Email: apc@resist.ca

Philippine Women Centre  
Phone: 604-215-1103  
Web: pwc.bc.tripod.com

Email: pwc@kalayaancentre.net

Vancouver Parecon Collective  
Web: vanparecon.resist.ca

Email: vancouverparecon@resist.ca

Group of Relatives and Friends of Political Prisoners in Mexico  
Web: www.mexprisoners.com

Email: gfappm2@yahoo.ca

Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group  
Phone: 604-291-4360  
Web: www.sfpirg.ca

Email: sfpirg@sfu.ca

Food Not Bombs  
Phone: 604-961-5894  
Web: foodnotbombs.ca

Email: fnb.gvrd@foodnotbombs.ca



## SOME COMMUNITY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDIA IN VANCOUVER

Co-op Radio CFRO  
SFU Radio CJSF  
UBC Radio CITR

102.7 FM  
90.1 FM  
101.9 FM

www.coopradio.org  
www.cjsf.bc.ca  
www.citr.ca

Carnegie Newsletter  
Fire This Time  
Latin America Connexions  
Redwire Magazine  
Antithesis Magazine  
Upping the Anti

www.carnnews.org  
www.firethistime.net  
conexion@tao.ca  
www.redwiremag.com  
www.sfpirg.ca  
auto\_sol.tao.ca

Mostly Water  
BC Independent Media  
Seven Oaks

www.mostlywater.org  
bc.indymedia.org  
www.sevenoaksmag.com





## OUR BASIS OF UNITY:

### PURPOSE

We, the Anticapitalist Community Forum, have come together to collectively oppose capitalism. Our purposes are to provide support and neutral ground to individuals and groups working within this mandate, welcome newcomers to collective political action, provide a forum for critical discussion and debate within this mandate, facilitate communication and skills-sharing and to unite people across differences in building a more inclusive anti-capitalist community.

### JUSTICE

We condemn white supremacy, patriarchy, imperialism and colonialism, oppression of the poor by the rich, enforced heterosexuality, wage slavery, environmental destruction and all other forms of structural oppression, domination and exploitation. Thus we do not tolerate manifestations of the above, including racism, sexism, poor-bashing, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, age discrimination, discrimination against immigrants or any other form of oppression or disrespect of difference. We recognize that capitalism and neoliberalism enforce and perpetuate the above. We aim to be open and accessible to all people who oppose the capitalist system, and to provide a space that strives to counter oppressive power dynamics, to empower historically marginalized groups, and to reaffirm the dignity of all persons. In keeping with the above, we do not recognize the legitimacy of nation-states, and in particular those, including the Canadian state, which stand on violently appropriated land.

### PROCESS

We recognize the importance of creativity and community-building in developing alternatives which stand outside of the capitalist system and in strengthening the anti-capitalist movement; as such, we aim to support artists and others creatively opposing capitalism and to provide not only a political, but a social and cultural space. We believe that every process is a creative process and aim to be inclusive. We are a self-critical, democratic organization that works within the principles of consensus decision-making.

### VISION

We believe that creating a just future is a process that must start today if we are to be successful. We support a diversity of tactics in building alternatives to the capitalist system in the face of opposing forces; we also support a diversity of tactics among people who support our principles of justice in countering those forces. We strive for the self-determination of individuals and communities, and support resistance of internal power dynamics. We envision a world free from divisive national borders. We have every intention of being successful in our struggle.

