

# REFUSE TO RETREAT

## conference

### HOW WE FIGHT ★ HOW WE WIN

February 21 – 22, 2004

**FREE. Everyone Welcome. Wheelchair accessible. Meals and snacks throughout both days. Childcare with kid's activities available.**

Under the BC Liberals, the attack on all unemployed poor and working poor has intensified. The latest Liberal assault to hit the people was the two-year time limit on welfare. Over the last few months, many individuals and groups have been working together in solidarity, building a community resistance to fight this government and organizing to rescind this oppressive welfare legislation. This weekend's conference will focus on our active forms of fight back, community organizing, education, and outreach. We will do this by emphasizing alliance building, creating solidarity and building strength between individuals and groups with the major goal of initiating and supporting a **Common Front** to formalize our network of resistance.

#### DAY ONE: Saturday, Feb 21st

11am – 12pm Registration/Breakfast

12pm – 1pm Opening  
Facilitators : Jill Chettiar – Anti-Poverty Committee, Claudio Eckdahl – BCGEU

1:15pm – 2:15pm Workshop 1 Labour Struggles  
Guest speakers: BC Government Employees Union – Local 106, Hospital Employees Union, Prepare the General Strike, Lower Mainland for Social Justice, CUPE locals

2:30pm – 3:30pm Workshop 2 Women's Liberation  
Guest speakers: Vancouver Status of Women, Aboriginal Womens Network, Philippine Women's Centre, BCTF Feminist Caucus, Kettle Friendship Society, Disability Action Committee – Victoria

3:45pm – 4:45pm Workshop 3 Welfare Fight Back  
Guest Speakers: Housing Action Committee, End Legislated Poverty, Anti-Poverty Committee, Downtown Eastside Residential Association, Kettle Friendship Society

5pm – 6pm Workshop 4 Indigenous Sovereignty  
Guest Speakers: Cheam Activist, Native Solidarity Network

6pm – 7pm Dinner

#### DAY TWO: Sunday, Feb 22nd

10am – 11am Registration/Breakfast

12pm – 1pm Workshop 5 Against Imperialism  
Guest Speakers: Queers United Against Capitalism, Stop War, Latinos In Action, Palestine Solidarity Group, South Asian Youth Alliance

1:15pm – 2:15pm Workshop 6 Immigrants and Refugee's Fight Back  
Guest Speakers: SANSAD (South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy), No One Is Illegal - Vancouver and Montreal, VAST (Victims and Survivors of Torture), Bus Riders Union, Palestine Community Centre, Al-Awda (Palestine Right to Return Coalition)

2: 45pm – 5:00pm <sup>United</sup> Common-Front Strategy Session

Facilitators: Jill Chettiar – APC, Claudio Eckdahl – BCGEU

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## Why a proposal for a Common Front?

The Anti-Poverty Committee (APC), along with other participating organizations, recognize that we are presently in an urgent situation, both locally and globally. We are facing a government that has constantly attacked the poor, women, children, aboriginal and immigrant communities, refugees, students, and the working class while being committed to privatization, imperialism, and corporate welfare.

Recognizing this situation, we believe a concrete outcome must be developed from the Refuse to Retreat conference. For this reason we are putting forth a proposal for a Common Front for consideration and debate during the conference. This is by no means a final document, but it is presented to allow constructive debate about the formation of a Common Front.

By having this document organizers aim to prevent the conference from becoming simply a debate about ideas with no real outcome. Participating groups are asked to debate the proposal and collectively modify it to produce a proposal that will represent the Common Front.

## Workshop/Discussion Groups

The purpose of the group discussion workshops is to share and tap into organizing and resources available to those who wish to be involved and or need support in their fight back. In our small group discussions we invite groups and individuals, after the presentations are made, to discuss and strategize around the below proposal:

### Proposal to organize a Common Front/Network:

The goals of the Refuse to Retreat Conference:

- \* to bring a variety of groups and individuals together
- \* to share issues and struggles
- \* to establish ties as a network
- \* encourage co-operation, solidarity
- \* to link struggles together, with the end goal of forming a united, solid fight back

### Organizing Goals of the Common Front:

1. Defeat the BC Liberals. ? *what does this mean?*
2. Commitment to active participation, and active organizing within the Common Front.
3. Commitment to direct action.
4. Commitment to mass mobilize people.
5. No political parties, people independent from their parties are welcome.
6. Reverse BC Liberal legislation and plan for an organizing framework that goes beyond the BC Liberals and extends into the future.

### What we are building a Common Front for:

1. Network: Share resources between groups & individuals
2. Outreach: Bring people in to join the Common Front

### What is the goals of this strategy session?

1. Make a decision to initiate a Common Front Network and set a date for the next meeting
2. Decide on a common point/action to organize towards.
3. Arrange a meeting date to follow up on ideas coming from the strategy session.

### What does it mean to be part of the Common Front Network?

1. As part of the Common Front, groups or individuals commit to sharing resources.
2. The Call for Action: Any group or individual can place a call for action around issues of their choice, and then call for a Common Front meeting.
3. Recognize that the Common Front is a network of resources and is action based.
4. The Common Front Network meets to organize actions and to share resources, but otherwise it does not meet.
5. Members of the Common Front are asked to actively participate; for example, when a Call for Action is presented, members of the Common Front will attend the meeting to discuss and decide on their involvement and to make their resources available.

### We encourage people to see this as a draft proposal, and to discuss these three questions:

1. How do you see yourself and or your group fitting into this proposal to form a common front/network?
2. What are issues that you see as important and crucial for you and your group to be involved?
3. Do you want to organize an action for April 1, 2004. What are points of action that you would like to be discussed at the final strategy session on Sunday?

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