

**Feb 21-22.04**

**The Anti -Poverty Committee.**

**Refuse to Retreat Conference.**

**Workshop Notes.**

**For the Final Common Front strategy session.**

**February 21.2004 Labour Fight Back**

**Discussion Points.**

1. Organizing for April 1. –
2. CUPE democracy day – groups interested in organizing for this day.
3. Common front to be involved in Democracy Day
4. Supporting people engage in illegal work action.
5. Organize with Welfare and Disability Peoples Union
6. UNN local 111 – doing workshops and education – sharing resources.
7. The importance of talking about class. and acknowledging class.
8. Importance to show solidarity, and work together
9. Looking at the workers living below poverty line, as more workers are forced to work outside unions.
10. Focus on education – outreach, shifting attitudes
11. Need to have independent democratic labor organizations

**Obstacles in organizing with labour.**

- Bureaucracy in labor politics and movement
- Passivity of labor
- Many workers are not in unions.
- Rank and files are disillusioned with unions
- Union worker feeling disconnected from the struggle
- Union bureaucracy is enemy if labor movement

**Ideas for common front:**

- Look at a united front instead.
- Need an issue to unite around. – That addresses and includes all points of oppression.
- How do we handle labour groups that will sabotage a united front?
- Look at where people work,
- Workers and union is not the same thing.
- Addressing the criminalization of people who work and whose work is  
“criminalized” by this gov't - supporting them.

## **February 21.04 Womens Liberation**

### **Discussion Points.**

1. Be critical of pitting workers against each other; be critical of trade unions – recognizing workers experience in Pilipino community.
2. Being critical of the vision of the: poor person” often looking primarily at the issues of single white men.
3. Poor people are single moms –facing welfare cuts  
- Welfare recipient, families.ect
4. The struggle for workers liberation and the class struggle are not separate, but the same struggle. Class division in Canada, looking at the working class are women working in the service sector.

### **Proposals for Common front:**

1. Mass casework.
2. Addressing unorganized pools of labor primarily women and people of color.
3. Lack of inclusion of women within poor peoples movement in BC.
4. We need to look at federal government - Paul Martin.
5. A women and peoples of color caucus within CF
6. Addressing Program review of Federal gov't; which will mean program and job cuts: looking at cuts to clerical, (primarily women) workers/and women with disabilities.
7. Support and organizing behind the women’s walkout in march 8.2004
8. Working with Welfare and DB People Union in Victoria

## **February 21.04 Indigenous Sovereignty**

### **Discussion points to be included in Common Front -**

1. Resources need to be sent to all marginalized communities
1. Anti –poverty struggle linked to indigenous struggles
2. Solidarity with NYM focused on sovereignty – not collaborating with gov't
3. Issues around urban aboriginals - not having rights to land.
6. Addressing development of aboriginal rights and national rights.
7. Addressing political genocide, treaties, looking at people who enter at a treaty, enter as a municipality.
8. Child apprehension - the resistance by the gov't for the aboriginal people to raise their own children: stolen generations.

### **Proposals for action:**

1. Bringing Common Front proposal to UNN
2. Sk'wek'welt possible demo against March 20. NDP fundraiser (svend robinson) who supported the military moving into gustafsen lake.
3. October – Freedom Tour.
4. Sunpeaks action in the fall. Needs support organizing
5. align and give support to Native Solidarity Network.

## **February 21.04 Welfare Fight Back.**

### **Discussion:**

1. Welfare - only provides subsistence for now.
2. Fighting cuts is important, must add the component that welfare rates are too low and must be raised.
3. Expand common front organizing into inner city schools.
4. Aboriginal people being told to back to reservation by welfare workers – aboriginal displacement
5. Organize with/in: student, parent teachers organizations
6. Draw links to other campaigns against liberals.
7. Victoria; alliance build –with people with disabilities union of Victoria, co-ordinated with ACP campaign beginning Feb 23.
8. Defend cuts to service – but understand their role in imperialism.
9. Must include aboriginal and women component to fight back –

### **Proposals for action:**

1. Address the communities not represented: for example Asian population.
2. Be critical of those who lobby for this legislation.
3. Target those who lobby for this legislation: Board of Trade. Partnerships BC Compass.
4. Federal gov't cuts to Canada Assistance Plan – as a target.
5. Action Center: ways for people to access unions – and ways for unions to bring their new to the table.
6. Raise welfare rates. Solidarity with welfare recipients.

**February 22.04 Sunday.**

### **Against Imperialism.**

#### **Important Points and proposals for action to be included in the Common front discussion:**

1. International struggle. Making the links. Supporting working class struggle in industrialized countries. Fighting corporate agendas. Recognizing the similarities in struggle. Show solidarity, and analysis around international struggles.
2. Fight imperialism through direct action. Supporting autonomous communities that are taking matters into their own hands internationally.
3. Supporting autonomous movements, eg. landless peasants taking land, not making deals with corporations and governments, within this context: support armed struggle.
4. An Anti-imperialist struggles must be included in analysis.
5. Analysis around the “systems of oppression”
6. Coming together against a common enemy, uniting locally, internationally and nationally.
7. Target anti-terrorism laws.

**Sunday, February 22.04**

**Immigrants and Refugee Fight back.**

**Points to be included in the Common Front:**

1. Connection of war abroad to the war at home.
2. Challenging the concept of peace.
3. Discussion of tactics, sharing models of organizing and tactics.
4. Recognizing that people without status and refugees have more at stake – these are the barriers to organizing and participating in actions.
5. How do we fight back effectively – supporting the attack on vulnerable populations?
6. Look at the role of women in organizing, empowering communities in and outside of immigrant and refugees.
7. Looking at the vision beyond the current imperialist state.
8. What models are we using, sharing, and models for outreach.

**Proposals for action for common front:**

1. Legal Aid Cuts - direct action casework, networking with NOII, forming a quick response team.
9. Coalition formed among refugee communities, people without status: presenting unified demands.
10. Flying squads: with the purpose to mobilize for 100 – 1000's.
11. Looking at how we confront the gov't to elicit response in overall situation rather than case by case.
12. Providing assistance in navigating bureaucracy: immigration, refugees claims
13. Facing culture: language barriers: so issues are represented with support and inclusiveness. Understanding the issues immigrants and refugees face in organizing.
14. Translators must be part of common front.
15. Include both direct action and diversity of other tactics.
16. Bring to the common front the sharing of analysis and resources sharing from each group and individual.
17. Legal clinic. Immediate assistance to those affected legal aid cuts.

# REFUSE TO RETREAT

## 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. + Feds -
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?

HOW WE FIGHT ★ HOW WE WIN