

Coalition marches for peace

by Chris Lambie

On Saturday, November 24 the Coalition Against War in the Gulf staged a peace march through the streets of downtown Halifax to protest Canadian military involvement in the Persian Gulf.

Over fifty people marched from the Public Gardens, down Spring

people spoke to the crowd, explaining why they felt Canada should not be engaged in the war-torn area.

Frank Jones, one of the coalition organizers, said "we are trying to form a multi-base organization. Our aim is to get together as many people as we can to form a movement to get the troops out of the Gulf.

criticize the soldiers and sailors who are there. We don't want to chastise or condemn them in any way. They are simply being used by the government to support policies that we don't agree with."

Pat Kinley, a spokesperson for the Voice of Women, a thirty-year old women's peace group formed in response to the nuclear threat, was adamant in her condemnation of Canadian military involvement. She said "the Conservative government takes step after step to make the world one big happy economic organ so that the trans-national companies can do as they please in order to increase their profits."

"These cuts are going to pay for a war that is only benefiting the multi-nationals. Once we accept cutbacks, we will never get those social services back again. After ten years working in the peace movement, I can't believe we are preparing to go to war," she said.

Bill Lewis, an aboriginal representative drew a connection between the Native Peoples' dilemma and the Canadian situation in the Gulf.

"There is a specific racism to oil: when the media refers to Iraqi oil, they always call it Arab oil, even though the Western trans-nationals are filtering off most of the profits," he said.

Lewis said "right now, on Lubicon land, there are some four hundred wells pumping out over a million dollars worth of oil every day. He suggested the government and Shell Oil take the money they were stealing from the Lubicon to pay for the lengthy stand-off at Oka. Lewis concluded by saying "there can be no peace without justice."

Gordon Davie asked the crowd "why are we marching today?" He

answered his own question by pointing at the war monument in the Parade Grounds. "Because we don't want to see the year 1991 up there with the rest of those dates," he said.

"We have Canadian generals telling us that we are fighting for democracy in Kuwait. There's never been any democracy in Kuwait to die for in the first place," he said. "It's one of the least democratic countries in the world; no political dissidence, thousands of political prisoners, no political rights and no rights for women. Are we going to fight and die for that?"

Davie said "We know Saddam Hussein is a dictator and that he has oppressed his own people for

twenty years, but nobody gave a damn until now. All of a sudden he's the most terrible swine on earth. He's been a swine for twenty years, and yet the West is just discovering it now. It seems like we start fighting dictatorships only when they turn against us. When he was on our side against Iran, we never criticized him."

Peter Gionnovlis capped off the protest, he said "the Canadian government has ordered 800 body bags, and by this action, they have finished their Christmas shopping. We have no interest in oil companies and we do not support war industries, we want our troops out of the Gulf. Let economic sanctions work; we have the time!"



Photo: Chris Lambie

Inclement weather didn't deter these protestors

Garden Road to the Grand Parade Grounds to demonstrate their discontent over the presence of over eighteen hundred Canadian Forces personnel in the crisis-ridden region.

Car horns honked and drivers' fists waved in solidarity with the marchers as they braved the cold, heavy rain; protestors carried signs and shouted the slogans No blood for oil and Hell no, we won't go, we won't die for Texaco.

After the march, a number of

Jones said, there is a lot of confusion as to why the troops are there. "The papers have been saying that the military presence is necessary for the protection of democracy," he said. We want to inform Canadians that our troops are there to protect oil profits and oil profits alone.

Another coalition member said "we all have one thing in common, we do not want to see Canadians die in the Gulf. We aren't here to

Barlow fears for Canada

by Paul Webster

"If you want to see what this country will look like in ten years, just look south", Maude Barlow told a crowd at Dalhousie last Thursday.

The Americanization of Canada is very much on Barlow's mind, as the National Chair of the Council of Canadians (CoC). The event at which she spoke was partly aimed at promoting her new book *Parcel of Rogues: How Free Trade is Failing Canada*, partly a reconvening of the CoC faithful, and partly a presentation of a radically apocalyptic vision of Canada in the hands of an administration she barely restrains herself from calling fascist.

The CoC was formed in 1987 as a non-partisan organization pitted against Free Trade. The Council made strong headway in warning Canadians the Free Trade Agree-

ment (FTA) did not protect Canadian labour, Canadian social and cultural programs and Canadian resource sovereignty.

Barlow points out that when the CoC was formed 70 per cent of Canadians supported Free Trade, while by the time the 1988 election arrived more people voted against the Free Trade Tories than for them.

Summing up the impact of the FTA so far, Barlow noted 162 000 jobs have been lost, and 92 per cent of the new companies established in Buffalo last year were Canadian. "I would tear up the FTA on a dime. Its dragging us into a terrible economic disaster, one where we have lost sovereign control of our resources", she concluded.

The present thrust of Barlow's concerns is focussed on Free Trade with Mexico, which is being negotiated bilaterally by the US,

while the Canadian Government makes overtures of trilateral interest.

Barlow noted that Mexican industrial workers are completely unprotected, are never paid more than \$3.25 per day, are forced to live and work in toxic conditions similar to the "worst of third world poverty".

The majority of Mexican labourers working in the Free Trade maquiladora zones are teenage females between 15 and 20 years of age, older than that and they're unfit to work anymore in the toxic workplaces, said Barlow.

Barlow argues Free Trade will not help these people. She sees the Canada-US-Mexico idea as one which will allow US capital to appropriate Canadian resources and exploit Mexican labour to

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Metro food bank ready for winter

by Kothai P. Kumanan

Despite dramatically increasing demands during the winter months, donations to the Metro Food Bank Society (MFBS) tend to be sufficient because more people seem to think about the problems faced by the hungry around Christmastime, according to Geoff Regan, Acting Spokesperson for the society.

"Though we have a good response at all times of the year people seem to be especially aware at this time of year," said Regan, who is also Chairperson of the MFBS Public Relations Committee.

Demand and supply fluctuate considerably throughout the year, but the worst times of the year for the Food Bank are February and the summer months.

"This summer our demand did not drop as it usually does, mostly because of the recession with more people being unemployed," said Regan. In these situations, Food Bank officials must actively canvas for food.

The Metro Food Bank Society is a non-profit organization founded in June 1984 by local community workers, church workers and business workers, and was initiated primarily as an emergency food program to assist churches and various social services with an increased demand for food. Support was also received from the local food industry, with companies like Bolands providing a regular quantity of its produce.

The Metro Food bank, like many other food banks across the country, does not distribute directly to individuals, but acts as a central distribution point to member agencies, which in turn distribute to individuals.

The original goal of the Food Bank, which was to provide emergency supplements in crisis situations, has changed over

the years as economic conditions worsen and individuals experience an increased dependence for organization like the MFBS. "We were becoming simply an institution that was handing out food," said Regan.

"Just the distribution of food is not a solution to poverty," Regan said, "there's a lot more that has to be done."

The gradual change in the MFBS's mandate has been a result of the lack of awareness as to the extent of the hunger and poverty that exists in the Halifax area. According to Metro Food Bank statistics, more than "50,000 people in the Halifax Metro area, of which 40% are children and youth, are now receiving emergency food assistance to supplement their low-income levels".

Given that our society is aging and that a smaller number of people are entering the work force, higher productivity will be required to preserve our standard of living. Failure to invest now in one-fifth of our future work force will cost us in coming years.

With the problem of poverty not being alleviated, the MFBS Board decided at its January 1989 annual planning session that the Food Bank would phase itself out of business over a period of five years. During the period before Dec. 31, 1994, the Food Bank would focus on developing more long-term solutions to hunger and poverty.

One of the prime concerns of the MFBS presently is to make people more aware of the situation. "It's not just a problem for the people who are poor and the volunteers working at the food banks," said Regan, "it's the responsibility for the entire nation, which is why we are concentrating on raising public awareness."