



Letter from your Executive

Dear Fellow VANA Members in BC:

“When the people sigh there is a storm,” runs a Chinese saying. Around the world there is a big and growing storm of discontent with the Bush administration’s eagerness for war. Major antiwar demonstrations around the world on 18 January and on 15 February have been big waves in this storm. Strong currents have also been flowing in city halls across North America. Members of VANA have been active in city halls in BC.

On 30 January, Vancouver city council voted unanimously in favour of a resolution to oppose the war. This was the first such resolution by a major city in Canada. This resolution had been prepared by Lawyers Against War, and VANA members in Vancouver assisted in the process of contacting speakers representing churches, teachers and unions to appear before the council. VANA members Woody Coward, David Morgan and Ed Shaffer spoke before the council. A Sun report on this council session appears below. The presentations by decorated veterans Woody Coward and Ed Shaffer were especially well received. Some of Ed’s presentation appears below.

Ed Shaffer was contacted for the founding meeting of Writers Against War on February 1st. Ed invited David Morgan to this meeting and we will keep members informed about our ‘pen-is-mightier-than-the-sword’ progress.

Meanwhile, on 2 February in Nanaimo, VANA members Marvin Brown and Tony Guppy boldly addressed an unsympathetic council on the issue of peace. Marvin’s presentation appears below.

Bravo to Marvin and Tony! In Ottawa, the antiwar struggle by VANA Life Member Libby Davies is rarely reported. We try to rectify this with an extract below from Hansard which shows the fine work that Libby does.

We have to spend so much time and energy protesting against the awful mess that the Bush administration is making of the world that we sometimes forget to think of the positive alternatives. A conference, attended by Elsie Dean, in Puerto Alegre, Brazil did just that.

Elsie, who lives in Burnaby and is a member of the Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) will be telling us about her experiences in Brazil, at our BC Branch VANA meeting on Monday 24 February at 1:30. This event will, as usual, be held in the Fireside Room, Unitarian Church at 49th Avenue and Oak Street, Vancouver. Don’t miss Elsie’s upbeat news about plans for a brighter future.

We close with a poem “**Constructive Response**” kindly sent to us by Fred Knelman. Do keep sending in your news, information, articles, writing, questions, beefs and bouquets. They are always welcome and will be included in future updates.

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Canada shouldn't act on Iraq without UN sanction, council motion urges

By KARENN KRANGLE, *The Vancouver Sun*, January 31, 2003, p. A2

Vancouver city council unanimously agreed Thursday to a motion opposing Canada's involvement in a war against Iraq that is not authorized by the UN, despite the reservations of two councillors about debating issues that don't involve running the city.

The vote came after a raucous, three-hour meeting of the planning and environment committee, which heard from 17 speakers, all but one opposed to war with Iraq.

Speakers ranged from elderly war veterans who said any war is horrible to community peace activists, to a woman who has visited Iraq several times and opposes economic sanctions against that country.

The range of debate varied widely among council members who several times sniped at each other, even within their political caucus. In the end, all agreed they are not in favour of Canada joining a unilateral U.S. attack on Iraq and that a unanimous vote sends a stronger message to Ottawa.

"The thing that is most important about this city is that COPE [the Coalition of Progressive Electors, which holds the council majority] and the NPA [Non-Partisan Association] would get together

on peace, said Councillor Fred Bass.

NPA Councillor Peter Ladner said he was supporting the motion "under duress." "I was moved by many of the presentations but if we are on a path that we're going to save the world with this council, I'm concerned about where it will stop," he said. "I see U.S. cities doing this because they're directly affected, but we should be wary about getting people all strung up about things they can't do anything about"

Several speakers argued council has an obligation to discuss issues relating to peace. "This issue may be beyond the powers of this body but it isn't beyond the concerns of this body," said David Morgan of Veterans Against Nuclear Arms. The motion also urges the federal government to push diplomatically for a peaceful solution in Iraq and opposes what it calls threatened pre-emptive military action by the U.S. against Iraq.

Council also voted to resurrect the peace and justice committee from the 1980s. At that time, a mixed council headed by then-mayor Mike Harcourt debated such issues. Vancouver was then declared a nuclear weapons-free zone and signs to that effect were erected at city boundaries

Marvin Brown, VANA, Addresses Nanaimo City Council on Iraq and War.

My name is Marvin E Brown. I am a veteran of the 2nd world war and I am glad to be able to speak to you about peace. Many of my comrades are not able to and there are millions of others who would speak out if they were able .

Looking back on my life and the history of the last 78 years I feel ashamed of my former country, the USA and the record of their military conduct. All their military activities are conducted on other peoples' lands. They say they are protecting people from terrorism. Not true. What they are doing is using terrorist methods of controlling people and their resources.

I think back to my service World War II. I served in the Parachute Infantry in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Austria. I remember much about what happened and I have thought about it. Why were we killing each other? Young German soldiers looked a lot like us when you saw them lying dead in the snow.

We were killing each other because the German people did not speak up and stop their leaders from building and using a powerful military machine until it was too late. Millions of innocent people died. Hitler used lies and now the American president and the American military are using the same lies to build a huge military machine to dominate the world. We and our children will pay the price if we don't stop it. If they start the war on Iraq it could be too late. Work for peace

Statement before Vancouver City Council on Iraq Resolution

Ed Shaffer, January 30, 2003

I am here wearing two hats. One is the hat of a veteran of the U.S. Army in World War II. The other is that of a retired professor of economics and the author of several books on oil.

I would now like to wear my first hat, that of a veteran. I was one of those soldiers who, after wading ashore in France, fought across Europe and met the Red Army about 65 miles north west of Berlin. I know war first-hand and I know how horrible it is and that is one reason I vigorously oppose it. I would like to quote what U.S. general Sherman, who fought for Union side in the American Civil War, told the cadets at West Point in 1879.

**War is hell. I am tired and sick
of war. Its glory is all
moonshine. It is only those
who have never fired a shot nor
heard the shrieks and groans
of the wounded, who cry aloud
for blood, more vengeance,
more desolation.**

General Sherman's statement applies to the present rulers of United States. Nearly all of them, while old enough to fight in the Vietnam War, found excuses to avoid service. These same people, who lost the popular election, are the ones who are asking other people to risk their lives and their futures in order to satisfy ambitions of the U.S. rulers. It makes my blood boil.

I now would like to put on my other hat, that of a retired professor. I want to say first of all that this impending war against Iraq has nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction. According to a former arms inspector, Scott Ritter, a U.S. marine major, these weapons have been mainly destroyed. Few, if any are left and those left are insufficient to threaten the United States or any other country. These

weapons are not the issue. Neither is the so-called war on terrorism.

Let's look at the terrorist acts in United States. No terrorist has ever fired a missile that reached the United States. There have nevertheless been a number of terrorist attacks within the U.S.. There was for instance the shootings of students in a university in Texas by a sniper in one of the campus towers. In 1963 John F. Kennedy was assassinated. There was the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City and finally the attack on the trade center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington. The first three of these attacks were committed by native-born Americans, all former members of the U.S. armed forces. No foreign powers were involved. The last was committed mainly by citizens of one of the United States' closest allies in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia. These terrorists were all legal residents of the U.S. Not one of these attacks was made by citizens of those countries that President Bush calls "the axis of evil." It would seem that if the United States really wanted to fight terrorism it would ask itself this question, "what is the process which caused those serving in the armed forces to become terrorists?" If the United States really wanted fight terrorism, it should go after its own armed forces and those of its allies.

Furthermore, if United States felt that somehow Iraq could somehow launch a surprise terrorist attack on United States, then it should welcome the arms inspectors and try to make them stay as there long as possible. As long as inspectors are in Iraq, Iraq would not be able to launch such attacks. Then why is the United States in a hurry to get them out? It is precisely because the United States has no fear of such attacks.

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Iraq Resolution (continued from page 3)

Then what does the United States want? The answer was partially given in an October 12, 2001 article in the *New York Times*, just one month after 9/11. Entitled "Some Pentagon Officials and Advisers Seek to Oust Iraq's Leader in War's Next Phase," the article revealed:

A tight-knit group of Pentagon officials and defense experts outside government is working to mobilize support for a military operation to oust President Saddam Hussein of Iraq as the next phase of the war against terrorism, senior administration officials and defense experts said. The group, which some in the State Department and on Capitol Hill refer to as the "Wolfowitz cabal," after Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul D. Wolfowitz, is laying the groundwork for a strategy that envisions the use of air support and the occupation of southern Iraq with American ground troops to install a Iraqi opposition group based in London at the helm of a new government, the officials and experts said. **Under this notion, American troops would also seize the oil fields around Basra, in southeastern Iraq, and sell the oil to finance the Iraqi opposition in the south and the Kurds in the north, one senior official said.**

Not one word was said about "weapons of mass destruction." It, instead, revealed the true reasons for the planned action against Iraq, **regime change and oil**. The demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 provided the opportunity for the United States to establish a *Pax*

Americana. Control of the world's oil supplies is an important component of its efforts to establish an American empire. This oil empire would stretch from the Central Asian countries of the former Soviet Union, including those bordering on the Caspian Sea area, down to the Middle East. The link between them would be Afghanistan. The Americans figure that by taking control of Iraq they will be able to control all Middle East oil, including that produced by Saudi Arabia.

The Americans are actively seeking to control oil in other parts of the world. They are now trying to wrest control of the oil in Venezuela, by toppling Chavez. They have troops in Colombia to help build pipelines for Colombian oil. They are active in Indonesia. And at the same time, they want the world to be more dependent on oil and this is one reason why they refused to ratify the Kyoto agreement, which would reduce oil dependency. The more the world is dependent on oil the easier it is for the United States to control oil dependent countries.

The Americans cannot openly admit that this is the true reason for attacking Iraq. So they attempted to demonize Iraq. President Bush is really using the same methods as his close friend and supporter, former Enron president Kenneth Lay. Lay used "creative" accounting to make Enron look good. Bush is using "creative" fear mongering to justify war.

Canada should not take part in this con game. It should join France, Germany and other countries in opposing this criminal activity. We must remember that Canada benefitted by Lester Pearson's refusal to back the United States in the Vietnam War. Canada would also benefit by refusing to take part in this imperial venture. This is why I support the resolution

On the Light Side

Skeptical European reporter: "What proof do you have that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction?"
American diplomat: "We kept the receipts."

Libby Davies, MP Vancouver East, and Questions of the Day

Speaking Out: The War on Iraq

EXCERPTS FROM HANSARD (January 31, 2003)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, weapons of mass destruction in anyone's hands are dangerous and must be disarmed. No one should be exempt, including George W. Bush. All nations must honour international treaties that would control such weapons. Surely we should be following our own rules.

Surely we should be telling George Bush to follow these rules too. What is Canada doing now to abolish weapons of mass destruction around the globe, including in our own backyard?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Liberal.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has had a long and proud tradition of working on the disarmament commission of the United Nations and with other nations around the world, including, let me say, the United States of America, in seeking to bring nuclear non-proliferation around the world. We worked with the United States in a very dangerous situation between Pakistan and India last year.

I think it is irresponsible to suggest in the House that the United States is not taking a responsible approach toward its massive power. We are all trying to reduce the danger in the world and make sure that we get rid of weapons of mass destruction.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it makes us wonder what happened to that Canadian tradition. Why will the Canadian government not disclose what Canada's involvement was in discussions this week on the Star Wars missile defence system? Why are we allowing Canada to become complicit in this rampant militarism and escalation of weapons development? Why was this Parliament not consulted before Canada held secret talks on Star Wars?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Liberal.): Mr. Speaker, the reason why Parliament was not consulted before we held secret talks on Star Wars was that there have not been secret talks about star wars or anything else.

We are constantly engaged with the United States in discussing how we can best ensure the security of this continent for the benefit of Canadians and Americans and all of us together. We will continue to do that in a responsible way and in a way which ensures Canadian sovereignty and Canadian interests.

EXCERPTS FROM HANSARD (January 30, 2003)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, "there is anxiety in the Canadian people today, they do not know exactly what is going on". Those are not my words, although I agree with them. They came from the Prime Minister in 1991 when he was speaking about the gulf war. He said then that it was embarrassing for Canada not to have a position.

It is more than embarrassing now. It is shameful that Canada is hedging its bets on a war on Iraq. There is a choice here. Will the Prime Minister say that it is wrong to invade Iraq and Canada will have no part of it?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a choice and we have made the choice. We will follow and respect the process of the UN and its resolutions.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, from the debate last night that we heard in this House, it is very clear that the government is hedging its bet. I believe that Canadians want to see leadership on this question. Why is there not an aggressive campaign for peace? I urge the Prime Minister to listen to his own words, not the official opposition. He said in 1991, "Why this war? What are our national interests in this war?"

Let us begin by having a democratic vote in this House. Never mind all the talk about formulas and

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Davies (Continued from page 5)

what the history was, we want a democratic vote in this House. That is why we are here and that is what Canadians expect us to do. What is the government afraid of?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):
Mr. Speaker, no one wants war and no one wants the

availability of weapons of mass destruction.

We are following a process that will allow the UN inspectors to see whether or not the evidence exists that requires further action. We have been consistent in our approach. We will continue to take this approach and let the UN process work out.

Constructive Response

F.H. Knelman, Ph.D.,

Can we build a bridge instead of a wall?
Can we choose love instead of hate?
We must respond to the former call
for the latter will surely seal our fate.
The mirror image of mutual distrust
is the greatest challenge we now face
will we reduce our earth to dust
or will we save the living race?
To build a bridge and not a wall
is the way to rise not fall

VANA MEMBERSHIP

To renew your membership in or to join VANA, please fill out the form below and send, along with a cheque payable to VANA, to Ted Powis, Treasurer, #603-1745 Esquimalt, W. Vancouver, V7V 1R7. The dues are \$30, \$20 of which go to the national office and \$10 to the branch. (You can use the enclosed addressed envelope)

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