

Project Hero, education and occupation

By ALEX COREY

"Project Hero" is a program recently introduced by the Canadian government to provide post-secondary education to the children of Canadian soldiers killed in the line of duty. Professors from the University of Regina were criticized for pointing out that "Project Hero" largely duplicates an existing program, Children of Deceased Veterans Education Assistance Act (CDVEAA). Veterans Affairs Canada states that recipients of CDVEAA grants are provided with \$6,700 per year to help pay for their education and living expenses.

What is clear is that there are stark contradictions between the image the Canadian government has presented and the reality of its policy choices.

According to the 2009 Education Action Plan published by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), for under \$1.6 billion dollars per year Canada could provide fully-funded post-secondary education with zero tuition fees and targeted grants for living expenses for all university students. According to the Alternative Federal Budget 2010 produced by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), Canada has spent approximately \$15 billion to date in its war on Afghanistan.

A majority of Canadians have opposed Canada's participation in the NATO occupation of Afghanistan since the beginning of our involvement in 2001. Polls also show that a vast majority of Canadians support increasing funding for post-secondary education and the reduction or elimination of tuition fees.

In Afghanistan, Canada has been supporting an oppressive government of fundamentalist mujahideen criminal warlords known as the Northern Alliance. Female Afghan MP, Malalai Joya, was banned from Afghanistan's parliament for denouncing the criminals. Joya explains in her book, *A Woman Among Warlords* that the mujahideen first implemented the anti-woman extreme interpretation of Sharia Law in Afghanistan during the civil war from 1992-1996. When the Taliban took power in Afghanistan they were largely greeted as liberators from the Northern Alliance's despotic rule, although the Taliban's rule continued the oppression.

"We are still face with foreign occupation and a US-backed government filled with warlords who are just like the Taliban. Instead of putting these ruthless murderers on trial for war crimes, the United States and its allies placed them in positions of power, where they continue to terrorize ordinary Afghans," Joya says in her book.

Canada's stated humanitarian reasons for its invasion of Afghanistan are unconvincing in the face of its ongoing colonial policies regarding First Nations. CFS reports that only 8% of Aboriginal people in Canada have a post-secondary degree compared to 23% of non-Aboriginal people. Canada is legally obligated to provide fully-funded access to post-secondary education to all Aboriginal people. Poverty among First Nations is the direct result of over 500 years of genocidal and colonial policy including: the concentration of their nations onto reserves (a practice that informed Apartheid South Africa and Nazi Germany regimes); scalp bounties that rewarded the murder of indigenous men, women and children; abduction of children from their families to residential schools to destroy their languages and cultures; ongoing violations of treaty rights, and theft of land. No land in New Brunswick has ever been ceded or sold by the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet or Passamaquoddy.

Prior to 1992 funding for Aboriginal students was determined by the number of eligible students, and their expenses. Since 1997 funding for Aboriginal students has been capped at a 2% increase per year. With inflation and the

population growth of First Nations, per capita funding for Aboriginal students has been declining every year. CFS estimates that between 2001 and 2008, 13,088 Aboriginal students were denied funding for post-secondary education.

Canada is limiting access to post-secondary education by systematically underfunding it. The children of Canadians working in the military deserve a free education, but they also deserve more. They deserve to have their parents. They deserve an end to our imperialist war in Afghanistan. First Nations and Afghans both deserve the right to self-determination and education. Peace, economic justice and education will not come through imperialist war.

Contact the Fredericton Peace Coalition at info@frederictonpeace.org.



Toronto students mobilize against the war in Afghanistan with the slogan, "DROP FEES NOT BOMBS!" Canada is one of the few wealthy countries that maintain high tuition fees. Cuba, Scandanavian countries, Ireland, Wales and Brazil have zero tuition. Students around the world have been energetic participants in peace and social justice movements (frederictonpeace.org). Photo by The Canadian Federation of Students.

In Brief...

Canada Post has decided to contract out its call centres, including one in Fredericton and shut down its National Philatelic Centre. The public postal service has had record profits every year for the last 15 years. The Public Service Alliance of Canada, who represent affected Canada Post workers, says that this work will now be done by low-wage, precarious employment and could be moved out of the country altogether.

The Conservation Council is concerned by the granting of eight allocations to extract biomass from New Brunswick's public forest. Half of the eight allocations went to Irving-owned companies. Studies suggest that at least one-quarter of all wildlife species in New Brunswick's forest depend on woody debris.

Innu communities in Quebec and Labrador mounted a blockade on June 11th to prevent two mining companies from operating on their territory without free, prior and informed consent. The blockade is supported by the Innu Strategic Alliance, which represents approximately 12,000 people in the Innu traditional territory of Nitassinan. Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, has threatened to cut payments to the Innu Nations if they continue their blockade.

José Figueroa, a Salvadoran man was ordered deported from Canada for past involvement with the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in the 1990s. The FMLN is now the democratically elected government of El Salvador and is officially recognized by Canada. Figueroa has been living in Canada for 13 years and has three Canadian children.

The Guatemalan government ordered the suspension of Goldcorp's Marlin mine on June 23rd. Goldcorp CEO Chuck Jeannes said mining at Marlin will continue. Diodora Antonia Hernandez Cinto, a local woman resisting the Marlin mine was shot in the face on July 7th at her home. She is in critical condition.

A Mexican teenager was shot and killed by U.S. border patrol on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. U.S. President Barak Obama recently promised to increase military presence along the border.



Twenty-five thousand people protested the meeting of the G-20 leaders in Toronto on June 26-27. Over 1,000 were arrested making it the largest mass arrest in Canadian history. Canadians are demanding an inquiry into the arrests of peaceful protesters and journalists. Photo: Dave Steele.

Community Calendar

For a complete and updated list of events, visit nbmediacoop.org. To list your event or to receive the community calendar by email once per week, email: community@nbmediacoop.org

Critical Mass Bike Ride - Take the streets on bikes the last Friday of every month. Upcoming rides. Jul. 30, Aug. 27, 5:30pm, Officer's Square, Fredericton.

Short Course on Ecological Forestry - Offered by Community Forestry International. Learn native plant and tree identification, chainsaw use and maintenance, the principle of ecological, restoration and conservation forestry, sawmill operation, wildcrafting and timber framing. Aug. 2-6, Sackville, NB. Contact: info@forestsinternational.org

Fredericton Pride Week - Join in the fun! Parade, festival, Travesty Café, and more! Aug. 8-15, Contact: sarah@boomnightclub.ca

Tay Creek Folk Festival - Aug. 13-15, Tay Ridge Farm. Info: taycreekfestival.com, (506) 367-3133.

Musquash Paddle - The Saint John Fundy Chapter of the Conservation Council and Fundy Baykeeper invite you to participate in a 10km canoe, kayak or rowboat paddle down the Musquash Estuary followed by a BBQ. Sun., Aug. 8. Info: (506) 458-8747, info@conservationcouncil.ca

Cinema Politica Sackville - Film screening: The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil. Mon. Aug. 9, 7:30pm, Dunn Bldg, Rm 108, Mt. Allison

University 67 York Street @ Salem.

Urban Gardening Workshop in Fredericton - Falls Brook Centre and Landless Gardeners will be hosting a workshop on urban gardening at Renaissance College - 811 Charlotte St., Fredericton. Sat., Aug. 14, 9am-5pm. Registration \$25. Space is limited. Contact (506) 375-4310, greg@fallsbrookcentre.ca.

Annual Deer Island Camping and Whale Watching Weekend - Join the Conservation Council and Fundy Baykeeper for a fun weekend at the Deer Island Point Park campground. Aug. 27-29. To register, call (506) 458-8747, email sflatt@conservationcouncil.ca

NB Media Co-op 1st Annual General Meeting - Sat., Sept. 11, 4:30pm at Conserver House, 180 St. John St, Fredericton. Skype and phone in options available - contact us ahead of time to make arrangements. Only members can vote, so become a member today!

AIDS Walk 2010 - In Bathurst and Fredericton, Sat. Sept. 11. Contact: (506) 459-7518, info@aidsnb.com. Visit: www.aidsnb.com

Something on your mind? We want to hear about it! Send your story ideas and letters to editors@nbmediacoop.org.

Membership Options

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☐ \$10/month

☐ \$20/month

☐ \$10/year

☐ \$20/year

☐ \$50/year

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Payment Options

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Application forms and cheques may be mailed to NB Media Co-op at 180 St. John St, Fredericton, NB, E3B 4A0