

## *Introduction*

# Simple Statements of Fact

Charles R. Menzies

*New Proposals Editorial Collective*

This journal is published in the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Nations.

UBC is located within the Traditional Territory of the Musqueam Nation.

These simple statements of fact often raise the hackles of otherwise polite Vancouver residents. Notwithstanding left of center Vancouver mayor-elect Gregor Robertson's acknowledgement in his victory speech that Vancouver lies within the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Nations, it seems that the above statement challenges non-Indigenous people to recognize where they are and the history of alienation and expropriation that underlies the existence of contemporary British Columbia.

Locally, many well-intentioned people have fought long and hard against the Musqueam Nation. Of course it is never phrased in this manner. Rather, local community activists (one of whom who was recently elected to local government office) will speak in the civil public register of ensuring 'full consultation' for all involved, or will argue against settling debt by alienating parks or golf courses.

A year ago local community members organized a rally to "save" portions of UBC's Pacific Spirit Park from what they saw as a form of alienation of public lands to private ownership. Speakers at the Friends of Pacific Spirit Park rally on December 9 2007 spoke against the "transfer of a public asset" to "settle a provincial debt" and to "save" the UBC Golf Course from the Musqueam. While the speakers at the rally were unlikely to actually feel or think that were rallying against a reconciliation agreement with the local Musqueam Nation, any First Nations per-

son or any person who has worked with First Nations for any length of time would find it hard to see the fine distinction that the speakers thought they were making.

First Nations communities constantly face non-indigenous communities who will say "we support legitimate land claims" but then say that the specific item—be it fisheries, forestry, energy, water, or parkland—trumps the particular interest of the First Nations. The argument? That the non-aboriginal claim is in the "interest of all of us" as opposed to the "narrow interests of the Indigenous Nation."

For over 30 years I have had opportunities to witness many different non-indigenous groups rally the same arguments in their opposition to land claims and the existence of Aboriginal title and rights. The current provincial government of British Columbia even entered office opposing many specific aspects of reconciliation but has found, as they matured in office, that their populist opposition to Aboriginal title and rights is not supported in law. The point of fact is that these lands are indigenous lands and, in British Columbia, they were alienated from Indigenous people without due regard to even the law of the colonialists.

Contemporary provincial and federal governments have been compelled by law to negotiate with Indigenous Nations in BC. Even so, and despite populist feelings to the contrary, the governments are very reluctant to let anything go. In his paper, "Disagreement in Principle," Brian Thom documents how the governments are attempting to restrict and limit the scope of Aboriginal rights and title through negotiation. At stake is the manner by which culture, the perennial anthropological concept, is being

defined and constrained in proposed treaty agreements. Thom offers his suggestions for ways to advance treaty negotiations and maintain the breadth of Aboriginal rights and title.

Thom's paper is not alone in addressing critical controversial issues. Dianne Grant's paper also deals with issues that raise heated and passionate debate. Grant turns a critical eye on the regulation of prostitution as a mechanism of the state to discipline women. Both papers deal with the ways in which contemporary capitalist nation states attempt to constrain and control the ways in which socially oppressed and colonized people are integrated into (and interrogated by) the apparatus of the state; different social collectivities, different histories, but similar systems or structures of control.

Also included in this issue are two theoretical pieces that offer insights into the political struggles described by Thom and Grant. Magnus Nilson makes the case for a postsocialist radical politics with a clearer analytical distinction between class and identity. According to Nilson this would lead to a more effective radical politics capable of engaging both economic and cultural injustices. Ercan Gündoğan offers a critical introductory primer to the main works of Antonio Gramsci.

Comments and Arguments include two items that challenge our standard thinking. Dennis Bartels

examines the moral legacy of the cold war. Drawing inspiration from the Egyptian god of Osiris, Bartels weighs the good and the bad of the cold war. For Bartels the good guys lost. It's an intriguing argument, but I wonder if perhaps the good guys in the former Soviet Union actually lost with the emergence of state capitalism and the rise of Stalin, not at the end of the cold war? I'll leave it to readers to decide.

Carlo Fanelli's "The Cuban Alternative to Neoliberalism" takes on neoliberal globalism by documenting the ways in which social and economic development in Cuba has been able to meet key social needs. He argues that the leftward shift throughout Latin America demonstrates that alternatives to neoliberalism are more than utopian dreams.

This is our third issue with two more in line for publication. What began on the margins of North American anthropology meetings is now starting to take hold. Our papers are coming from across the globe. To date we have had submissions from Europe, North America, and Africa. Our subjects have included Indigenous peoples, workers, theoretical debates, and political strategy to name just the most recent.

We aim to be part of a new globalism, a progressive globalism. We are fast on our way toward achieving our goal!