

HOT CULTURE FOR RADICALS

TSUNAMI POLITICS

new★ SOCIALIST

IDEAS FOR RADICAL CHANGE

Challenging Borders

Immigration and Global Capitalism

FREE the DETAINEEES

OPEN THE BORDERS

NO ONE IS ILLEG

OPEN THE BORD

Bolivia Rising Up
I am a Feminist!



FEB / MARCH / APRIL 2005
ISSUE NO.50
\$4.95
www.newsocialist.org

EDITORIAL

The Tsunami Crisis: Not Simply a Natural Disaster

The devastation caused by the tsunami that struck countries in South and East Asia and Africa on December 26, 2004 is now widely-known. Over 200 000 people have died. Five million have been displaced. The threat of disease in affected areas is severe. Countless homes, schools, hospitals and other institutions have been destroyed.

But it is a mistake to think of this as simply a "natural" disaster. For this is yet another "natural" disaster that mainly affects poor countries of the Global South. Many of the deaths and much of the damage could have been prevented. For example, tsunami detection technology exists but no such systems were in place in any of the countries hit. The US has its own tsunami warning system, which includes the ability to detect earthquakes under the ocean floor. With its resources, the US state could easily establish a global warning system. But this was simply not seen as a worthy project by those who rule the US – unlike the occupation of Iraq, on which the Bush government has spent \$200 billion to occupy Iraq. The fact that neither it nor other Western governments were prepared to set up a global warning system for tsunamis is a reminder of the grossly misplaced priorities of Western states.

The extent of the devastation was not "natural." According to scientists and residents of coastal fishing communities in the affected areas, natural defenses against tsunamis, such as mangrove forests, have been severely weakened by the kind of tourism and industrial development taking place in coastal areas. Often flouting environmental laws passed to protect coastal areas from ecological pillage, whole swathes of coastline have been cleared for industrial development or to create wider beaches and better views for tourists. Significantly, some of the worst-hit areas were those in which natural defenses had been weakened.

It should be clear, then, that this was not simply a "natural" disaster. Capitalist development and the priorities of capitalist states contributed to the devastation. These are the same forces behind the neoliberal policies of Western governments and banks that kill millions of people in the Global South every year. Unbearable debt burdens (Sub-Saharan Africa pays \$US 28 000 per minute on servicing debt) and structural adjustment programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and Western states make it impossible for poor countries to develop capacities to meet people's needs. Neoliberal policies are responsible for mass unemployment and increasing levels of poverty and hunger. They lead to death from diseases which are

usually prevented or cured in rich countries like Canada. Despite the pledges of money for aid and reconstruction and the visits by Western dignitaries, the relationship between Western states and the countries of the South remains one of imperial domination that leads to a callous disregard for human life.

Yet amidst the horrors of the tsunami crisis, there is a glimmer of hope that's important to appreciate: the outpouring of donations and the mobilization of solidarity and support by people around the world. This very strong surge of support from individuals, NGOs, unions and community organizations forced Western governments to alter their initial responses, most of which were reluctant to put forward anything approaching a meaningful aid package and showed an almost indifferent attitude to the suffering.

We should not forget that the Bush administration's original aid package, announced three days after the tsunami, was a miserly \$US 35 million, less than what it spends in one day in its occupation of Iraq. Meanwhile, Paul Martin – favorite leader of the corporate world's favorite dissident, Bono of U2 – showed his priorities by remaining on vacation in the wake of the disaster. Finally returning home as public discontent grew, he initially offered a mere \$35 million.

US, Canadian and other Western governments have since increased their aid packages in response to public pressure. While this is positive, what is being promised falls far short of what's needed to rebuild the devastated areas and what Western governments can actually afford. Canada's latest offer is \$425 million, which is only \$13.07 for every person in the population. In comparison, Canada now spends approximately \$14 billion a year on the Department of Defense. The \$425 million includes a moratorium on interest payments on the almost \$1 billion debt that eight tsunami-hit countries owe to the Canadian government.

The sad facts are that, to date, the total aid promised from all countries is \$US 5 billion but the total debt to the West of countries hit by the tsunami is \$US 300 billion. Paying interest on those debts costs \$US 32 billion per year.

In the aftermath of the tsunami, global justice calls for nothing less than the cancellation of the Third World debt and opening the doors to migrants. In the outpouring of sympathy and support for people affected by the tsunami, there is reason for hope. Now is the time for a revival of the movement for global justice and against neoliberalism, the face of capitalism today.★

NEWSOCIALIST



February/March/April 2005
Issue #50

Box 167, 253 College St.
Toronto, ON M5T 1R5
(416) 955-1581
newsoc@web.net
www.newsocialist.org

NEW SOCIALIST offers radical analysis of politics, social movements and culture in the Canadian state and internationally. Our magazine is a forum for people who want to strengthen today's activism and for those who wish to replace global capitalism with a genuinely democratic socialism. We believe that the liberation of the working class and oppressed peoples can be won only through their own struggles. For more information about the publisher of this magazine, the New Socialist Group, please see the inside back cover.

EDITORS

Todd Gordon
Sebastian Lamb
Harold Lavender
Nick Scanlan
Tony Tracy

EDITORIAL ASSOCIATES

Richard Banner
Jackie Esmonde
Denise Hammond
Clarice Kuhling
Alex Levant
Morgan MacLeod
David McNally
Dana Milne
Keith O'Regan
Frances Piper
Sandra Sarner
Hamid Sodeifi
John Simoulidis
Shiraz Vally
Ingrid Van Der Kloet
Jeff Webber

DESIGN & COVERS

Ryan Cherewaty (Cover Design)
Sandra Sarner (Design/Layout)

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Editors or members of the New Socialist Group.

New Socialist is a member of the CMPA.

Printed at Hamilton Web, a union shop

★ HOMEFRONT ★

Diagnosing problems with the Canadian health care system	Robert Chernomas	4
Rightwing politics grow on campus	Nick Smith	6
Grassy Narrows and the 1872 Treaty: State treachery	Dave Brophy	8
Sun Peaks aboriginal land dispute	Harold Lavender	11
Manitoba: Is labour's future in the streets?	Errol Black and Jim Silver	13
Regularization and immigrants' rights	Jean McDonald	14
A question of labels: What's at risk for feminism	Denise Hammond	17

★ INTERNATIONAL ★

Women's global charter for humanity	World March of Women	20
Bolivia: Natural gas, urban insurrection and revolutionary tradition	Jeff Webber	23
Arafat's legacy and challenges for the future	Roland Rance	26

★ THEORY AND ANALYSIS ★

Immigration and capitalism	Katherine Grzejszczak with Todd Gordon	28
--------------------------------------	--	----

★ REVIEWS ★

Women and immigrants in prison: Review of <i>Global Lockdown</i>	Antonia Baker	32
Review of Le Tigre's <i>This Island</i>	Jackie Esmonde	34
Pluggin' away: The best of culture	Mark Connery	35
What's real about Reality TV?	Alan Sears	36

★ OBITUARY ★

Bob Everton (1952-2004)	Maryann Abbs and Harold Lavender	38
-----------------------------------	----------------------------------	----

★ TIME TO ORGANIZE ★

.....	39
-------	-------	----



Diagnosing problems with the Canadian health care system

BY ROBERT CHERNOMAS

To help clear away obstacles standing in the way of efforts by corporations to raise the rate of profit, in the 1980s and 1990s capitalist governments introduced policies that deregulated key economic sectors and allowed for the privatisation of publicly-owned assets.

The advantages to capital of these policy changes are significant. For one, new sectors are opened up for private-sector investment. In addition, labour and the public in general become more subject to greater control by market forces. The result is a transfer of wealth and power from the public to the private sector.

The health sector in Canada is an illustration of both deregulation and privatisation. The hope that the recent Health Accord between the provinces and a more generous federal government would stem this tide in the public interest must be seen as a disappointment.

THE HEALTH ACCORD

Paul Martin was elected on a promise to fix health care for a generation. The Medicare deal struck between the premiers and the Martin government stipulates that over the next 10 years there will be \$41 billion in new federal cash transfers. It is highly unlikely, however, that this deal will fulfill his promise or that it will provide needed and promised access to cost-effective and timely surgery, drugs and home-care. Why?

First, there is no mechanism in the agreement that ties the money to results. As recently as 2002, the federal auditor general told Canadians that the provinces were breaking the Canadian Health Act because federal money that should have been earmarked for health care has been used for everything from tax cuts to lawn mowers. With few strings attached to the \$41

billion, much-needed health care improvements such as reduced wait times for cancer surgery or home care cannot be guaranteed.

Second, there is nothing in the agreement that stems the tide of for-profit health care. Indeed, the absence of mechanisms linking money to results opens the way for for-profit (multi-payer) health care to rise because the latter is more costly and less effective than public (single-payer) health care. This becomes clear once we consider two issues that must be at the forefront of the discussion around the "Medicare Deal": sustainability and cost-drivers.

For-profit hospitals result in both higher mortality rates and greater payments for care than not-for-profit hospitals.

A nation's capacity to finance its public health expenditures can properly be measured by the share of public health expenditures in its GDP. Canada spends about the same percentage of GDP (10%) as the Germans and French and significantly less than the US (14%). That 10% is about the same amount we spent a decade ago. Part of that 10% is public and part is private (insurance and out-of-pocket). The public share (out of taxes) is about the same for Canada (6.8%) as the rest of the G7 and interestingly, approximately the same as the Americans.

Implicit in the question as to whether we can afford our single-payer health care system is the assumption that what matters to a nation's capacity to maintain its health care spending is, everything else being equal, not who pays, but rather how much is spent. However, everything else is not equal if a single-payer public system such as Canadian Medicare can raise financing, administer claims, and spread risks over the population more efficiently than a multi-payer private system can. There are no marketing expenses, no cost of estimating risk status in order to set differential premiums or decide whom to cover, and no allocations for shareholder profits.

Indeed, the larger the private share of health care financing, the more difficult it is to control health care expenditures. The overhead cost of administering a multi-payer system, for both reimbursing agencies and providers, is generally much larger than a single-payer public system. In 1999, the estimated cost of prepayment and administration accounted for 13.6 percent of total payments to private insurers in Canada versus only one percent in the public sector. Thus, it is no surprise that administrative costs count for nearly half of the difference between the share of resources allocated to the health sector in Canada and the US.

What's more, in a 1999 article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* the authors argue that no peer-reviewed study has found that for-profit hospitals are less expensive than not-for-profit hospitals. And not only is for-profit health care less efficient, it delivers lower quality care. A *Journal of the American Medical Association* article in 1999 found that an examination of the quality of care, for everything from heart attacks to diabetes to eye examinations, showed that investor-owned Health Maintenance Organizations deliver a lower quality of care than not-for-profit plans. A June 8, 2004 study in the

Robert Chernomas is a Professor of Economics at the University of Manitoba and a member of the Board of the Council of Canadians.

Canadian Medical Association Journal concludes that for-profit hospitals result in both higher mortality rates and greater payments for care than not-for-profit hospitals (June 8, 2004).

COST-DRIVERS

The Canadian health system is mandated by the Canada Health Act (CHA) to control three sub-sectors: hospitals, physicians and administration and not other sub-sectors such as dental care, pharmaceuticals, long-term care, hi tech equipment and so forth. (The former is hereafter referred to as CHA services and the latter as non-CHA services).

While overall health care costs rose as a proportion of the economy in the 1980s and the second half of 1990s, the share of resources allocated to CHA services were stable or declining. Thus, the increase in cost reflects the rising costs of non-CHA services. Research from the Canadian Institute for Health Information demonstrates that government spending on hospitals and on physician services has declined as a share of total health expenditures over time. In 2003, 30 per cent of total health expenditures went to hospitals (down from 45.2 per cent in 1976), and 12.9 per cent of expenditures went to physician services (down from 15.4 per cent in 1991).

While there is no indication that spending on CHA services are getting out of control, the non-CHA costs have been growing. Expenditures on the non-CHA services accounted for 37 per cent of the total health spending by the provincial and territorial governments in 2001, up from 23 per cent in 1975. The increase in the cost of non-CHA services has become particularly pronounced in the case of prescription drugs whose share of health care costs almost doubled, from 7 per cent in 1987 to 12 per cent in 2001. The disproportionate rise in prescription drug costs among all items of health care expenditures over the period 1987-2001 alone accounted for about 53 per cent of the rise in the share of resources allocated to the health care sector. Since 1997, drug costs (prescription and non-prescriptions) have exceeded expenditures on physicians by a growing margin. In 2003, spending on drugs represented 16.2 per cent of the total health expenditures in the country, up from 9 per cent in 1984.

It is often argued that higher drug costs



pay for themselves because they provide hospitals with more effective therapy. However, according to a recent study of 1035 new drug applications that received approval by the Food and Drug Administration in the United States for the twelve year period from 1989 to 2000, in 85 percent of the cases the new drugs do not provide significant improvement over current therapies. According to the National Institute for Health Care Management, drug manufacturers have capitalized on perverse incentives in new patent laws and advertising regulations to flood the market with new products (known as "evergreening" in the industry). Joel Lexchin tells us that of the 455 new patented drugs introduced into Canada from 1996-2000, only 25 (just over 5%) were major improvements.

Successive Tory and Liberal administrations have rewritten patent laws and regulations extending the period of patent protection and restricting access to lower priced generic drugs. The extension of patent protection was justified on the grounds that we needed to encourage the multinational drug companies to do more of their research and development in Canada. In other words, the cost of higher drugs would be offset by the multinationals' willingness to increase Canada's role in the "knowledge" economy. But if these new drugs drive costs up without improving our

health or saving resources, this is the equivalent of paying corporations to dig holes and fill them in again.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the recent for-profit health care experience of the US suggests it is more expensive, of relatively poorer quality and less accessible than are single payer, non-profit systems like Canada's. It is therefore unlikely to reduce waiting lists for surgery or the number of patients lying in beds in the halls of our hospitals. Spending a dollar on the less efficient for-profit sector means we get less service for the same dollar.

Furthermore, an increasingly wasteful healthcare system undercuts the capacity to properly fund a range of other services. In a speech before the Canadian Medical Association on August 19, 2004, Roy Romanow noted that since 1996 spending on health care has increased by \$108-billion while during the same period federal and provincial governments cut taxes by \$250-billion. Tax cuts plus rising health care costs could result in a fiscal crisis for other areas of the public sector.

The only way to begin reversing this trend is to stem the tide of privatisation. By failing to do this, the federal government's recent deal with the provinces fails to solve the real problems in the Canadian health care system. ★

Rightwing politics grow on campus

BY NICK SMITH

The events of September 11, 2001 put a chill on progressive movements that had grown with the peak of the global justice movement in North America. This chill resulted in an initial downturn of mass protest and a widespread call to cancel actions on the street out of “respect for the victims”. These developments created a window of opportunity for organized right-wing politics on university campuses. Conservatives, for instance, used the moralistic mobilization for the “war on terror” to dismiss student protest and lobbying efforts as confrontational, ineffective and terrorist-like.

But ironically, many conservatives who are often the most vocal in their dismissal of student activism are the very ones who pretend to engage in it: they are conservatives infiltrating positions in student unions. Campus conservatives have learned to exploit divisive “wedge” issues to consolidate enough bloc constituency votes to occasionally deliver electoral victories. With average voter turnouts in student union elections ranging from 8 to 15%, such blocs can play decisive roles. However, there is another common aspect to their strategy: campus conservatives who actually win campus elections almost universally do so by deceiving students by appropriating progressive language to cloak their neo-conservative political agenda.

This phenomenon is not only the result of the opening provided by the “war on terror”. There is something else driving the young conservatives’ infiltration of student unions across Ontario. Many months before September 11, 2001, a centrally organized campaign was launched by the Ontario “Progressive” Conservative Party (PC) to take control of student unions and cultivate a new generation of “leaders” to carry forward the conservative agenda. Indeed, the most insidious development

bolstering backdoor conservative machinations within certain Ontario student unions is the commitment, within the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, of infrastructure and resources devoted specifically to providing finances and political consultation to conservative candidates running in elections on a number of key university campuses.

SECRET FUND

With the help of the PC Party, since 2000 the Ontario Conservative Campus Association (OCCA) has been running the “Millennium Leadership Fund”, which is expressly dedicated to supporting conservative efforts to “Take back student unions”. Although this “secret” fund has been quietly servicing election candidates for over four years, it is unknown how much money is filling its coffers. The OCCA, as an external campus organization, is not

required to publicly list its donors or recipients. Most importantly, the OCCA’s operation is sometimes in clear violation of students’ union election regulations. At present, the University of Western Ontario Students’ Council is possibly the only students’ union with regulations explicitly banning external donations in student elections. And yet, this is also a campus that has seen some of the most active Conservative organising.

The OCCA leadership feels no need to apologise for their campaign to hijack student unions, but they do feel the need to stay undercover so as not to jeopardize the success of their candidates. Former president of the Ontario PC Youth Association, Dave Forestell, stated in a 2002 interview with the *Western Gazette* that there is no reason to inform student voters of his party’s interference in campus elections: “Candidates make decisions based on what will get them elected. Why would they freely offer information that would identify something negative in their campaign?”

These manipulative tactics have had limited success, duping student voters at the Universities of Toronto, York, Ryerson, Waterloo, Western, Wilfred Laurier, Lakehead, Windsor and Guelph. And the list continues to grow. One can only assume that it is not only financial support delivering these results; but also the mentorship from senior party brass, ‘ringers’ and organ-



Students protest cuts in education and increases in tuition fees

Nick Smith is a student activist in Toronto.

isers who coach their candidates to massage their message to win votes by avoiding political hot button issues.

Indeed, conservative candidates on several campuses have actively attempted to undermine the work of student advocacy by suggesting that student unions are plagued by divisive politics. In a number of cases, candidates have campaigned on a platform of “removing politics from their students’ union” (as if this were possible!). In the current context of privatization, increased fees and chronic under-funding, the strategy of the Right has been to use the politics of division to distract students from important issues and from the devastating policy being implemented by the government. The reality is that the candidates sponsored by the Millennium Fund have clear marching orders and a hidden agenda that comes into view only after they are elected.

PROGRESS NOT POLITICS

At the University of Waterloo, in 2004, the OCCA held its convention and its outgoing vice president, Ryan O’Connor – who was later hired by the York Federation of Students’ “Progress Not Politics” slate as a Policy Analyst – provided telling words to Conservative candidates seeking Millennium Fund support: “Member campuses must be assisted in their efforts to fight for conservative sensibilities during election and referendum campaigns at their schools. We need to be working together to find the best ways to promote our Conservative message at universities to offset the union-washed rhetoric students

The strategy of the Right has been to use the politics of division to distract students from important issues and from the devastating policy being implemented by the government

have suffered through during their high school careers. This year, campuses will be able to look to OCCA for assistance and support in organizing, messaging and campaigning at home.” Further comments from O’Connor shed light on the role that Conservative youth are playing within the broader arena: “There may be times when the constant squawking of the special interest groups in Ontario begin to strain our Party, and lead them away from the Conservative principles we stand for. If that happens, we will be there to drown out those self-interested, shrieking harpies and ensure that sanity reigns”.

The message that elected conservative leaders are bringing to campuses is one that sounds alarmingly similar to hard-Right Bush rhetoric. Nowhere is this agenda made more arrogantly explicit than in the election platform of Queen’s student and current president of the OCCA, Kasra Najatian. Najatian’s rattling rally cry (which can be found at www.rightwing.ca/users/teamkasra) calls for a “shock and awe” campaign and calls upon Conservative students to take back student unions by building a “coalition of the willing . . . a team [comprised] of libertarians to pro-lifers, free-market capitalists to pro-Israel advocates”. What is interesting about this is the very conscious strategy of moving beyond Conservative Party members to reach other socially conservative groups to consolidate resources and broaden the sphere of influence.

ALARMING

The lines of affiliation between some Conservative student union leaders are alarming. For example, shortly after being appointed to office by the York University central administration, despite being investigated for electoral fraud, the former York Federation of Students’ (YFS) Executive hired other campus conservative ringers to fill key staff positions in the students’ union. The first thing these newly installed politicians did was to cancel the next regularly scheduled elections to keep themselves in office. They also eliminated the Vice-President of Equality position and cut



The Ontario Campus Conservative Association website (www.campusconservatives.ca) proudly displays photos of the York Federation of Students executive and staff wearing Stephen Harper T-shirts and goofy smiles at last year’s Conservative Party leadership convention.

funding for the black, aboriginal and queer student services. Then, while other student unions were using the summer’s federal election as an opportunity to raise concerns over education funding and extract campaign commitments to tuition fee reductions, the YFS executive joined other Conservative student leaders to campaign for the Conservative Party of Canada and for increasing the student debt. They also funded a delegation to attend the Conservative Party leadership convention to endorse Stephen Harper’s campaign bid. In addition to this, they teamed up with Conservative students from University of Toronto, Queen’s and several other schools to organize the Toronto pro-war rally on the anniversary of the war in Iraq. But the trail of influence is most clearly evidenced by the fact that the owner of the domain name for York’s conservative election slate, Progress Not Politics, is OCCA President Najatian, a Queen’s student.

The 2004-05 Ryerson student union president, Dave MacLean, also a Conservative member and recent appointee to the OCCA executive, supported the establishment of an anti-choice student group and later voted to allocate student union funds to it. Despite having promised, during his campaign, to work with students across the country through the Canadian Federation of Students, MacLean’s big

See **STUDENT POLITICS**: Page 37

GRASSY NARROWS: THE 1872 TREATY

A history of state treachery

BY DAVE BROPHY

THIS IS THE FIRST OF TWO ARTICLES ABOUT INDIGENOUS STRUGGLE IN WHAT IS NOW NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO. IT LOOKS AT THE HISTORY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ANISHINAABE AND THE CANADIAN STATE IN THE AREA COVERED BY "TREATY 3" OF 1873, AND DESCRIBES HOW THE CANADIAN STATE VIOLATED THE AGREEMENT AND INITIATED A CAMPAIGN TO DESTROY THE INDIGENOUS ECONOMY (AN ECONOMY THAT HISTORICALLY ALLOWED THE ANISHINAABE TO BE A PROSPEROUS AND POWERFUL PEOPLE).

THE SECOND ARTICLE (TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF NEW SOCIALIST), WILL FOCUS ON GRASSY NARROWS FIRST NATION. IT WILL PROVIDE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO, AND AN ANALYSIS OF, THE COMMUNITY'S CURRENT CAMPAIGN TO END CLEAR CUT LOGGING ON THEIR TRADITIONAL TERRITORY. THE SIGNIFICANCE THIS STRUGGLE HAS FOR THE BROADER QUESTION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' SELF-DETERMINATION WILL ALSO BE EXAMINED.



Demonstration in support of Grassy Narrows in Kenora

WWW.FIRSTNATIONSDRUM.COM

Most people who are aware that indigenous peoples preexisted the Canadian state believe in the following Canadian nationalist myth: the indigenous societies encountered by European settlers were traditional and backward, and they disappeared as a result of the advance of "progress" and "civilisation". The average person does not know about the dynamism of indigenous cultures prior to the arrival of Europeans, or of how native communities were underdeveloped by the settlers.

The nationalist myth leads people to believe that the European domination of indigenous peoples was a good thing, and any resistance (if such resistance existed) by indigenous peoples to colonisation was futile. It follows from this line of thinking that the treaties, the reserve system, and so on are the result of well-intentioned,

protective treatment towards weaker peoples by a benevolent Canadian state.

These nationalist myths are just that – myths. They are debunked by the briefest look at, for instance, the history of relations between the Anishinaabe and the Canadian state in the years leading up to and shortly after the treaty they reached (known as "Treaty 3") in 1873. If we look at the conditions under which the treaty was negotiated, the terms of the treaty itself, and the deterioration of the indigenous economy after the treaty, we get a much different view than is portrayed in nationalist mythologies.

A PROSPEROUS PEOPLE

In the 1800s the Anishinaabe of northwestern Ontario had a prosperous and diverse land-based economy that allowed its population to grow and thrive.

According to Boyce Richardson, the indigenous population increased approximately five fold between about 1820 and 1870, growing from less than 500 to 2,500 people during that period.

There were few Europeans in the area until around 1850. In the decades prior to the 1873 treaty, though the indigenous peoples still far outnumbered whites, the Anishinaabe had to occasionally re-assert their control of the territory as the number of white settlers and travelers increased.

The Canadian state, competing with the US for the spoils of colonial conquest, was extremely eager to plunder the resources of the northwest and establish itself as the colonial power there before the US did. The expansion of the Canadian state went beyond merely repopulating the area. If Canada's rulers were to extend control in that direction, negotiations with the indigenous peoples were necessary to avoid a war, as the strength of the indigenous peoples would make such a war too costly.

Dave Brophy is a member of Friends of Grassy Narrows Winnipeg

The need for a treaty with the Anishinaabe became especially urgent when the Canadian government recognised that continued road construction through Anishinaabe territory – later known as the Dawson route – would be impeded without the indigenous peoples' consent.

Dawson himself wrote in 1868 that

“The Anishinaabe of the northwest angle are very intelligent, and are extremely jealous as to their right of soil and authority over the country which they occupy....They are shrewd and sufficiently awake to their own interests...and they neither reply to a proposition, nor make one themselves, until it is fully discussed and deliberated upon in council of all the chiefs.”

NEGOTIATIONS

In the late 1860's, representatives of the Canadian government started negotiating with the Anishinaabe to acquire access to their land. However, it took numerous visits to the northwest over a number of years to reach an agreement that set out the terms under which the Canadian government would be permitted to share the land.

It is important to note that, given their wealth and capacity for war, the Anishinaabe negotiated from a position of considerable strength. Their form of democratic collective decision making made them very strong negotiators. Alexander

Morris, the unscrupulous commissioner who finally succeeded in negotiating a treaty with the Anishinaabe for Canada in 1873, had to wait four days while 800 Anishinaabe gathered to discuss the treaty before coming to a decision.

As Richardson notes, a clear priority for the Anishinaabe in the negotiations was for them to maintain control of their land (a territory of 55,000 square miles) and ensure that their hunting and trapping activities would not be hampered by any treaty. Charles Wagamase (a former high school teacher on the Grassy Narrows reserve who also served on the Treaty 3 Grand Council in the early 1990s) explained it this way:

“We have researched the conditions at the time that we signed our treaty in 1873.... Our people were well aware of what the treaty was, and were perfectly content with how they were living. It was not a life of drudgery and suffering. There were a lot of beautiful songs and ceremonies. There is a lot of evidence people were living a good life here which they did not want to change.”

Though the Anishinaabe wanted to negotiate a treaty that would protect their prosperous way of life, they also sought provisions that would allow the land to be shared. They anticipated that they would need to expand their agricultural production, which already provided for about half

of their subsistence food needs, to accommodate the increased pressure on the land that would result from the settlement of whites. Thus, one of the conditions for a treaty was that they receive tools and instruction in farming.

Thus, it was no easy task for the Anishinaabe to agree to a treaty with the Canadian government. They had concerns about how their society might be adversely affected, but they also saw potential benefits from cultural exchange. In the end, they made an important collective decision that Charles Wagamase summed up as follows:

“We find out [the white man] needs a place to live, to raise his kids. He says, ‘I want to come and live with you people.’ He wants to share this beautiful country with us, every square foot of which we use. Every little pond, somebody travels it and knows it.”

“We take it back and think about it. We know what is going on. There is active trading all over North America. We have made deals in the past with the Sioux and Mohawks. We are well aware of the Indian wars. We can use violence and eject him, or come to some kind of arrangement. That's what we did.”

The practical, even generous approach the Anishinaabe had in their dealings with Europeans, however, was not returned in kind. Before Treaty 3 was signed, the



Demonstration in support of Grassy Narrows in Kenora.

WWW.FIRSTNATIONSDRUM.COM

Canadian government had already begun legislating policies that were completely at odds with the agreement they were to make. But even after the treaty, the Canadian government continued to pursue its colonialist course in blatant disregard of the treaty.

The first major attack on the indigenous economy was the destruction of the Lake of the Woods sturgeon fishery. Canadian negotiator Alexander Morris had understood the indigenous peoples' demands around hunting and fishing rights, and assured them that their hunting and fishing would not be affected by the settlement of whites in the area. But an influx of commercial fishers beginning shortly after Treaty 3 and the subsequent pillaging of the sturgeon fishery proceeded without any intervention from the Canadian state. Before, the bountiful yet sustainable catches of fish had helped the Anishinaabe prosper and were a long-time staple of the indigenous economy. But the resource was destroyed following a short bonanza for white fishermen.

A second major attack took place in 1881. As noted above, at the time of the 1873 treaty the Anishinaabe already were producing significant amounts of food through agriculture, especially wild rice, potatoes, and corn, and they wanted to expand their endeavours. The treaty stipulated that the indigenous peoples would be designated "wild land reserves" as well as "farming reserves". With this arrangement, it would appear that the Anishinaabe were well placed to continue diversifying their economy by furthering agricultural production.

However, an 1881 amendment to the

Indian Act (initially created in 1876) systematically discriminated against indigenous peoples. The amendment prohibited "western" Indians, including the Treaty 3 Anishinaabe, from selling any agricultural produce. This measure undermined the Anishinaabe efforts to extensively expand their agricultural production – efforts that had been underway for 10 years.

A third major colonialist attack came in the 1890s, when Ontario's northwestern boundary was extended to the far side of

The first major attack on the indigenous economy was the commercialisation of the Lake of the Woods sturgeon fishery.

the Treaty 3 area. In 1894 the federal government had transferred the natural resources on "Crown" land to the provinces. This provided the federal government with a loophole that allowed it to avoid meeting its legal obligations to indigenous peoples who had signed treaties. The federal government's assurances of indigenous land rights were clear under the treaties (even though the federal government ignored those obligations whenever it was convenient). But when management of "public" lands was transferred to the provinces, there were no explicit stipulations made to clarify what level of government would be responsible for upholding indigenous peoples' treaty rights.

As a result, under Ontario's jurisdiction, indigenous land rights, even in legal terms, went completely unrecognised. In the name of slowing rampant depletion of animal and fish populations, the Ontario government enacted laws limiting hunting and fishing that were to be applied equally to Indians and whites, even though the animal and fish stocks had been stable until the arrival of the settlers. Not only did these laws violate the Indians' treaty rights; they were also enforced unequally against them, as they are to this day.

Furthermore, during these years various industries expanded into the Treaty 3 area. There was a rapid expansion of logging, mining, hydro-electric projects, and later, the development of tourist lodges and the cottage industry. However, because of the racist hiring practices in these industries, the Anishinaabe found it increasingly difficult to secure employment despite all this growth. And while native people were being excluded from the wage labour opportunities that came with this economic expansion, alternatives to wage labour were disappearing as the land base continued to deteriorate with the growth of industry.

In 1946, Treaty 3 Grand Council spokesperson Tom Roy had this to say to members of the federal parliament in Ottawa:

"We contend that the terms of our treaty were violated or abrogated by the federal government on or about April 16, 1894 when, without notifying the Indians, the federal government transferred the natural resources to the provinces, with whose laws we have to comply [sic] since then. The Indians have tried to protest against this; they have made trips here to Ottawa asking the Indian department for protection. The answer has been: 'This comes entirely under the provincial governments, and there is no authority whatever vested in our department to change their laws'."

Today, the Grassy Narrows First Nation leads the current struggle of the Anishinaabe of the Treaty 3 area against colonisation of their lands. The refusal of the federal government to make good on its part of the treaty agreement continues to fuel the Ontario provincial government's relentless attack on the indigenous economy. The resistance of the Anishinaabe at Grassy Narrows is a reassertion of the legitimacy of indigenous peoples' rights after years of colonialist repression. That resistance will be taken up in the next issue of *New Socialist*. ★

RECOMMENDED READING

Research for this article was from the following sources:

Boyce Richardson, *The People of Terra Nullius*

Deborah Lee Simmons, *Against Capital: The Political Economy of Aboriginal Resistance in Canada*



SUN PEAKS ABORIGINAL LAND DISPUTE

Land, Freedom and Decolonization

BY HAROLD LAVENDER

The long simmering dispute between the indigenous Secwepemc people of British Columbia's (BC) southern interior and the Sun Peaks mega ski resort development northeast of Kamloops boiled over in August and September 2004.

On August 29, approximately 200 supporters (including two busloads from Vancouver) rallied in support of the Skwelkwek'welt Protection Centre against the expansion of Sun Peaks. We joined in as Aboriginal elders, youth and land users exercised their rights to their unceded traditional territory. Work began on constructing a camp between a golf course expansion and adjacent condominiums.

The reaction was predictable. The fundamental issue of who owns the land was brushed aside. On September 3, the BC Supreme Court granted Sun Peaks (supported by the BC government) an injunction excluding Aboriginal people from using 846 hectares of their traditional territory. On September 21, the RCMP moved in to dismantle the camp. Three people, Henry Sauls, George Manuel Jr. and Arnie Jack, were arrested.

Direct action at the site, which successfully shone a spotlight on injustice, is over. But the campaign to win Aboriginal rights is proceeding, including legal defence battles against current charges and to force both governments and corporations to comply with Aboriginal title. This campaign has involved work on fundraising as well as a focus on building the growing solidarity movement.

The work took a step forward with the formation of Land, Freedom and Decolonization in Vancouver in May, 2004. It is now targeting the corporate interests through a campaign to boycott Delta Hotels

and through building new alliances to connect the issue to resisting the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver with the theme "No Games on Stolen Native Land".

WHERE IS YOUR DEED?

In BC, the vast majority of land remains unceded by treaty.

Sun Peaks Resort is built in Secwepemc territories, land that has never been ceded, released nor surrendered. Defenders of the land and their supporters say the BC government and Sun Peaks have no authority over the Secwepemc people or their lands.

The federal government has completely shirked its responsibility to uphold Aboriginal rights. Canada's constitution, following the Royal Proclamation of 1763, recognizes Aboriginal and treaty rights and the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed Aboriginal title in several recent decisions. In most parts of Canada, at least lip service is accorded to the treaty process. However, post-Confederation BC government saw no need.

In 1862, Chief Neskonlith reached an agreement for a reserve with Governor James Douglas, including the site where

Sun Peaks Resort is located. However, the British colonial office did not fund the treaty and the land was never ceded. In 1873, the BC Land Act unilaterally annexed much of BC as Crown land.

Today, Sun Peaks has a lease from the BC government and some land has been sold as high priced real estate. But people like Arnie Jack are asking, "Where is your deed granting jurisdiction over the land?"

The federal and provincial governments are trying to close this gaping hole via the BC Treaty Process, which aims to extinguish Aboriginal title. But the process is bogged down and discredited and has not concluded any treaties. Many areas of BC, including Sun Peaks, are not covered under this process.

MEGA-DEVELOPMENT FOR WHOM?

Modest initial development at Sun Peaks in 1961 turned into mega-capitalism when it was purchased by Nippon Cable Company Ltd. in 1992. Accommodation expanded from 100 to 4000 beds. In 1997, the BC government approved a \$70 million expansion to 20,000 units with ski runs on previously undisturbed Mt Morrissey. Today, Sun Peaks has become



The indigenous Secwepemc people of BC never ceded the rights to this traditional territory.

Harold Lavender is an editor of New Socialist.

B.C.'s second largest complex, behind Whistler. Its expansion plans are now \$285 million.

The rapid development of Sun Peaks Resort has occurred without the consent of those with title to the land. The government disregarded environmental and cultural impact studies and meaningful discussions with the Neskonalith and Adams Lake bands about the development. The Secwepemc attended stakeholders meetings and gave an emphatic "No." to expansion. But Sun Peaks and the BC government ignored their concerns.

The environmental consequences have been devastating. Cutting has destroyed the ecosystems of Mount Morrissey, Todd and Sundance mountains. Animal habitat for deer, moose, bears, lynx, bobcat, cougars and wolverines has been destroyed, as have plant systems that provide berries and medicine for the Secwepemc. Sun Peaks has polluted the water with herbicides for a golf course and with chemical and bacterial additives to make artificial snow (which also grossly over-consumes water).

The Skwelkwel'welt Protection Centre was established in October 2000. Since then, five protection centers have been burnt to the ground (arson) or bulldozed. Sun Peaks demolished two sacred sweat lodges, a crime against traditional Aboriginal culture. Sun Peaks' action caused the RCMP to arrest 54 elders, youth and land users, resulting in jailing of single mothers, grandmothers, berry-pickers and hunters. Court injunctions even banned a dozen Secwepemc land users from going within a two to 10 km radius of Sun Peaks.

SOLIDARITY

The Protection Centre has relied on both its own direct action and on building a wider network of alliances and support. They have worked with groups such as the Indigenous Network on Economics and Trade (INET) and drawn international attention to their situation. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, recently visited the center as a guest.

The cause has won considerable support in the Canadian state, ranging from the Native Youth Movement to the radical activist left to well beyond. After visiting the area and experiencing the destruction first hand, author Naomi Klein wrote:

"Let's be clear, this is not about a ski hill. It is about a plan to build a small city in the mountains, a place for urbanites to have a

Under corporate globalization, issues of sport, resort and tourism dominate struggles for indigenous rights and the environment.

weekend getaway and for developers to make a killing on real estate. Let's be clear on something else: the massive expansion of the Sun Peak is an act of violence. British Columbia's First Nations peoples have already been robbed of so much. It is the duty of all Canadians living on stolen land to join the struggle to defend what is left."

Faced with mounting opposition, Sun Peaks has resorted to divide and conquer tactics, working closely with Aboriginal groups like the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council (SNTC) to isolate others. For example, just prior to the protests planned on August 29, 2003, the SNTC, comprised of band councils under the Indian Act, issued a press release saying the planned presence of groups like the Council of Canadians and Union of BC Indian Chiefs was unwelcome. The BC Supreme Court cited this letter in granting an injunction.

In recent years, the SNTC has focused on short-term economic development, and some bands have investments in Sun Peaks. (A parallel process has occurred with the 2010 Olympics.)

However, grassroots people oppose their actions. Janice Billy said the Shuswap "need to listen to the people." Art Manuel, former chief of the Neskonalith Band and former head of the SNTC, has supported the efforts of the Skwelkwel'welt Protection Council.

Groups such as No One Is Illegal in a number of cities have been prominent in linking the struggles of immigrants and refugees to indigenous issues. Harsha Walia, of No One is Illegal Vancouver and a spokesperson for Land, Freedom and Decolonization, worked to build the August 29 convergence.

Harsha emphasizes the link between immigrant and Aboriginal issues. Many immigrants have fled the colonial histories imposed from the North by imperialism, she says, while indigenous peoples in BC were subject to the same colonialism.

Aboriginal people living off-reserve face issues of status and citizenship comparable to migrant workers. She said both communities "face obvious racism in terms of access to services, incarceration and representation."

Land, Freedom and Decolonization, formed in May, brings together Aboriginal, immigrant and anti-poverty groups. Harsha points out it attempts to create "strength and unity versus divide and rule, which is how the system usually works." It also hopes to overcome tensions between Aboriginal people, anti-poverty groups in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and the Chinese community. It was involved in actions on Canada Day at Sun Peaks and against Delta Hotels, as well as anti-Olympics organizing.

She says the fundamental issue is "unceded territory and how land is developed." Under corporate globalization, issues of sport, resort and tourism dominate struggles for indigenous rights and the environment.

"Piles of money are involved," she says. That's why it important to work on all fronts, including direct action, media and boycotts, to challenge the economic base of the development. Tourism and real estate developers and investors fear negative publicity, which could challenge profits. That's why the boycott is focusing on Delta Hotels. She says supporters of Aboriginal sovereignty need to seek out support ranging from ethical purchasing funds to unions to the Council of Canadians.

RESISTING THE 2010 OLYMPICS

Meanwhile, new grassroots alliances are being formed in response to the 2010 Olympics. The BC government plans to fast-track the development of nine new ski resorts, but some, such as Jumbo Creek, face strong community and environmentalist opposition, as well as Aboriginal title issues.

In Vancouver, the Olympics raise multiple issues ranging from gentrification, housing, anti-poverty, transportation, health care and education, child labour and union rights, and repression in the name of security.

On February 12, five years before the start of the 2010 Olympics, an action will be held in Vancouver. One of its primary targets will be Delta Hotels. Activists will be working to make sure Aboriginal self-determination and sovereignty are not swept under the carpet when Vancouver welcomes the world. ★

Is labour's future in the streets?

Manitoba labour faces increasing opposition, not only from employers, but also from the provincial NDP government

BY ERROL BLACK AND JIM SILVER

Organized labour in Manitoba (and elsewhere in Canada) has fallen on hard times of late, and the situation might well continue to deteriorate unless the labour movement finds ways to counter the relentless drive of employers to marginalize it.

Part of the answer almost certainly lies in the need to organize workers in the service sector, where unionization rates have traditionally been low. In recent months, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) has twice lost bids to obtain certification for a Wal-Mart store in Thompson, a town dominated by a unionized workforce. Nonetheless, this was a spirited effort against one of the most stridently anti-union employers in the world.

A proposal to establish a project labour agreement for a major upgrade of the Red River Floodway, which would have required construction workers to become union members while employed on the project, encountered fierce opposition from business interests (construction associations from every sector and every part of the province, the Merit Contractors Association of Manitoba, Chambers of Commerce) and the Conservative Party. Opponents of the proposal expressed particular concern about the government trampling on the rights of workers who did not wish to join unions. The government responded by appointing Wally Fox-Decent to find a solution that would make everyone happy. Fox-Decent recom-

mended that the floodway construction site be declared an organization-free zone, but non-union members be required to pay a fee for services equivalent to union dues into a trust fund. Despite its neoliberal thrust and logical contradictions, NDP Premier Doer accepted Fox-Decent's solution.

At the March 2004 Manitoba NDP convention, a huge majority of delegates endorsed resolutions supporting anti-scab legislation and calling for the Labour Board to have the power to approve automatic certification in situations where 50% plus one of members in a bargaining unit signed union cards. These proposals were not new; they have been party policy for many years. Nor was there anything new about Premier Doer's response to these resolutions. On the contrary, when he was asked by *Winnipeg Free Press* reporters for his reac-

tion, he declared that he was opposed to anti-scab legislation and saw no need to reduce the threshold for automatic certification from 65% to 50% plus one.

Every year since the NDP regained office in 1999, delegates to conventions have called on the government to: (i) extend coverage of employment standards, health and safety and workers' compensation legislation to paid workers in the agricultural sector (intensive livestock operations, large grain operations, and the like); and (ii) conduct public hearings on employment standards in general as a prelude to major reforms that would improve standards for all workers and extend rights to part-time, casual and term workers. At the 2003 convention, then-Minister of Labour Becky Barrett announced that reform of labour standards would be a priority of the NDP in a second term. The NDP was elected to a second term in June. Following the election, Premier Doer also indicated that employment standards would indeed be a top priority of his government in the second term. Then on March 30, 2004, the nominal Minister of Labour was in Brandon to discuss labour issues with the table officers and delegates of the Brandon and District Labour Council. When she was asked about Employment Standards legislation, she replied "Employment Standards? Oh, we won't be dealing with that until the third term."

See MANITOBA LABOUR: Page 22



PHOTO: MAT SIMPSON, THE MANITOBIAN

Striking faculty members at the University of Manitoba

Errol Black is a Brandon City Councillor and a retired professor of Economics at Brandon University. Jim Silver is a professor of Politics at the University of Winnipeg. This article was originally a Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba "Fast Facts."

Regularization and immigrants' rights

What possibilities and risks are there in the struggle to win legal immigration status for people in Canada?

Jean McDonald looks at the history of such struggles and draws important lessons for today's context.

Since 1960, the Canadian government has implemented a number of regularization programs – many hard-won through the struggles of directly affected communities – providing opportunities for non-status immigrants residing in Canada to apply for legal immigration status. While they can positively change the lives of thousands of people, there are significant dangers in advocating for these programs. Regularization programs have historically coincided with increased enforcement and security measures, including more detentions and deportations for those excluded from the programs, as well as tightened border controls. However, today the only avenue for a non-status immigrant to obtain legal status is through a Humanitarian and Compassionate application. With an estimated 5% success rate, this process is far from adequate, leaving the struggle for an inclusive regularization program one of the central demands of many immigrant rights organizations.

POLITICS OF REGULARIZATION

Although often portrayed as the humanitarian act of a compassionate government, the history of regularization programs in Canada shows a more complicated reality. Regularization programs are often referred to as 'amnesties'. This can be misleading in several respects. First, 'amnesty' implies the state is a 'benevolent protector' capable of forgiveness, and non-status immigrants are people who need to be forgiven, thus

reproducing their alleged (and wrongly perceived) criminality and illegality. The language of 'amnesty' also feeds into a nationalist mythology that casts Canada as a kind, embracing, compassionate and humanitarian country – legitimating the existence of the Canadian state and erasing the fact that the very existence of this nation-state relies on colonization and theft of Indigenous territories. Second, amnesties are presented as an exceptional act, reaffirming the state's authority to make decisions about who is desirable and suitable for integration, and who is undesirable and destined for detention and removal.

Third, regularization programs have never been full 'amnesties'. Governments have always attached criteria for eligibility that exclude many people from getting full legal status. But what happens to non-status immigrants who do not qualify? Most regularization programs put significant resources into monitoring and apprehending failed applicants which can actually increase the number of non-status immigrants in detention and under deportation orders. Regularization programs often happen at the same time that the government makes it more difficult to enter Canada, potentially creating more non-status immigrants as more people must enter Canada illegally. As well, more restrictive criteria force people who think they will not be accepted to avoid the risk

of applying – thus remaining 'underground'.

These are not reasons to give up on the idea of a regularization program for non-status immigrants. On the contrary, they highlight the importance of being aware of and careful about the type of exclusions that governments make while they claim to be including people.

REGULARIZATION SINCE 1960

The Chinese Adjustment Statement Program (1960-1972) allowed Chinese migrants who came to Canada without status documents, or with the documents of a relative of a Canadian citizen ('Paper Sons'), to apply for permanent residency. Applicants needed to demonstrate that they were of 'good moral character' and were not involved in the 'industry' of 'illegal immigration'. Chinese communities in Canada were active in pressuring the federal government to change racist immigration laws that had for decades excluded Chinese immigrants, such as the Chinese Head Tax and the Chinese Exclusion Act. It is estimated that around 12,000 people were regularized through this program.

The Adjustment of Status Program – the largest regularization in Canada to date – was implemented in 1973. In the early 1970s, increasing numbers of immigrants became non-status because they could no longer apply for permanent residency from within Canada. Many community groups and political organizations advocated for a regularization program, and garnered much public support. Despite the narrow time frame – August to October of 1973 – tens of thousands applied. Information about the program was widely disseminated, largely through community organizations. Although it is unknown how many were excluded or rejected, an estimated 39,000 people were successful.

In 1981, Haitians living in Quebec fought for and won a regularization program. By 1980, more and more

Jean McDonald is a member of No One Is Illegal – Toronto and a doctoral student in Social Anthropology at York University. Special thanks to Peter Nyers and Erika Khandor for their help in writing this article.



PHOTO: JOHN BONNAR

Grassroots pressure is needed to secure immigrant and refugee rights.

Haitians in Canada found themselves with fragile status: they had student or work visas, or perhaps had overstayed their visa and had become 'non-status.' As the political situation in Haiti worsened, Haitians in Quebec began to organize for a program that would address their needs collectively, rather than on a case-by-case basis as refugee claimants. The Office of Christian Haitians played a key role in this struggle, as well as in campaigns for regularization in 1972 and 1987. This group first came together when immigration laws changed in 1972-73, and Haitian nationals could no longer apply for permanent residency from within Canada. This change left many Haitians without legal status, and several were targeted by immigration authorities while attending church. The group organized meetings, lobbied government, and successfully increased public awareness through news coverage. The 1981 program regularized over 4,000

people. Unfortunately, this program rejected applicants with criminal records and serious medical problems.

The Minister's Review Committee (1983-1985) was a program in which non-status immigrants who had lived in Canada for more than five years, and were deemed to be 'successfully established and integrated,' could become regularized. At this time, 'illegal immigration' was considered an important political issue by the federal government. Several reports were commissioned, including two by W.G. Robinson, "Illegal Immigrants Issues Paper" (February 1983) and "Illegal Migrants in Canada" (June 1983), both of which rejected a general amnesty and recommended 'conditional settlement' and increased enforcement and border controls. Through the Minister's Review Committee an estimated 1,000 people were regularized.

From 1994-1998, the Deferred Removals Order Class (DROC) regularized

several thousand failed refugee claimants who had remained in Canada for three years or more without a removal order. Refused claimants were generally stuck 'in limbo' because they were from moratorium countries – countries that the federal government considered too dangerous to deport people to. China was one of these countries at this time, and Chinese community organizations in Canada began to advocate for permanent residency for failed refugee claimants. Groups from Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, including many non-status immigrants, drew public attention to this issue. Approximately 3,000 applicants from China, Iran and other countries were regularized through this program, but many more were rejected because they did not meet residency requirements, had criminal records or serious medical conditions.

In 2002, failed refugee claimants from Algeria fought for and won a regularization program. In the 1990s, many people came to Quebec from Algeria due to the violent conflict that has continued for many decades. In 1997, the Canadian government stopped all deportations to Algeria as a moratorium country, yet at the same time many Algerians' refugee claims were refused. In 2002, the Canadian government decided to start deporting people to Algeria again, after a lucrative trade deal was struck between the two countries. About 1,069 failed refugee claimants from Algeria found themselves at risk of deportation. Many non-status Algerians in Quebec mobilized to put pressure on the government to regularize their status. They created the Action Committee for Non-status Algerians (CASSA), and worked with allies from No One Is Illegal (Montreal), individual supporters, and various labour, faith and women's groups. Forced to act, the Canadian and Quebec governments introduced a regularization procedure for failed Algerian refugee claimants who had been living in Quebec. While approximately 900 people were regularized through this program, over 150 people were refused and continued to face deportation, most because they did not meet the Quebec residency requirement, or could not afford to pay the large application fee for the program. Many were not accepted because they had criminal records for small offences such as stealing to survive – or for their political activities.

CRITERIA IN REGULARIZATION

Criminal inadmissibility, among the most common criteria used to exclude people from regularization programs, is implicated in an insidious and racist discourse that produces the immigrant as a source of fear and danger who must be 'screened' in order to prevent the 'contamination' of the national body politic. Further, this condition does not address systemic racism and sexism within policing and the criminal justice system both in Canada and in countries of origin. Many non-status immigrants and community activists argue that this criterion imposes a 'double punishment' – a non-status immigrant could 'serve their time' in jail, but then face deportation afterwards. Citizens, on the other hand, are only punished once.

Regularization programs have also historically excluded people with serious medical conditions. Like criminality, this criterion is implicated in a nationalist production of fear, and reinforces the racist discourse that constructs the immigrant as dangerous and diseased – to be screened, tested, monitored and contained. People with physical disabilities, or who have chronic illnesses such as kidney disease, HIV/AIDS, leukemia, or tuberculosis, are often found 'medically inadmissible' for landed status, despite the reality that non-status immigrants often get sick as a result of the unsafe and dangerous work conditions they are forced to accept.

Employment and economic wealth have also been used to exclude certain people from regularization programs, either through the work that they do or because of their inability to financially support themselves and their families. The expensive application fees that are necessary to apply for programs and to become landed are huge barriers for many non-status immigrants, as is the Right of Landing Fee of \$975 for each adult. The use of fees to exclude and further marginalize certain



PHOTO: JOHN BONNAR

groups of people is just one example of the classist, racist and sexist ways the immigration system works. People who cannot always do paid work (for example, people with disabilities, single mothers, elderly people) should not be excluded from regularization programs. Community activists have criticized regularization programs that would only allow applicants to obtain temporary work permits, such as the one proposed by the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association, because they cannot provide the security and stability that permanent residency offers. Work permits simply do not address the long-term needs of non-status workers and their families.

Residency requirements are another means of exclusion from regularization programs. Like criminal checks and medical conditions, this requirement is implicated in an exclusionary nationalist discourse that demands 'loyalty' and proof of 'belonging' from those viewed as 'outsiders' or 'foreign' to the national body politic. Residency requirements serve to keep non-status immigrants in a state of 'illegal limbo' where exploitation by employers, landlords

and other people can continue.

Family, integration and country of origin have also been used as criteria in regularization programs. Many non-status immigrants and community agency workers point out that the definition of 'family' in the Canadian immigration system is narrow and exclusionary. It privileges the patriarchal hetero-nuclear family, while queer, single-parent and non-nuclear families are likely to be excluded. The criterion of 'integration' is largely discretionary and arbitrary – it is often one immigration officer who decides what 'integration' means. As noted above, programs specific to country of origin have occurred, particularly following pressure and community mobilization from groups directly affected to push for regularization.

THE STRUGGLE TODAY

Despite the dangers of advocating for a regularization program, it remains one of the key demands and struggles of many immigrant rights' organizations across the country, including No One Is Illegal (Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal), the Solidarity Without Borders coalition (Montreal), the Coalition Against the Deportation of Palestinian Refugees, the Action Committee of Non-Status Algerians, the STATUS campaign and many other groups. One of the major dangers in a campaign for regularization would be to concede to exclusionary practices, such as criminal or medical inadmissibilities. To advocate for a regularization program is to participate in a nation-building exercise; to ask the state to re-assert itself and make decisions about who is desirable and who is undesirable. Yet, a regularization program would have a huge impact on the lives of possibly tens of thousands of people who would no longer have to live with the threat of detention and deportation. An historical study of the struggle for regularization teaches us not only its victories but also its downfalls. In this context, a campaign such as the one in Toronto for a 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' municipal policy (see Shiraz Vally's article in NS #47, June-July 2004) becomes that much more important, as it not only accounts for the time in which we wait for the next regularization – it also accounts for those who may be excluded from such a program. ★

To get involved in these struggles and for more information, contact:

nooneisillegal@riseup.net.

METROPOLITAN HOTEL WORKERS COMMITTEE

For one year now, the MHWC and its community supporters have been fighting their Five Star Sweatshop employer. To find out how you can support the Metropolitan Hotel workers in their rank and file union struggle, contact them at:

justice@metropolitanhotelsworkers.org
or check out their website at:
www.metropolitanhotelsworkers.org

Solidarity alert

A question of labels

DENISE HAMMOND *examines what's at risk for feminism*

It has been fifteen years since the Montréal Massacre at École Polytechnique. For many, the social and political context for remembering the murder of fourteen women – women who were snarlingly demonified as "feminists" – has been replaced by sentimental gestures and symbolic rituals: buy a button, wear a ribbon, attend a vigil. Throughout Canada, many of the vigils and markers on university and college campuses seem to allow an annual atonement that excuses people from their responsibility to challenge women's oppression in a concerted way, every day.

I was fortunate to attend a memorial dinner at Ryerson University that featured a lecture by Dr. Sharon Rosenberg from the University of Alberta on the social role of memorials. Her presentation was a reflection on how the significance of tragic events like the Dec 6, 1989 Massacre can be diminished and replaced by static memorial objects and sculptures that obscure both the identities of the individual victims and the important underlying socio-economic issues that led to the tragedy.

Rosenberg did not claim that all memorials are inherently depoliticising. Rather, she suggested that once a monument has been created, it becomes the context for future remembrances of the events it serves to memorialize. Though this allows the community to move on, over time these signifiers (be they park benches in Montreal or geographical markers in Victoria) can eventually lose their connection to the original issues that gave occasion for their creation.

This process makes possible the collective amnesia that would allow the murder of 14 women, and the impact this had on women and men across the country, to be erased for future generations. Reflecting on Rosenberg's presentation and the lack of knowledge many young women have about the events of Dec 6th, 1989, I was drawn to conclude that not only were Rosenberg's thoughts insightful, but her talk provided an important occasion to reflect upon the importance that preserving a contextual analysis of our history has for raising political consciousness.

In addition to presenting on the socio-cultural phenomenon of memory and memorabilia, Rosenberg challenged the audience to see the Dec 6 massacre as an inherently anti-feminist attack. Many, at



December 6th Montréal Massacre Memorial Sculpture at Ryerson University designed by Alexandra Leikermoser.

first, were bewildered by this interpretation and this hesitancy is not without justification. After all, feminists from that time will remember how difficult it was to fight to have the murders classified in the media and by the public and authorities as an act

of "violence against women." A number of campus and mainstream newspapers of the day labelled the shootings as an attack on "engineering students" or just simply "students." Missing from this portrayal however is the cold reality that, judging from how he waved his gun through the corridors of the Polytechnique and what he wrote in his suicide note, Lapin did not merely set out to dispatch women; he very clearly and passionately sought to kill "feminists".

Lapin certainly didn't take the time to investigate the personal politics of the 14 women he shot and killed. However, despite this, Lapin's choice of words was not accidental and it tells us something important about the social significance of the label "feminist." For men like Lapin, and all those men and women who resisted efforts to define his actions as "violence against women", the word "feminist" conjures negative, derogatory and anti-male sentiments and thereby contributes to the development of a culture of distrust towards those advocating for women's rights.

But who is responsible for erasing the specifically anti-feminist character of Lapin's murderous actions? Did the feminist movements of the day fail to deliver a strong enough message? How was their message quietly co-opted in a way that better allowed the community to grieve rather than to acknowledge the complex issues that Lapin's actions underscored?

If we are to move forward and inspire youth activists today to join and continue the feminist struggles, it is important to understand why there wasn't – and still isn't – a national dialogue about how Lapin's actions bolstered a broader social vilification of women's empowerment, equality, and participation in the various feminist movements. Lapin's characterization of women who assume traditionally male roles as "feminists" is an example of the misperception that women belong to distinct and mysteriously homogenous class. Each bullet is a testament to his view

Denise Hammond is a self-identified feminist and a member of the Toronto NSG. Special thanks to all the activists that participated in interviews, much respect for your work and commitment to bring the struggles forward.

of women as "other", sub-human and threatening. By defining Lapin's violence as simply an attack on women and not as a distinctly anti-feminist act, the women's movement lost an important opportunity to fight the feminist backlash – a backlash that is still prevalent today as much in the streets as in the chilly classrooms of colleges and universities.

Campuses today, however, present an irony of sorts: while fewer women self-identify as feminists, there appears to be a concurrent rise in women's political involvement both in students' unions and

coalition groups that partake in forms of direct action. But with a glaring absence of feminist self-labelling, it is no surprise that young campus feminists find themselves confused not just by the label and language of feminism, but by the theory and practice that sees issues of gender or sex as intersecting with race, class, sexual orientation and ability.

To explore a snapshot of where campus feminist movements are at today, I interviewed several women activists on three questions: What is feminism to you? What role does it have in your political activities on/off campus? And how do you view the feminist movement in the context of today's political struggles?

WHAT'S FEMINISM?

Feminism is a word that has many interpretations and meanings, but its connection to the experiences of activism that many younger women have is ambiguous. There was an inconsistency between how the activists I interviewed theorized feminism and how they practised it in their activism. The women I interviewed had divergent notions of feminism and they recognised that there are different tendencies and approaches to it. However, each of them held the view that feminism was ultimately rooted in an idea of equality between genders and sexes that is based, at least in part, on some idea of "parity". All too often, I was told that feminism is only about equality: equality with men in the workplace, equality in the home and equal access to capital. This common understanding – that of liberal feminism – accommodates capitalist relations and displaces a much more complex understanding of feminism: one that sees issues of sex and gender intersecting with those of power and privilege in relation to race, class, sexual orientation and ability. This second, more complex understanding of feminism is socialist feminism.

Thus, the interviews I conducted followed an interesting political trajectory. Though many of the women spoke eloquently about power dynamics and class or race relations, when it came time to talking about women's emancipation from oppression, the answers diminished in complexity and frequently fell back to the classical liberal position – achieving equality. The prevalence of liberal feminist understandings is not that surprising given that modern Western capitalism has had so

much time to adapt to the challenges posed by feminism that its dominant ideology has successfully absorbed and nullified the more complex and critical notions of socialist feminism.

Rather than pointing our fingers at these activists to accuse them of having a limited understanding of feminism, we should use these observations to reflect on how capitalist social relations normalise feminism and reduce it to its least challenging incarnations. A deeper concept of feminism should be based on a critical analysis of capital, economic exploitation, and Western "democracy", and would provide women with an emancipatory framework for the fight for equity.

As the government and the marketplace have been given license to move higher education away from the ancient tenets of a liberal education – which included philosophy and critical thinking – and towards credentialism, commercialization, marketability and employability, there has been a corresponding shift in the analysis embedded in the curriculum. As a result, new generations of graduates are being shuffled through the education factory with limited intellectual engagement and only rare excursions below surface-level understandings of critical theory and consciousness. Furthermore, outside of the classroom there has been a significant and visible decline in public, radical, revolutionary women's movements. This is compounded by the general decline in cohesive coalition politics within activist communities of a post-Trade Summit era, where movement politics are experiencing a general decline of mobilizations (both in size and frequency).

WEAKENED PROCESS

Taken together, these trends have a strong impact on the relationship young women have to themselves and on how they understand feminism. In particular, they have led to a general disappearance of feminist mentorship and labelling and thus have weakened the process through which critical feminist theory and practice grows over time. The result is that there are fewer spaces for women to develop and hone their political consciousness as feminist. This is a real loss, because feminists, like other activists, are not born, they are formed and they develop through ongoing critical education and politicizing life experiences.

WOMEN EDUCATE • RESIST

The NSG is sending at least one of our women members to a week-long socialist feminist school at the International Institute for Research and Education (IIRE) in Amsterdam. This will be an opportunity to develop politics, share experiences and make international links.

But all this costs money. We need to raise over \$2000 to cover air fare, tuition and expenses. So we are asking you, our readers, to help out with financial donations. No contribution is too small!

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$_____

Please make cheques or money orders payable to New Socialist and indicate that it's for the Women's School initiative, and mail to:

Box 167
253 College St
Toronto, ON
M5T 1R5



Feminist trailblazer Shirley Chisholm, a founder of New York NOW (National Organization of Women) and fearless lifelong advocate for women and people of colour, who later became the first African American woman elected to the US Congress.

Reflecting back on the Montreal Massacre, we can see the obvious tension between labels and the realities they represent. For Lapin, the term "feminist" stood for strong women who were to blame for social and personal ills and who should pay for this crime with their lives. The dark irony to Lapin's actions is that they served to underscore, perhaps more vividly than anything else, the need for all women to identify with feminism and take action for change. However, for the young activists I interviewed, developing an understanding of the different theoretical approaches to feminism is one thing, but accepting feminism as a personal label or means of self-identification is another.

Indeed, although most of the women I interviewed recognized the importance of having a feminist perspective, very rarely did they seem to identify openly as feminist in the same way and with the same confidence as they did with other perspectives, such as socialism or Marxism. For some active women, working within a particular framework does not necessarily translate into personal ownership over a feminist identity. The result of this is that other young women have fewer role models and the number and influence of feminist role models for other young women on campuses diminishes. As a further illustration, two of eight individuals I spoke to indicated that in a women's studies class where the size ranged from 50 to 100 people, when the professor asked who identified as a feminist only two members in the class raised their hand.

Most interviewees noted that while many coalitions and political groups claim to have a feminist perspective, their activism is informed almost exclusively by a class-based analysis. One activist described this phenomenon as the melting pot effect, where activists appear to have both dominant and subordinate perspectives/identities. For example, activists may identify as anti-racist, feminist, socialist, anti-authoritarian, etc., but these perspectives/identities are almost universally subordinate to a strictly political-economic analysis. The result is that explicitly feminist work is consistently diluted within broader political agendas.

WOMEN'S CENTRES

Many women I interviewed spoke of how campus feminist work was done in women's centres. However, because many urban campus women's centres have risen to take action on the rights and recognition of transgender peoples, the political work of explicitly promoting women's rights and inclusion sometimes fall to the wayside. While challenging transphobia is a necessary part of challenging the social, political and cultural oppressions at the root of sexism, there still remains much work to be done to further the project of women's liberation.

In the same way that much of the original understanding of Dec 6 has been replaced with a faded Polaroid counterfeit, so too has much of the history of feminist struggle for basic rights – a struggle whose goals have not yet been fully realised – been

co-opted and revised so as to lull the current generation into complacency. Much has been gained by years of feminist radicals campaigning, as feminists, for progressive change: abortion rights have been won and largely defended, sex and gender roles have been bent and expanded and, in many respects, the largest hurdles to "equality" (access to many services and occupations) have been surpassed. However, equity – in the strong sense of the term, where it refers to a goal that cannot be achieved without a radical transformation of society on new values that embrace all people and distribute power between and among them – remains a distant point on a fading horizon. By not publicly and proudly carrying the feminist tradition and label forward, I wonder whether younger women are allowing the term 'feminism' to be co-opted and used as a political instrument to maintain and reinforce women's oppression.

MORE THAN LABELS

The complex state of the women's feminist movement (if such a movement exists) can't however be reduced to a just a question of labels. There are many reasons why young activists don't identify with feminism, for some those reasons stem from the ongoing failure of women's movements to intersect with issues of race, class and sexual orientation. But, to ensure that the political cause first picked up by our mothers and grandmothers isn't dropped, we need to develop a feminist vision that is inclusive and relevant.

The women's movement must be a place where multiple intersecting oppressions are challenged. It must be a political project as well as a method of organising. The disconnection between our struggles and the values of our younger sisters must be bridged and the perception that feminist movements are no longer relevant because "equality has been gained" must be challenged and replaced with the idea that for true social transformation to be achieved, informed collective action is required.

All this cannot happen without young women of today and tomorrow standing up and declaring: "I am a feminist". The task for the rest of us is to rise to their challenge and push forward a movement that not only lists feminism as one of its solidarity labels, but rather works from feminism as a framework for every action. ★

WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN

Women's Global Charter for Humanity

Below we reprint the final version of the Global Charter adopted by the World March of Women at a meeting on December 10, 2004, in Kigali, Rwanda.

PREAMBLE

We women have been marching a long time to denounce and demand an end to the oppression of women and end the domination, exploitation, egotism and unbridled quest for profit breeding injustice, war, conquest and violence.

Our feminist struggles and those of our foremothers on every continent have forged new freedoms for us, our daughters and sons, and all the young girls and boys who will walk the earth after us.

We are building a world where diversity is considered an asset and individuality a source of richness; where dialogue flourishes and where writing, song and dreams can flower. In this world, human beings are considered one of the most precious sources of wealth. Equality, freedom, solidarity, justice, and peace are its driving force. We have the power to create this world.

We represent over half of humanity. We give life, we work, love, create, struggle, and have fun. We currently accomplish most of the work essential to life and the continued survival of humankind. Yet our place in society continues to be undervalued.

The World March of Women, of which we are a part, views patriarchy as the system oppressing women and capitalism as the system that enables a minority to exploit the vast majority of women and men.

These systems reinforce one another. They are rooted in, and work hand in hand with, racism, sexism, misogyny, xenophobia, homophobia, colonialism, imperialism, slavery, and forced labour. They breed manifold forms of fundamentalism that prevent women and men from being free. They generate poverty and exclusion, violate the rights of human beings, particularly women's rights, and imperil humanity and the planet.

We reject this world!

We propose to build another world where exploitation, oppression, intolerance and exclusion no longer exist, and where integrity, diversity and the rights and freedoms of all are respected.

This Charter is based on the values of equality, freedom, solidarity, justice and peace.

EQUALITY

AFFIRMATION 1. All human beings and peoples are equal in all domains and all societies. They have equal access to wealth, to land, decent employment, means of production, adequate housing, a quality education, occupational training, justice, a healthy, nutritious and sufficient diet, physical and mental health services, old age security, a healthy environment, property, political and decision-making functions, energy, drinking water, clean air, means of transportation, technical knowledge and skills, information, means of communication, recreation, culture, rest, technology, and the fruit of scientific progress.

AFFIRMATION 2. No human condition or condition of life justifies discrimination.

AFFIRMATION 3. No custom, tradition, religion, ideology, economic system or policy justifies the inferiorization of any

person or authorizes actions that undermine human dignity, and physical and psychological integrity.

AFFIRMATION 4. Women are full-fledged human beings and citizens before being spouses, companions, wives, mothers and workers.

AFFIRMATION 5. All unpaid, so-called feminine tasks related to supporting life and social maintenance (household labour, education, caring of children and intimates, etc.) are economic activities that create wealth and that should be valued and shared.

AFFIRMATION 6. Trade among countries is equitable and does not harm peoples' development.

AFFIRMATION 7. Every person has access to a job with fair remuneration, in safe and sanitary conditions, and in which their dignity is respected.

FREEDOM

AFFIRMATION 1. All human beings live free of all forms of violence. No human being is the property of another. No person may be held in slavery, forced to marry, subjected to forced labour, trafficked, sexually exploited.

AFFIRMATION 2. All individuals enjoy collective and individual freedoms that guarantee their dignity, in particular: freedom of thought, conscience, belief and religion; freedom of expression and opinion; to express one's sexuality in a free and responsible manner and choose the person with whom to share one's life; freedom to vote, be elected and participate in political life; freedom to associate, meet, unionize and demonstrate; freedom to choose one's residence and civil status; freedom to choose one's courses of study and choose one's profession and exercise it; freedom to move and to be in charge of one's person and goods; freedom to choose one's language of communication while respecting minority languages and a society's choices concerning the language spoken at home and in the workplace, and to be informed, learn, discuss and gain access to information technologies.

AFFIRMATION 3. Freedoms are exercised with tolerance and mutual respect and within a democratic and participatory framework, democratically determined by the society. They involve responsibilities and obligations towards the community.

AFFIRMATION 4. Women are free to make decisions about their body, fertility and sexuality. They have the choice about whether they will have children.

AFFIRMATION 5. Democracy is rooted in freedom and equality.

SOLIDARITY

AFFIRMATION 1. International solidarity among individuals and peoples is promoted free of any form of manipulation or influence.

AFFIRMATION 2. All human beings are interdependent. They share the responsibility and the intention to live together and build a society that is generous, just and egalitarian, based on human rights; a

society free of oppression, exclusion, discrimination, intolerance and violence.

AFFIRMATION 3. Natural resources and the goods and services necessary for all persons to live are quality public goods and services to which every individual has equal and fair access.

AFFIRMATION 4. Natural resources are administered by the peoples living in the area, in a manner that is respectful of the environment and promotes its preservation and sustainability.

AFFIRMATION 5. A society's economy serves the women and men composing that society. It is based on the production and exchange of socially useful wealth distributed among all people, the priority of satisfying the collective needs, eliminating poverty and ensuring the balance of collective and individual interests. It ensures food sovereignty. It opposes the exclusive quest for profit to the detriment of social usefulness, and the private accumulation of the means of production, wealth, capital, land, and decision-making power by a few groups and individuals.

AFFIRMATION 6. The contribution of every person to society is acknowledged and paves the way to social rights, regardless of the function held by that person.

AFFIRMATION 7. Genetic modification is controlled. There are no patents on life or the human genome. Human cloning is prohibited.

JUSTICE

AFFIRMATION 1. All human beings regardless of their country of origin, nationality and place of residence are considered to be full-fledged citizens, with fair and equal entitlement to human rights (social, economic, political, civil, cultural rights, sexual, reproductive and environmental rights), within an egalitarian, fair and genuinely democratic framework.

AFFIRMATION 2. Social justice is based on the equitable redistribution of wealth to eliminate poverty, limit wealth acquisition, and satisfy essential needs to improve the well-being of all people.

AFFIRMATION 3. The physical and moral integrity of every person is protected. Torture and humiliating and degrading treatment are forbidden. Sexual violence, rape, female genital mutilation, violence against women, sex trafficking and trafficking of human beings in general are considered crimes against the person and crimes against humanity.

AFFIRMATION 4. An accessible, egalitarian, effective and independent judiciary is put in place.

AFFIRMATION 5. Every individual benefits from social protection guaranteeing her or him access to care, decent housing, education, information and security in old age. Every individual has sufficient income to live in dignity.

AFFIRMATION 6. Health and social services are public, accessible, quality and free of charge; this includes all treatments, and services for all pandemic diseases, particularly HIV.

PEACE

AFFIRMATION 1. All human beings live in a peaceful world. Peace is achieved principally as a result of: equality between women and men, social, economic, politi-

cal, legal and cultural equality, rights protection, and eradication of poverty, ensuring that all people live in dignity and free of violence, and that everyone has employment, enough resources to feed, house, clothe and educate themselves, is protected in old age, and has access to health care.

AFFIRMATION 2. Tolerance, dialogue and respect for diversity are foundations of peace.

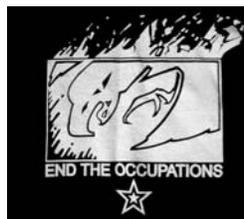
AFFIRMATION 3. All forms of domination, exploitation and exclusion, of one person over another, one group over another, of a minority over a majority, of a majority over a minority, or of one nation over another, are excluded.

AFFIRMATION 4. All human beings have the right to live in a world free of war and armed conflict, foreign occupation and

Anti-occupation and socialist-feminist T-SHIRTS FOR SALE



Feminist t-shirt: front and back



Anti-Occupation / Anti-Imperialism t-shirt: front and back



BOTH SHIRTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE IN BOTH "REGULAR" SIZING AS WELL AS WOMEN'S "FITTED" SIZES!

- FEMINIST AND PROUD (red & white on black): "regular" sizing XS S M L XL
- FEMINIST AND PROUD (red & white on black): women's "fitted" XS S M L XL
- END THE OCCUPATION (white & yellow on black): "regular" sizing XS S M L XL
- END THE OCCUPATION (white & yellow on black): women's "fitted" XS S M L XL

_____Shirts @ \$20.00 Cdn each = \$ _____
 + \$7.50 shipping (for up to two shirts) = \$ 7.50
TOTAL = \$ _____

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Contact Phone Number and/or Email: _____

For shipping costs for orders of more than 2 t-shirts, or to arrange for pick-up in Toronto, contact us via email at: newsoc@web.net or phone: 416-955-1581.

Please make cheques or money orders payable to New Socialist Group and mail to: Box 167 • 253 College St. • Toronto, ON • M5T 1R5

military bases. No one has the right to decide on the life or death of individuals and peoples.

AFFIRMATION 5. No custom, tradition, ideology, religion, political or economic system justifies the use of violence.

AFFIRMATION 6. Armed and unarmed conflicts between countries, communities and peoples are resolved through negotiations, which bring about peaceful, just and fair solutions at the national, regional and international levels.

CALL

This Women's Global Charter for Humanity calls on women and men and all oppressed peoples and groups of the planet to proclaim, individually and collectively, their power to transform the world and radically change social structures with a view to developing relationships based on equality, peace, freedom, solidarity and justice.

It calls on all social movements and all forces in society to take action so that the

values promoted in this Charter can be effectively implemented and political decision-makers adopt the measures necessary for their implementation.

It is a call to action to change the world. The need is urgent!

No aspect of this Charter may be interpreted or utilized to express opinions or conduct activities that contravene the Charter's spirit. The values defended in it form a whole. They are of equal importance, interdependent, and indivisible, and the order they appear in the Charter is interchangeable.

WHAT IS THE WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN?

The World March of Women is a movement composed of women's groups of diverse ethnic, cultural, religious, political and class backgrounds, and different ages and sexual orientation. Far from dividing us, this diversity unites us in greater, more far-reaching solidarity.

In 2000, as part of the World March of

Women, we wrote a political platform containing 17 practical demands for the elimination of poverty throughout the world, wealth sharing, the eradication of violence against women and the respect of women's physical and moral integrity. We transmitted these demands to the leaders of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and United Nations. We received not even one concrete response. We also transmitted these demands to elected officials and leaders in our countries.

Ever since, we have ceaselessly continued to defend our demands. We are proposing alternatives to build another world. We are active in the world's social movements and in our societies. We are furthering the thinking about women's place in the world and the place we should be occupying.

With this Women's Global Charter for Humanity and our upcoming actions, we reaffirm that another world is possible, a world filled with hope and life that is truly a fine place to live. We proclaim our love of the world, its diversity and its beauty. ★

Manitoba labour

Continued from Page 13

The long and short of it is that the labour movement in Manitoba is running into intensifying opposition from employers not only in organizing drives but also in collective bargaining and before the Labour Board. At the same time, the labour movement has discovered that, contrary to expectations, Doer-led NDP governments are not especially labour-friendly (a result perhaps of the fact that Doer seems to have modelled himself on Tony Blair in Britain,

a man who has a hard time containing his contempt for the people and organizations who built the Labour Party).

Where does the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL) fit in all this? Historically, the pattern in Manitoba has been for the MFL to try and mobilize member unions and rank-and-file members to oppose the regressive programs and policies of Conservative governments. Then, when the NDP forms the government, as it did from 1969 to 1977, 1981 to 1987 and 1999 to the present, efforts to mobilize are stopped and relations between the labour movement and the government are moved inside, with meetings between the MFL executive and government through a labour-liaison committee and meetings with the NDP caucus and cabinet ministers.

The NDP governments of Ed Schreyer and Howard Pawley did make improvements to legislation and programs that mattered to labour and working people in general, although even with their governments there was a big divergence between what labour wanted and what labour got.

Under the first, and now the second Doer government there have been some modest reforms. Firefighter eligibility for workers' compensation benefits has been extended to include some of the cancers to

which firefighters are more susceptible, and there are improvements in the works for pension and workers' compensation legislation. But the divergence between what workers need and what the NDP delivers has widened. In such a situation, the question becomes, how long do you keep doing what you're doing when it doesn't seem to be working very well? And, what might the alternatives be?

It would seem that the labour movement might attempt to exploit growing discontent amongst the rank and file to try and mobilize workers to put the pressure on the Doer government to respond to the needs of workers with progressive legislation and programs. This sort of strategy could result in some benefits to workers during the Doer government's second term of office. More importantly, mobilizing workers for extra-parliamentary action against this government would prepare the labour movement to take on the next Conservative government, with which the "inside" strategy will of course be impossible. In other eras, when faced with a hostile government it was possible to call on workers to defend the gains that had been made in the past. Yet unless the labour movement changes strategy soon, such a call will carry little weight with the mass of workers in Manitoba. ★



Natural gas, urban insurrection and revolutionary tradition

BY JEFF WEBBER

Across the Third World a novel societal and demographic sea change is occurring. As Mike Davis has recently explained, urbanization is rapidly transforming the face of the underdeveloped world, spawning a vast and little-understood class of informal workers. Growing out of the debt crisis of the 1980s and the subsequent neoliberal economic restructuring, the countrysides are spilling out into the urban slums of Third World megacities and secondary urban centres.

The remarkable part of this trend is that the cities continue to grow even as economies stagnate and depress, suggesting the “push” from the countryside is vastly more important than the “pull” or allure of a better life in the city. As Davis puts it, “The global forces ‘pushing’ people from the countryside – mechanization in Java and India, food imports in Mexico, Haiti and Kenya, civil war and drought throughout Africa, and everywhere the consolidation of small into large holdings and the competition of industrial-scale agribusiness – seem to sustain urbanization even when the ‘pull’ of the city is drastically weakened by debt and depression.” The rapid expansion of cities while the state retreats from the economy and structural adjustment policies rape the popular classes has meant “an inevitable recipe for the mass production of slums.”

The 650,000 strong shantytown-city of El Alto, Bolivia encapsulates many of the more general traits of Third World slums: inadequate urban infrastructure, increasing economic insecurity, poor sanitation and so on. In a country where 62 per cent of the population identify themselves as indigenous, 82 percent of *alteños* (residents of El

Alto) identify as such.

El Alto has grown rapidly since the 1950s, from approximately 11,000 people in 1950 to roughly 650,000 in 2001, with much of this growth since the 1980s. In particular, the confluence of three factors led to this spectacular expansion. First, droughts stemming from El Niño in 1982-1983 drove tens of thousands of subsistence peasants off their land and into El Alto. Second, the rapid collapse of the

The rapid expansion of cities has meant “an inevitable recipe for the mass production of slums.”

international tin market and the inception of the neoliberal assault, which targeted state-owned tin mines, led to a massive flight of ex-miners into the city in 1985. Finally, commercial liberalization and the flood of cheap imports that accompanied the neoliberal revolution in 1985 effectively emptied much of the countryside as farmers and herders went bankrupt.

As Juan M. Arbona and Benjamin Kohl note, “This intense migration has created a political culture that combines aspects of trade unionism with traditional forms of land-based organization within a context of marked economic insecurity and social frustration.” That social frustration has recently given birth to wide-scale mobilization.

In something of a replay of the 1781 indigenous rebellion led by Tupac Katari that laid siege to the colonial city of La Paz, the October 2003 “Gas War” was marked vividly by the eruption of El Alto and the

occupation of La Paz, with up to 500,000 protesters demanding the resignation of neoliberal architect and then-president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, and a national referendum on the future of natural gas extraction, among other things.

To get at where this revolt came from and the complexities of the insurgent character it took, we need to look back at the material changes wrought by neoliberal economic restructuring and the ideological

ploy of “neoliberal indigenism” used by the Bolivian state. We also need to understand the subjective identities and ideologies of the mobilized popular sectors that engage with class and ethnicity, drawing from a rich mosaic of revolutionary tradition within the geographic entity called Bolivia and beyond.

The 1985 elections brought to power once again the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MNR), the party of the 1952 Revolution. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, an historic figure within both the MNR and the populist current of the revolution, assumed the presidency once again.

Forced by the mobilization of the popular classes, especially the militant mining unions, the MNR had instituted a dramatic series of national reforms immediately following the revolution. Known in Bolivian popular parlance as “el estado del ‘52,” the political, social and economic reforms in the post-revolutionary era included land reform, the purging and discrediting of the Bolivian military, nationalization of mines, universal suffrage, ambitious universal education programs

Jeff Webber is a member of the Toronto Branch of the NSG and a PhD Candidate in Political Science at the University of Toronto. He is currently in Bolivia.

People protesting recent events in El Alto

and a populist/corporatist political apparatus of cooptation, reward, as well as periodic repression to keep the revolution from taking a socialist course. While retaining a nationalist/populist character, the revolution nonetheless struck a blow to the landed oligarchy and the tin-mining elite, at the same time as it expanded the meaning of citizenship for the poor, indigenous majority.

1985 witnessed the end of this era. That year was characterized by hyperinflationary economic crisis and the high point of the political Left's longstanding internal conflicts. Against this backdrop, the historically populist MNR orchestrated a revolutionary break with the state of '52 social order, introducing a new, radically neoliberal model, where the state would no longer play the role as primary agent of development. A philosophy based on free market capitalism and a dogmatic faith in liberalization and privatization was crystallizing in a state controlled by an energized New Right and an unprecedented unity among the dominant capitalist classes.

The economic "reforms" introduced were based on the removal of the state from virtually all productive economic activity, the bankruptcy of "uncompetitive" productive enterprises, the mass firing of low and mid-level state bureaucrats, the near-total destruction of the state-owned tin-mining industry (with 60 percent of the militant miners losing their jobs, as much for political reasons as for economic rationale), and the de-peasantization of the countryside as small-holders fled to the city slums.

According to Bolivian-based economists Carlos Arze and Tom Kruse, the state has suffered dramatically from reduced capacity as a result of relinquishing its revenue-generating, productive enterprises. As a consequence, public spending on social needs such as health, education and so on, has deteriorated. Public sector employment



has been more than halved, while the private sector, contrary to neoliberal mythology, has been unable to secure jobs for victims of state downsizing. At the same time, the insecure and highly exploitative informal sector of the economy has expanded rapidly, aided and abetted by the rural-to-urban demographic wave.

As Henry Veltmeyer and Juan Tellez remind us, "... the dramatic expansion of the informal sector both in Bolivia and elsewhere in the region is a clear indication of a generalized tendency toward the casualization and informalization of employment and a change in the conditions of employment. The latter are marked by lack of legal protection, increasing insecurity and uncertainty, as well as dramatic growth of what Karl Marx defined as an industrial army – that is, a reserve pool of surplus labor visible in its effects on the disciplining of labour and the weakening of its organization, its capacity to negotiate, and its flexibility (labour loses its mobility and becomes available at lower rates and in worse conditions)."

NEOLIBERAL INDIGENISM

The neoliberal movement held its momentum throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s. In the first administration of Sánchez de Lozada (1993-1997), however, the contradictions of the model were emerging and the discourse of the state consequently began to take on a more sophisticated tenor, one based on neoliberal indigenism. Sánchez de Lozada embraced as his vice president the renowned Aymara intellectual Víctor Hugo Cardenas, while

the 1994 Constitution, in a departure from older nationalist discourse, declared Bolivia a "multiethnic and pluricultural" nation. Bret Gustafson writes, "Through the mid-1990s, neoliberal economic reforms in Bolivia were accompanied by legislative measures that 'recognized' indigenous identities, languages and organizations and ascribed to them new categories for participation within formal institutions of state governance."

Therefore, we see the perverse embrace by the state of "indigenous culture," or a call for the indigenous masses to adapt and incorporate themselves into the capitalist democratic order, while the regime proceeds apace, implementing an economic program that impoverishes the majority, robs them of sovereignty and control over their lives and disproportionately harms the indigenous poor. Enjoy the recognition of your languages. Shut-up about the economy.

Recent events have demonstrated the shallow veneer of the state's "tolerance" of indigenous popular politics, while massive insurgent roadblocks, strikes, and full-scale mobilizations of mostly indigenous poor indicate that the subaltern sectors of society have not swallowed whole the paring of indigenous cultural recognition with a neoliberal economic order that impoverishes the same people it "recognizes".

In the rupture of October 2003 Sánchez de Lozada demonstrated his willingness to open fire on the non-violent protestors, killing more people in 14 months than were killed under General Hugo Bánzer's military dictatorship from 1971-1978, as

Katherine Ledebur points out. Meanwhile, as societal tensions mounted during the Gas War, the overtly racist declarations of the mass media and elite figures outside the state highlighted the shallow reach of the state's official discourse of tolerant neoliberal indigenism.

REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

In the heat of reporting contemporary uprisings, the historic roots of social mobilization are often lost in the fray. It's impossible to comprehend the subjective consciousness and ideologies of the current Bolivian radical protagonists without relating them to the complex revolutionary trajectories of the country in the past.

Even beginning only as far back as the 1952 revolution, we can begin to understand the key social forces in the popular blocs of one of Latin America's most historically mobilized and radical populations. Following the revolution, there is no doubt that the Central Obrero Boliviano (Bolivian Workers Central, COB) - and within the COB, the mining union Federacion Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia (FSTMB) - played the predominant role in the struggle to socialize the Bolivian economy and to steer the Bolivian post-revolutionary cycle in a socialist direction, a direction at odds with the MNR and the nationalist/populist forces within the revolution.

Since its establishment, according to James Dunkerley, "the COB has developed into one of the most militant trade union confederations in the world. It has the distinction of being the only Latin American confederation that possesses authority over an entire workers' movement, it has remained independent of all international affiliations, and - despite numerous reiterations of its rejection of party connections - plays a central and explicit role in national politics, paralleled only by that of the military."

It was therefore a serious blow to the Bolivian Left when the international tin market collapsed in 1985 and the Bolivian state began its concerted attack on the miners' union, effectively gouging out the heart of the COB and its capacity to mobilize against the neoliberal order.

Replacing the COB on the mantle of social struggle during the late 1980s and continuing to this day, the cocaleros (coca growers) of the Chapare region have taken up a central role in the Bolivian Left, strug-

gling against the imperial adventures of the American state and its "drug war" throughout the Andean region.

The cocaleros have mounted tremendous popular resistance on a number of levels. Tactics have included mass rallies, marches, hunger strikes, road blockades, cultural events, expanding alliances, occupying government offices and forming the basis of a new political party: the Movimiento Al Socialismo (MAS), led by Evo Morales.

Nonetheless, it was not until 2000 that the Bolivian Left really moved from a defensive to an offensive position, with indigenous protests and road blockades in the altiplano and the internationally renowned Water War in Cochabamba. In the year 2000, argue Forrest Hylton and Sinclair Thomson, "a new revolutionary cycle was ushered in.... The latest insurgency constitutes a major challenge to Bolivian society's internal colonialism and may lead to the formation of a new national-popular bloc representing the social majority."

From their perspective, much of the union and Leftist political party mobilizations and political ferment during the post-revolutionary period until the mid-1980s represented a "national-popular" tradition which fought many courageous struggles for social justice and against dictatorships but nonetheless, "held, at best, a condescending view of indigenous participation in national political organization. These groups privileged a schematic vision of class consciousness over cultural identity as the basis for political action."

Since the decline of the COB and Leftist political parties, however, indigenous politics has come to the fore. For Hylton and Thomson, the indigenous symbolism in the streets of the Gas War mobilizations stands out as a clear indication of this momentum. For example, commenting on the miners' participation in the October revolt they write: "When mineworkers traveled from the mining center of Huanuni to join the protests in El Alto, they revived the memory and symbolic power of earlier proletarian struggle in the national-popular tradition. However, on this occasion they also surpris-

ingly affirmed their own indigenous roots."

While I'm not sure we can call the social struggles of recent years "the revolutionary intervention of popular forces," I certainly agree that the confluence of different traditions has at least laid the seeds for a powerful national popular bloc of the social majority. In Hylton and Thomson's eloquent analysis, the "October insurrection thus represents an exceptionally deep and powerful, though not unprecedented, convergence between two traditions of struggle - indigenous and national-popular. Earlier mobilizations, and some of their gains - notably the nationalization of mines in 1952 or petroleum in 1969 - left a more enduring legacy than had been supposed. Self-consciously building on earlier revolutionary cycles, especially those of 1780-1781, 1899 and 1952, the current cycle of 2000-2003 will leave its own legacy."

At minimum it's clear that the meaning of the October struggles penetrates far deeper than a struggle about natural gas. This revolt grew out of the political and economic contradictions of the neoliberal capitalist order set in place in 1985, and built on and expanded the, at times contradictory, revolutionary traditions of South America's poorest country.

The future of mass struggle, and the rewards it might foster, remains opaque. However, as long as gross hierarchies and multiple injustices reign in Bolivia, the traditions of revolutionary insurrection will continue to find voices and actors. As I write these words, the transportation workers have gone on strike and a new Water War is emerging in El Alto.★

new★
SOCIALIST
IDEAS FOR RADICAL CHANGE

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

	IN CANADA	IN THE U.S.
1 year	\$25	\$30
2 years	\$45 (save \$5)	\$55 (save \$5)
3 years	\$65 (save \$10)	\$80 (save \$10)

INSTITUTIONAL AND OVERSEAS INTERNATIONAL: \$50 per year

ALL PRICES IN CANADIAN DOLLARS

SEND CHEQUES TO **NEW SOCIALIST**
Box 167, 253 College Street
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R5

www.newsocialist.org

Arafat's legacy and challenges for the future

BY ROLAND RANCE

The death of Yassir Arafat, which has been portrayed by the bourgeois media as a “new opportunity” for the Middle East, does indeed mark a turning point in the Palestinian struggle. It is seen by Israel and its western backers as an opportunity to install a more compliant Palestinian leadership. For the Palestinian people, however, it can only become a real opportunity for progress if they engage in a serious strategic reassessment. However, the election of Mahmoud Abbas to succeed Arafat as president of the Palestinian Authority (PA) is a sign that they are not yet ready to draw the necessary balance sheet of Arafat's successes and failures, and to reach the necessary strategic conclusions.

Despite the strong criticism of much of Arafat's politics and decisions, virtually all strands of Palestinian opinion were united in mourning a man who symbolised their struggle for liberation, and who, during the early decades of a remarkable fifty-year political career, ensured the survival of the Palestinian cause and its central importance in Middle Eastern and world affairs. Ironically, those Israelis who, stigmatising him as “someone we cannot deal with,” most welcomed his demise, are likely to come to the realisation that he was the only Palestinian leader capable of negotiating a deal favourable to Israel and then persuading the Palestinians to accept it.

Any assessment of Arafat's legacy needs to balance his undoubted achievements – principally the crystallisation of the Palestinians as an independent political entity – against the failures and sell-outs

Any assessment of Arafat's legacy needs to balance his undoubted achievements against the failures and sell-outs which have characterised much of the past twenty five years.

which have characterised much of the past twenty five years. His passing leaves many unresolved questions, just as his life contained many controversies, and several mysteries.

The first of these relates to his birth in 1929, to the eminent Palestinian Hussein family. Whether born in Jerusalem, Cairo or Gaza, Arafat – like many young Palestinians of his generation – spent his childhood in both Palestine and Egypt. Although this easy movement came to an end with the partition of Palestine and Israel's defeat of the Arab armies in 1947-8, Arafat's family did not themselves become refugees. His family home in Jerusalem's Old City stood until it was bulldozed by the Israelis following the occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967.

By then, Arafat was already an active fighter for Palestinian liberation. While studying engineering at Cairo University, Arafat became leader of the Palestinian Students Union, and by 1959 was able to use this position to establish Fatah, the Palestinian National Liberation Movement.

By this time, most Arab states – including Egypt under the nationalist Nasser regime – were engaging in strenuous covert efforts to reach an agreement with

Israel at the expense of the Palestinians. In an attempt (apparently at the behest of the US government) to create a compliant Palestinian organisation, in 1964 Nasser set up the PLO with diplomat Ahmed Shukeiry at its head. Despite its bombastic rhetoric about armed struggle as “the only way to liberate Palestine”, the PLO under Shukeiry carried out no attacks on Israel, while Arafat's Fatah and other small guerrilla groups carried out dozens of attacks.

The 1967 war, in which Israel occupied the remainder of Palestine, provided an opportunity which Arafat grasped. It exposed the inefficiency, even cowardice, of the regular Arab armies (years later, Arafat boasted that the PLO had lost more men defending the Beirut rubbish dump from Israeli attack in 1982 than had the entire Arab armies in defence of Jerusalem in 1967), and it brought hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, many with military training, under direct Israeli rule.

Guerrilla attacks, and Israeli retaliation, increased massively as Israel tightened its grip on the occupied territories and began the establishment of settlements. In 1968, this led to the Battle of Karameh, in which Fatah fought off an Israeli attack on its base in Jordan. Despite heavy Palestinian losses, this was the first occasion on which the Israeli army had faced a military reverse. This galvanized the Palestinians and indeed the whole Arab world. Within a year, Fatah had seized control of the PLO from Shukeiry and his Egyptian sponsors; in 1969 alone, the PLO carried out over 2000 attacks on Israel.

Arafat became a hero for many western radicals during the 1968 uprisings, but being a social conservative, he was always an unlikely symbol for the 60s generation. It was during this period that the PLO

Roland Rance is a revolutionary socialist living in London, and convenor of Jews Against Zionism (info@jewsahgainstzionism.org)

Arafat's policies were widely criticized among Palestinians but he was mourned by all as the leader who first brought the Palestinian cause into the international arena.



amended its charter, defining its goal as a democratic secular state in Palestine, and began a series of clandestine meetings with Israeli dissidents in Europe. It is likely that, even then, Arafat's intention was to use this as a means to reach an agreement with the Israeli state, leaving him as head of a truncated Palestine. Unlike the more radical People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Arafat rejected the strategy of Arab revolution leading to Palestinian liberation, preferring to seek alliances with the existing Arab regimes. He sought diplomatic pressure on Israel, backed up by the threat of armed attacks across the border.

This strategy faced its strongest challenge following the disaster of the Lebanese Civil War of the 1970s, and the Israeli invasion of 1982. Across the refugee camps, PLO members, disappointed at the failure of the PLO to defend Palestinians, and dismayed at the growing evidence of political and financial corruption, joined the rebellion against Arafat's leadership, which culminated in the "Camps War" of 1984-5. The dissidents, however, missed the point by counterposing a "military" strategy against a "political one, rather than addressing the real question of how to build a mass struggle, with both political and military elements.

The uneasy truce which followed this crisis lasted until the first Intifada erupted in December 1987. The Intifada, although obviously a mass uprising against Israeli occupation, was widely seen as a movement against Arafat and an increasingly out-of-touch leadership in exile. For the first time since the "Arab Revolt" of 1936-9, it showed the potential for mass civilian struggle against occupation and oppression. Despite brutal repressive measures, Israel was unable to defeat the Intifada, and was forced to turn to Arafat to act as its surrogate in governing the Palestinian people and lands. Israeli PM Rabin famously insisted that Arafat rule "Without the High Court and without the civil rights movement" – two elements which have constrained Israel's potential for unbridled barbarism.

Arafat did not disappoint the Israelis. The past ten years, since the signing of the Oslo Agreement and the return of Arafat and his coterie to Palestine, have seriously weakened and demoralised the Palestinian resistance. The turn to Islamist forces, and to the tactic of "suicide bombing", testify to the destruction by Israel, aided by Arafat, of the popular institutions which led the first Intifada.

This legacy, and the failed strategy which lies behind it, is the challenge for a new Palestinian leadership. But it was hardly

addressed during the election campaign. The election was generally described in personal terms, with Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) – Israel and the USA's favoured candidate – referred to as a "realist" and a "moderate", while other candidates – several of whom were arrested or beaten during the campaign – were stigmatised as violent, anti-Jewish extremists.

But this is to miss the point entirely. The election, in which only Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation could vote, was for a head of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Of Arafat's other roles, Abbas had already been appointed head of the PLO, while Farouq Qadumi, a veteran Palestinian critic of the Oslo agreement (previously considered to be the Kremlin's closest contact in the PLO) was elected head of the Fatah movement. However, the election result will widely be seen as an endorsement for Abbas's claim to represent all Palestinians, even though the majority of them were not allowed to participate in the election.

If the Palestinians suffering under Israeli military occupation, or their leaders, agree to ameliorate their situation at the cost of sacrificing the rights of the Palestinian refugees and exiles, this could lead to a decisive split within the Palestinian people, and the formal acceptance of the partition, not merely of the land of Palestine, but of the people too.

Israel favoured Abbas because it believes he will renounce both the armed struggle and the Palestinian right to return. If he were to do so, he would quickly find himself isolated from the Palestinian masses, and irrelevant to their struggle. But the real question that needs to be addressed is not the name of the leader of the PA, nor even what sort of arrangement can be made with Israel, but rather how to rebuild the Palestinian struggle, and the PLO, as a mass movement capable of mobilising the Palestinian people to assert and gain their rights.

The first Palestinian Intifada, which erupted in 1987, was a challenge to the increasing reliance on a strategy of diplomacy and negotiations. It did not counterpose armed struggle and political activity, but rather represented a mass popular struggle involving both approaches. This is the real challenge facing the Palestinian people; the election of Mahmoud Abbas as president of the PA is a sideshow to the need to rebuild this popular movement. ★

Capitalism and immigration

BY KATHERINE GRZEJSZCZAK
WITH TODD GORDON

Canadian capitalism is very dependent on cheap immigrant labour. This article ties the imperialist policies of countries like Canada to the international rise in global migration, and examines the Canadian state's use of racist immigration policies to create an extremely vulnerable class of Third World migrant labour. It argues that activists must make anti-racist solidarity organizing with immigrants central to their work.

Whether in search of refuge or a more prosperous economic future, people are increasingly crossing state borders. According to the United Nations there are currently 175 million people, or three percent of the world population, who reside outside of their country of birth. The number of migrants has more than doubled since 1970. Nine percent (16 million) of all migrants are refugees. This means that 91 percent of migrants leave their countries for reasons other than immediate danger to themselves or their families. The predominant reason for this type of migration is to attempt to improve a person's and/or their family's economic situation, living conditions and life chances. In other words, the majority of migrants are economic migrants.

In response to the massive movement of people across borders, state governments around the world are devising new ways of controlling migrants. Given this phenomena it is little wonder that organizing around issues of immigration has become the focus of a new layer of activists, not only in Canada but in other areas of the world.

While renewed immigration activism has brought the issue of refugees to the fore, it has been less successful in explaining economic migration, which accounts for the bulk of today's movement. An analysis of global capitalism and state power is central to understanding economic migration and increasingly restrictive immigration policies. Due in part to the weakness of Marxism among today's activists, there is a silence around issues underlying movement for economic purposes and the state's

coercive response to it. It is easier and fairly straightforward to argue that refugees deserve protection from the wars, persecution, and internal strife that have caused them to flee their countries. Some refugee rights activists rely on moral arguments to support their cause: "Canada is a great country, unlike those other countries that do not respect human rights, and therefore we have a moral responsibility to shelter those who are fleeing persecution."

But it is important to recognize the role that countries such as Canada play in creating the conditions which cause people to migrate in the first place, and how the Canadian state in turn uses this process to establish a cheap and vulnerable working class out of Third World migrant labour. To properly understand this, and assess its implications for activist work, we must address global capitalism and its relationship to imperialism, racism and nationalism.

So-called First World countries, including Canada, actively pursue policies in the Global South which push people to move. These imperialist policies involve military intervention and the imposition of economic imperatives that cause extreme impoverishment or outright destitution for local populations.

A good example of this is the role international financial organizations, such as the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), and rich creditor nations (who have the greatest influence in the WB and IMF) play in imposing structural adjustment programs on Third World countries in exchange for badly needed loans. Structural adjustment programs frequently include massive cuts to state welfare programs, the selling off of public assets and the reduction of tariff barriers to more competitive capital from the Global

Katherine Grzejszczak is a member of the Toronto branch of the NSG who migrated to Canada from Poland with her family in the early 90s. Todd Gordon is an editor of New Socialist.

North. They have been widely criticized for leading directly to increased poverty, unemployment and ecological destruction. In many cases, lands have been so devastated by nearby industries and massive development projects funded by governments and multinationals of the North that people who live there have little choice but to move, while in some instances people are physically forced off their land or out of their communities.

At the same time, the use of economic subsidies by Canada, the US and European Union (EU) in industries that are central to the livelihood of many people in the Third World, such as agriculture, also has a very detrimental impact on the Global South. The subsidies enable producers in the North to flood world markets and drive down prices to the point where producers of the South simply cannot compete.

In the context of the Global North's aggressive pursuit of structural adjustment and use of agricultural subsidies, in which hundreds of millions of people have been left unemployed or displaced, migration becomes a means of survival, as people leave their communities and head for the rapidly growing urban centres of their countries or across borders to Canada, the US and the EU in search of work to support themselves and their families. Indeed, you can trace the destruction caused by the economic policies of the imperialist countries in, for instance, the Caribbean basin or the Philippines, and the corresponding increase in out-migration from these same countries over the same period.

The devastation caused by neoliberal economic interventions has not gone unchallenged. There have been protests led by affected communities all over the world. However, movements against restructuring or displacement are often met with violent reprisal, whether from military forces or from paramilitaries

hired by corporations which stand to loose from the opposition. For example, when the Ogoni protested Shell's oil drilling on their land in Nigeria, the police were used to violently quell the resistance. In 1990, 80 Ogoni demonstrators were killed and 459 homes destroyed. In Mexico, the army has been used to fight the Zapatista uprising against displacement from their lands. Many more examples of this dynamic could be given. The bottom line is that military violence is used to implement the interests of global capital and defend policies that have disastrous consequences people in the Third World.

Canada, it must be stressed, actively engages in these imperialist practices. A major creditor nation, Canada has been a consistent supporter of structural adjustment policies, and has funded massive development projects, including dam building in China that has displaced hundreds of millions of people. There are also many examples of Canadian corporations – with the support of the Canadian state – ravaging the resources of the Global South and exploiting local labour to do this. These companies, especially in the mining sector, have been implicated in serious human rights violations. In Columbia, for instance, Canadian mining companies have been linked to paramilitary death squads that target union and indigenous activists. In addition, the Canadian military has actively participated in or supported military interventions around the world. Canada supported the bloody Indonesian occupation of East Timor (and was one of Indonesia's major arms suppliers), has been occupying Afghanistan for three years, and recently supported the military coup against the democratically elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Haiti.

It is not only conditions in source countries that lead to the movement of people. Economies of the Global North rely on cheap immigrant labour. This has actually been a regular feature of capitalist history. During England's Industrial Revolution, labour shortages were filled by pushing peasants off their farmland, which led to migration to cities where capitalist production was rapidly growing. Here they worked for meager wages in the growing industries. During early periods in which raw goods were being exported from the Americas, Africans were brought in as slave labourers to extract these goods. In Canada, Chinese migrants were brought in to fill the labour shortages in the early stages of the country's industrial development. There have been programs recruiting live-in domestic workers in this country for over 100 years and to recruit farm workers for the last 40.

The shift to neoliberalism has exacerbated these trends. In the face of increasing global competition, capital has sought to increase profitability and drive down labour costs. While the Canadian state has pursued strategies to drive down the costs of Canadian-born workers and increase their vulnerability – by attacking labour laws and union rights, cutting social benefits and using contract and part-time labour – it has also relied heavily on immigrant labour.

The vast majority of jobs characterized by low pay, difficult and dangerous working conditions, instability, irregular hours, lack of benefits, social stigma and a lack of advancement opportunities are done by immigrant labour, if not by Canadian-born



Access to full-citizenship status is denied to most immigrants entering the country to work ... In 1973, 57% of all migrants to Canada classified as “workers” entered with permanent resident status. Twenty years later, that number had dropped to 30%.



PHOTO: JOHN BONNAR

racial minorities, women, or youth. Immigrants do the kinds of jobs that others will not do, and this is precisely why they are so important to First World countries. Indeed, this is the conscious aim of immigration policy in Canada. Playing on the desperation of Third World migrants (for which Canada is partly responsible), and mobilizing deeply rooted racist attitudes towards persons of colour, it severely circumscribes their rights.

For example, access to full-citizenship status is denied to most immigrants entering the country to work. The requirements for obtaining status are so restrictive that they exclude huge cate-

gories of immigrants. In 1973, 57% of all migrants to Canada classified as “workers” entered with permanent resident status. Twenty years later, that number had dropped to 30%. In order to obtain permanent residence in Canada before arrival, an applicant must accumulate sufficient “points”. Only those who are fluent in English or French, have a university education, an arranged job in Canada, and at least four years of skilled work have a chance of obtaining enough “points” to get citizenship.

It is virtually impossible for economic migrants that show up in Canada without pre-arranged landed immigrant status to get status. At constant risk of deportation, non-status workers have no access to the social benefits and protections that are offered to “citizens,” which in turn makes them super-exploitable. Non-status migrants are barred from services such as subsidized housing, health insurance, social assistance, student loans, and in some provinces legal aid, despite the fact that these people are much more likely to be living in poverty than other segments of the population. In the case of the temporary worker program, which includes domestic and agricultural labourers, immigrants are not covered by labour law and are not allowed to change employers – extremely coercive conditions of employment that leave people susceptible to all kinds of abuse. Those immigrants who cannot obtain the permits required to work legally in Canada comprise the steadily growing underground economy. All of these factors contribute to the forcing of Third World immigrants into jobs for which they are often overqualified, and where they face the worst conditions the Canadian labour market has to offer.

The industries immigrants typically end up in are those where the labour needs to be done locally in order to keep the economy functioning, but which would not be profitable at pay levels needed to attract large numbers of full-time Canadian-born workers. These industries include all types of service provision, construction work, cleaning, transport, domestic work and sex work. Jobs in these industries are characterized as “unskilled”, and the pay is low relative to the working conditions. One of the reasons employers work very hard in these industries to keep wages low is they are considered “low productivity”. “Low productivity” refers to the fact that capital investment (tools, machinery, technologies etc.) in many of these industries does not tremendously increase labour productivity (certainly not compared to capital-intensive industries like auto manufacturing). For example, you can give cleaners stronger cleaning solutions which may somewhat decrease the time it takes to clean a bathroom, but beyond that the time to do this job, and thus the costs beyond wages, cannot be cut down significantly. Profitability, in other words, is very wage sensitive; the best way to increase profits is to cut down on labour costs.

Thus, one of the most effective ways for employers to keep down costs in these industries is by drawing from an army of highly vulnerable and badly paid migrant workers. The labour is cheap, but it is nevertheless pivotal to the economy. For an office building to function in Canada, for example, it will need cleaners, security guards and catering services. And more highly-paid workers there will need dry cleaners, taxi drivers, cooks, servers and dishwashers working at their lunch restaurants and coffee shops, hairdressers, caregivers for their chil-

dren, cleaners for their homes and people to build their houses.

So the capitalist economy cannot function without a class of people in the imperialist centre who are excluded from the benefits that come with living in the imperialist centre. The global domination of certain nations is reproduced within the dominating nations themselves. Individual and institutional racism helps extend the inferior status of certain nations onto its people, even after they have geographically moved into the First World.

The trends described here, framed by the deep-seated racist character of Canadian society, will continue, as Canada and other First World countries, with aging populations and low fertility rates, become increasingly dependant on cheap labour from the Global South. The Canadian government's annual *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada* reports that, in order to sustain economic growth, the country will have to rely on increased levels of migration. As it reports this, however, immigration policy, as we have noted, remains very restrictive towards people from the Third World. This doesn't mean that Canada doesn't want those labourers, however, just that it wants them on its terms.

The shaping of the working class in Canada via restrictive immigration policies places certain demands on activists in our struggles for social justice. Cheap immigrant labour plays an increasingly important role for Canadian capital and the state. Thus solidarity with immigrants must be central to our political work. It also follows from this that serious anti-racist analysis must influence our understanding of capitalism and the struggles against it. Racism has been an integral part of capitalist history, and the deeply rooted white supremacist nature of Canadian society is a basis upon which Third World migrants can be systematically excluded from citizenship rights and forced into the worst kinds of work. So we can't properly take up the struggle for social justice in Canada if we don't make the struggle against racism and racist immigration policy central to what we do.

This also means challenging Canadian nationalism, which is not only a right-wing phenomenon, but has resonance on the left as well. The nationalist call for Canadian independence or "sovereignty", not uncommon among some union leaders, NGOs and writers, is premised on the mistaken idea that Canada is a subordinate nation dependant on the US (some employ the term "dependency" – typically used to describe Third World countries' relations to the US and Europe – with the qualifier "rich" in front of it). It is based on the dangerous notion that a Canada completely sovereign from the US would naturally be a fairer and more just place (not being influenced unduly by the Americans anymore). This obscures Canada's own imperialist role in the world as a major capitalist economy, its colonialist history and the racist nature of the Canadian state, while not challenging artificial borders which are the product of capitalist history and facilitate the state's racist manipulation of the labour supply. Although activists demand reforms from the state, such as better services for people, including immigrants, and a radical change to immigration laws, we can't lose site of the role played by the state in general,

The nationalist call for Canadian independence or "sovereignty" ... is premised on the mistaken idea that Canada is a subordinate nation dependant on the US ... it obscures Canada's own imperialist role in the world as a major capitalist economy, its colonialist history and the racist nature of the Canadian state, while not challenging artificial borders which are the product of capitalist history and facilitate the state's racist manipulation of the labour supply.

and in Canada in particular, in terms of imperialism and coercive immigration policy.

Our organizing, then, must challenge wherever possible Canadian nationalism and the sanctity of Canadian borders. It must be based instead on relations of solidarity with immigrants struggling for better working conditions, access to social services and equal rights in Canada. We must organize not to highlight the importance of our borders, but to challenge them and the restrictions placed on the free movement of people.

This organizing must involve the demand for status and access to services that citizens receive, as people involved in the Status and Don't Ask Don't Tell campaigns are doing in Toronto. But the struggle for immigrant rights must also be taken up much more vigorously by unions. Indeed, as some of the most exploited workers in our society, whose labour Canadian business is increasingly dependant on, immigrants will be central to the renewal of the currently sluggish union movement. Sadly, however, most union leaders appear unwilling to take up this important challenge, and will likely only do so in the face of serious pressure from immigrants themselves, with the support of other activists, including the union rank-and-file.

These are not easy tasks, but they are necessary in the struggle for a more socially just world. ★

BOOK REVIEW

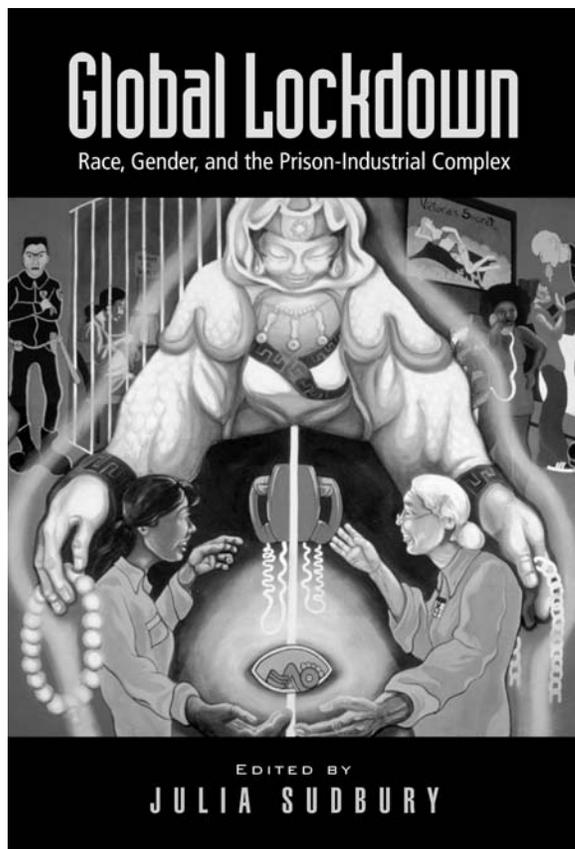
Beyond borders and bars

*GLOBAL LOCKDOWN:
RACE, GENDER AND
THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL
COMPLEX*

EDITED BY
JULIA SUDBURY

PUBLISHED BY
ROUTLEDGE, 2004,
352 PAGES

REVIEWED BY
ANTONIA BAKER



An impressive volume of twenty articles, *Global Lockdown* calls for a new approach to thinking about women in prison. Edited by abolitionist Julia Sudbury, it looks at the explosion of women's imprisonment as a crisis of working class women of colour and indigenous women globally. Unlike much existing prison research, it locates the experiences of prisoners at the centre of analysis, and using a transnational feminist approach, encourages us to think beyond the limits of national borders in order to critique the role of race, citizenship, global capitalism and military occupation in the expansion of prison regimes.

Compelling and layered, this anthology moves outside the usual scope of US-centric

writing on the prison industrial complex. Contributors analyze prisons in South Africa, Canada, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Australia, Italy, Jamaica, Britain, Colombia, Portugal, Palestine, the US and Pakistan. Many write from their prison cells.

Personal narratives and critical essays reveal the effects of imprisonment on women's lives, while rejecting the notion that there's a singular or universal experience of incarceration. Comparisons of prisons from different countries have been written before, but as Sudbury cautions us, many international studies stop short of questioning how borders are policed and the ways in which people's mobility is restricted while capital flows unimpeded.

There are, however, common features in

women's prisons worldwide. One of the fastest growing prison populations, women are confined in overcrowded jails where human rights violations are rampant. Sudbury asks what has caused the unprecedented rise in the number of women being sent to prison. She discredits theorists who point to an increased pattern of women offending, arguing that crime rates are falling. Explanations that hinge on women's past experiences of abuse are also problematic in that they obscure the larger political and economic forces driving mass imprisonment.

While much has been written on private investment and prison industries, prior to *Global Lockdown* there's been little discussion on how prisons are transformed by free trade agreements and economic restructuring, including the interplay between the globalized war on drugs, the criminalization of migration and increased border control and security. Sudbury encourages activists to consider other spaces of confinement, such as immigration detention centres, noting, "Immigrant rights and prison activists rarely share the same platform". *Global Lockdown* is an academic book, but also a tool for organizing, offering examples of successful cross-border campaigns.

CRIMINALIZING SURVIVAL

The first part of the book maps the ways in which women's survival strategies are criminalized. Asale Angel-Ajani explores the policing of immigrants, particularly African women, in Italy, which experienced a 50 per cent rise in its prison population over two years due to the immigrants, drug users and sex trade workers held in custody. The author points to policies such as the increased use of preventative detention under Italy's "Operation Clean Hands", immigration controls, and heightened penalties for drug use.

In Canada, Aboriginal women and youth disproportionately fill our prisons. First Nations ex-prisoner Lisa Neve and activist Kim Pate tell the story of Neve's designation as a dangerous offender in

Antonia Baker is a member of the Prisoners Justice Action Committee (PJAC). PJAC can be reached via email at pjac_committee@yahoo.com.

1994, a court decision that carries an indefinite sentence. Neve writes about her successful struggle to overturn this label, and the Court of Appeal judgment that ruled her crimes were connected to her efforts to survive, including her involvement in the sex trade. Her story shows how classification of women is dangerous, as it's based on the impossible prediction of future behaviour, as well as gender and racial discrimination. Women who refuse to be "managed" by the corrections system receive the harshest treatment. Pate illustrates how the neo-liberal destruction of social safety nets collides with colonization and poverty on a systemic level.

Stormy Ogden, an ex-prisoner of indigenous Yokuts and Pomo ancestry, examines California's prison industrial complex. She discusses the role of prison labour and its colonial roots. Native youth activists experience the devastation of foreign laws and are sent to prison for defending their native burial grounds and lands. The author, sentenced to five years for welfare fraud, describes the intersecting high rates of imprisonment and sexual violence of native women as genocidal. She concludes, "What was my crime? Being an America Indian woman."

WOMEN IN THE GLOBAL PRISON

The second section begins with Kemba Smith writing from her prison cell, serving time for a non-violent drug offence. She gave birth to her son behind bars and shares her dreams of being at home with her family. Her article *Modern Day Slavery* reveals that 61 per cent of federal US prisoners are serving time for drugs. "Basically this war on drugs is the reason why the prison-industrial complex is a skyrocketing enterprise," she writes. The Kemba Smith Justice Project has since successfully fought her conviction.

Palestinian political prisoners from three refugee camps in the Gaza Strip share their experiences of detention and sexual torture with Elham Bayour. Meanwhile, Linda Evans reports on women in Vieques resisting imperialist occupation, accused of "trespassing" on their own land. In the US,

stigma and discrimination against prisoners has become public policy; in many states women with drug felonies can never receive welfare, apply for student loans or vote. An anti-imperialist former political prisoner, Evans draws insightful links between border militarization, exportation of the war on terror, globalization and the criminalization of immigrants, who are deported after serving their sentences. Other authors

Women who refuse to be "managed" by the corrections system receive the harshest treatment.

discussing the detention of "illegals," include Sudbury, who writes of the cross-border imprisonment of Jamaican women in Britain, and Rebecca Bohrman and Naomi Nurakawa, who offer an in-depth examination of immigration and crime control in the US.

One of the most interesting articles is Manuela Ivone Perieria da Cunha's *From Neighborhood to Prison*, which looks at women and the war on drugs in Portugal. Da Cunha challenges the assumption that prison walls are impermeable, that prisoners are "A World Apart" from the rest of society. In Portugal, one of the European Union's largest incarcerators, women imprisoned for participating in the drug trade are often locked down with other female family members because mass arrests target entire communities. This, in turn, causes the division between the imprisoned and the free to become blurred, and shifts the focus to the "interface between inside and outside." Prison culture isn't about convict code; its roots are in pre-prison networks of family and kin, and it is this mass incarceration, ironically, that helps prisoners maintain their identities, relationships, and will to resist. Like national borders, prison walls can be porous.

FROM CRIMINALIZATION TO RESISTANCE

While the third section of the book is the

shortest, it contains valuable examples of organizing efforts (though testimonies of women's resistance weave throughout the book). Melissa Upreti looks at the policing of women's sexuality in Nepal and traces how cross-border alliances and local activism led to the decriminalization of abortion in 2002. Beth Ritchie challenges us to expand our understanding of the prison system to include regulation of sexuality; her article features the voices of queer black youth in detention in the US. In South Africa, where domestic violence is not criminalized, the Justice for Women Campaign asks why the state responds to women experiencing violence by locking them up. The campaign, as Vetten and Bhana write, mobilizes

for the early release of women, as well as legal reform.

Global Lockdown is successful because it contains writings by those who best understand the prison industrial complex: prisoners and their families. As ex-prisoner Debbie Kilroy insists in *Sisters Inside: Speaking Out against Criminal Injustice*, prisoners need to speak for themselves. Kilroy is rightly critical of those who assert that there are categories of prisoners "who do not belong" in prison – the underlying implication being that there are people who *do* belong behind bars. Activists need to hear this; to do otherwise is to condone the perpetuation of the prison system. Is the release of certain prisoners (non-violent, political or those deemed minimum-security) an abolitionist strategy? It can be, but only if anti-prison activists see decarceration and legal reform as a beginning and not a destination.

A phrase stays with me from Ruth Wilson Gilmore's *Pierce the Future for Hope: Mothers and Prisoners in the Post Keynesian California Landscape*. "without glorification or shame." Romanticizing the prison experience or stigmatizing it renders the pains of imprisonment invisible. What makes *Global Lockdown* unique among other books on the prison industrial complex is that many of its voices are those of women inside, orienting us to center the experiences of women of colour in our analysis and organizing. ★

MUSIC REVIEW

'Feminists we're calling you'

ALBUM: *THIS ISLAND*
BAND: LE TIGRE

REVIEWED BY JACKIE ESMONDE



Le Tigre members Kathleen Hanna, J.D. Samson and Johanna Fateman

Le Tigre's long-awaited third album, *This Island*, was released in October 2004 amidst intense fan speculation about whether the trio of feminist "electronic punk" rockers had sold out. *This Island* is Le Tigre's first album on a major label, Universal, and fans were concerned that the politics and musical innovation of the band would be replaced with pop music designed to appeal to a wider audience. The fact that their song "Deceptacon" had recently been used in Telus ads fueled the speculation.

With their first two albums, Le Tigre's Kathleen Hanna, Johanna Fateman and J.D. Samson created a unique danceable feminist sound, an offshoot from the riot grrrl movement of which they were all a part in the 1990s. *This Island* is a continuation of this aesthetic, blending disco, punk and dance music with feminist, anti-racist and queer politics.

I had a chance to see their multi-media live show in Toronto just after they released the album. Le Tigre is adept at creating a connection with their audience and their political call for equality and pride could not be missed.

In a clear signal of the importance the band places on getting their political messages out, the first single and video from the album is "New Kicks". "New Kicks" doesn't actually feature many vocals from the band itself. Instead most of the vocals and sounds are sampled from the February 2003 anti-war protest in New

York City. The song includes clips from actual speeches and chants from the demonstration set to music. The result is a creative interplay of politics and music, and an anti-war song that captures an important historical moment. The band created the song to "serve as a reminder that we are not alone in our protest and our struggle" against the Bush administration. "New Kicks" is not the only song to speak out against the Bush administration. Le Tigre also takes it on in their song "Seconds": "On a golf car / Wearing some uniform / Bombing in the night-time / Lying on TV / You make me sick sick sick sick."

This Island continues Le Tigre's project of creating forms of cultural resistance. The album projects an incredibly affirming message. For example, "Viz" is described as a butch lesbian anthem written from the firsthand experience of Le Tigre's JD Samson and includes lyrics such as: "They call it climbing and I call it visibility / They call it coolness and I call it visibility / They call it way too rowdy, I call it finally free." Through their music, their website and their live performances Le Tigre continues to encourage their listeners to fight apathy, believe in themselves, get involved with activism and engage with art and ideas. These characteristics have not changed despite their shift to a major label after their former label, the queer/feminist "Mr. Lady", closed down. In this sense, at least, it cannot be said that Le Tigre has "sold out." Though it is hard to understand why the grassroots anti-establishment band would not have found another independent label.

While I enjoy the positive messages and

the political nature of Le Tigre's music, I continue to feel disappointed with their unwillingness to push themselves lyrically beyond somewhat shallow sloganeering. The band acknowledges that the term "feminist" can refer to a wide range of positions on the political spectrum, but it is difficult to discern where they position themselves. On their website they state that they feel the greatest affinity to a feminism that challenges misogyny while also standing "against racism, homophobia, classism, imperialism etc..." If this is the case, I would have hoped for more than slogans such as "peace up, war down". There is nothing particularly radical about such a lowest common denominator anti-war statement. The group's participation in the "Bands Against Bush" performances suggests an unexpectedly wishy washy, liberal politics, and a failure to critique the political process in the United States.

But perhaps I am asking too much of Le Tigre. They are a band after all, not a political organization. In a clear statement of their goal in making music, the band states on their website: "We want to make great music that radical people can recognize their values in, because that is what we ourselves crave." *This Island* does accomplish this goal, as limited as it is. With Universal's resources, Le Tigre is able to bring radical values to a wider audience.

If the crowd of dancing and joyful young women at their concert in Toronto is any indication, this is something there seems to be a real hunger for. ★

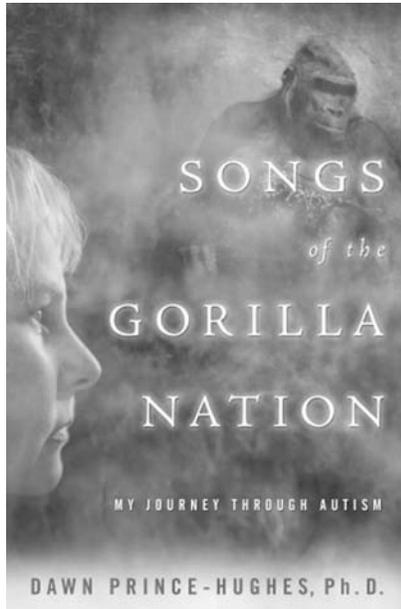
Jackie Esmonde is a member of the Toronto branch of the New Socialist Group.

The best of culture

Two fascinating non-fiction books crossed this reviewer's lap in late 2004.

Songs of the Gorilla Nation by Dawn Prince-Hughes (Harmony, 2004) is a brilliant book about living with an undiagnosed autism disorder and about gorillas. In the first section Prince-Hughes describes her growing up in an eccentric family, being terrorized and bullied in school for odd behaviour and open queerness, living on the streets, and working as a stripper. She writes about her identification with the Seven of Nine character on *Star Trek Voyager*, "She thinks very rationally with the focus and harmony of the collective, which uses her talents for conciseness and intellectual efficiency to the utmost until she is 'rescued' by the captain of the *Voyager*. The captain is determined to 'restore her humanity.' The pain she subsequently endures is heartbreaking. She has no inherent understanding of social protocol, the importance of valuing the individual over the whole, or why the isolation of individuality is prized over efficiency and pragmatism. I have related to her every falter and crushing defeat. I believe we share the same brand of innocence and wisdom."

The second part of the book describes her yen to spend time at the zoo, as she hung around and eventually found work there. As she spent time with a gorilla she started to find herself relating to another being as an equal. She learned to communicate feelings, one of the most difficult of tasks for someone with autism. "By applying the bodily and language components I had learned from the gorillas, I was beginning to have more social success; this led to less tension for me when I was in social situations, and



that in turn enabled me to relax and read people better." The final third of the book Prince-Hughes writes about finding love, getting her PhD, being diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, the pregnancy of her partner and birth of their son. It also discusses the political and ecological issues surrounding gorillas and their habitat.

It may sound like it jumps all over the place, but *Songs of the Gorilla Nation* is very readable. I couldn't put it down. It's a great introduction to the world of autism, a short primer on gorillas, a lesbian love story and a good reminder that human beings are animals.

Susan Braudy's *Family Circle: The Boudins and the Aristocracy of the American Left* (Random House, 2003) is a fantastic account of an important family in the development US left wing politics. The book focuses on Kathy Boudin, a schoolmate of Braudy's, a leader of the Weather Underground, niece of I.F. Stone and daughter of radical lawyer Leonard Boudin. Amongst Leonard Boudin's clients were Paul Robeson, Benjamin Spock and Fidel Castro. The book is



nearly 500 hundred pages and quite detailed, but also a good story. As I started it, I thought "Oh no, another attempt to make left politics a mental illness," but Braudy brings enough facts, tact and richness of detail. It goes some way in providing the base for answers of why well educated young people with the ability to make progressive social change happen, instead dragged themselves down to the nihilistic politics of the Weather Underground. Great for anyone wanting to learn more about the American Old and New Lefts or the Weather Underground.

While not especially political, I'd like to put in a plug for Toronto hiphop artist Mindbender and his new double CD, *Beautiful Mutant*. The beats are rough, the MCing all over the place, and verges on falling apart, but just keeps it together enough to get through the song. Available at hiphop and indie music stores, or more easily from www.supremebeingunit.com, where you can also find out more about Mindbender.

One final plug is for *Polunatic: the Journal of Polunacy*, an excellent lefty blog at <http://polunatic.blogspot.com>. ★

Mark Connery is a child care worker and library enthusiast from Toronto.

What's real about Reality TV?

BY ALAN SEARS

Some TV critics claim that this year is the beginning of the end for Reality TV. The huge success of the very smart and sharp-edged *Desperate Housewives* is supposed to mark a return to scripted and professionally acted drama/comedy. This is a good moment, then, to take stock of the Reality TV phenomenon.

Reality TV is a genre that combines elements of talk show, game show, vulgar pseudo-anthropology and pro wrestling. It traces the actions of non-actors placed in various situations facing set challenges. The success of *Survivor* played a big role in launching the genre in North America. It was popular enough to make "voted off the island" a part of our everyday language.

There has been quite a range to the Reality TV shows. There have been the truly hideous shows like *Who's Your Daddy*, in which an adopted person tries to identify a biological parent through a game show format. There have been hilarious ones like *Married by America* that show how meaningless and commercialized the wedding industry is. There are gross-out shows like *Fear Factor* and roommate shows like *Big Brother* and the pseudo-anthropology of *Survivor*. They tend to share a format of starting out with a bunch of contestants and narrowing it down to one winner, who takes home a big wad of cash.

The success of Reality TV was driven first by commercial considerations. What makes these shows popular to producers is in part the same process of restructuring to drive up profits that we are seeing in all



Reality TV contestant drinking blended duck bits

kinds of workplaces. It involves the use of new technologies and work reorganization to deskill the workforce and tap into cheaper labour sources. Reality TV is very cheap to make, requiring fewer writers and actors than traditional programming while making use of limited sets and fixed cameras for at least some of the action. It is a big profit centre for the networks, which are facing increased competition in the digital age.

But the success of Reality TV also tells us interesting things about North American culture at the present time. To start with, there is not a lot of reality on television right now. It can be argued that Reality TV is more realistic than the news on American networks these days, where CNN refers to the insurgents resisting American occupation in Fallujah as "anti-Iraqi forces." Who are the foreign fighters there anyhow? The parameters of debate in the mainstream American media and political institutions are now so narrow that the only place for

even moderate political interchange is documentary films, books and the Jon Stewart fake-news show.

Everyone knows that Reality TV is not actually about reality. But it does give us some sense of the fantasies about reality that occupy North American culture today. Reality TV tells us something about what it is like to live in a neo-liberal world marked by cutbacks, layoffs, plant closures, contracting out and privatization. This is a world where social policy and management strategies are geared to producing increasing insecurity for working people and those who are not employed.

Reality TV represents a world of insecurity, where most people end up as losers. It is a hyper-competitive world where people are forced to battle one another to the end. Many of these shows encourage conspiracy and devious alliances that must necessarily be broken for ultimate victory. It is a social darwinist world, where existence is a struggle and only the few survive and thrive.

Alan Sears is a socialist university teacher who guiltily watches too much television.

*Reality TV tells us
something about
what it is like to
live in a neo-
liberal world
marked by
cutbacks, layoffs,
plant closures,
contracting out
and privatization.*

It also represents a world where everything is a commodity aimed for sale on the market and everybody has their price. People will do anything for money on these shows, swing from high heights, eat live bugs, marry the twit if required, manipulate, lie, backstab – it's just like the world of corporate management, except for the eating bugs part.

The money on these shows is not nickel and dime stuff, though. There is a big prize for the one winner at the end of the whole thing – the one who eats the bugs, marries the bachelor, survives the votes, identifies the straight guy or wins the race around the world. That prize represents the only imaginable deliverance from our everyday lot of hard work and insecurity, the slim chance of winning the big one – the lottery, the card game, the slot machine, the pot of gold at the end of the series. Reality TV presents a world where it is not reasonable to hope for anything better than this, and where it often feels futile to organize and fight for improvement. Instead, the idea of a better life becomes a fantasy constructed around competition and a big jackpot money shot to finish the whole thing.

I must confess that even though I watch a lot of junky television, I find most Reality TV hard to stomach. It might sound horribly sanctimonious, but I see in these shows a representation of how ugly this neo-liberal world is, and I find it hard to laugh as people shove worms down their throat until they puke on the small chance they will win the big fortune and be delivered from the everyday reality of toil and precariousness.

But there is something else about them. The appetite for these shows is driven not only by the need for escape fantasies in the era of Bush and Martin, but also by a craving for seeing “real” people portrayed in culture. So much television is about the rich, the famous, the doctors, the lawyers and the cops. Reality TV offers a bit of a break from that, showing ordinary (or extraordinary) working people facing up to big challenges and being creative, funny, goofy, smart or dumb. It suggests that maybe there is an appetite for something other than the lives of the wealthy on television. The demonstration of an appetite for something closer to our own stories may be the hopeful aspect of Reality TV. ★

Student politics

Continued from Page 7

project was to unilaterally and undemocratically pull Ryerson out of the CFS. That effort was put to rest when his own membership quashed his agenda at a general membership meeting where the rank-and-file voted to over-rule the council's actions. Another one of MacLean's campaign deceptions included alleged support for the tuition fee freeze. This promise was contradicted when MacLean immediately joined the university president to criticize the freeze and support ancillary fee increases. Back-room politicking reigned this year at Ryerson, where MacLean's “more friendly approach to lobbying” translated into wine-and-cheese parties with the university administration.

But while the Canadian incarnation of the conservative electoral machine has, so far, been limited to Ontario, these campus conservatives are clearly taking cues from south of the border. In fact, the American-based US Campus Leadership Program, a website featuring resources and a section on “How to Win Student Government Elections,” indicates a sophisticated level of

organising that allows for free cross-border Conservative exchanges. The US Campus Leadership Program trains field representatives to go to college campuses to identify, recruit and coach student leaders to promote conservative principles more effectively.

But the real question we are facing today is: Why now?

Well, the Left in general has been very effective in not only winning victories, but in being able to make progressive ideas part of public consciousness. In Ontario, winning a tuition fee freeze represented a major victory against privatisation. This victory was the result of consciousness-raising, and it made it impossible for the right-leaning McGuinty Liberals to ignore voter demands. However, as our collectively-won successes grow, so will opposition to them. This means that on our campuses, students are charged with battling the ideology of the Right not only in the streets, but even within our own students' unions. We need a wide call for activists and progressives to bring these unions back to their roots in integrated, progressive activism. Historically, students unions have provided infrastructure and

resources in support of the mobilization for real progressive change. Such vehicles for change are essential for sustaining a movement that will pry open the Ivory tower and challenge oppression. The real task for campus progressives is to pick up not only the megaphone, but also a nomination form as part of the struggle to build and maintain a fighting student movement. ★

read

CANADIAN DIMENSION
FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Canada's socialist bi-monthly
now in our 42nd year of
independent publishing!

subscribe to CD
and support media
run and written by activists
for activists
free of the
mainstream corporate agenda

visit
www.canadiandimension.mb.ca
or call toll-free 800.737.7051

OBITUARY: BOB EVERTON (1952-2004)

Life long social justice activist



Hundreds of people attended a December 23 Vancouver memorial and community meeting for Bob Everton, a life long activist. Bob lived an interesting life which intersected with international movements and the development of a community-based Vancouver left.

After graduating from high school in Burnaby, BC, Bob traveled the world and was drawn to Chile in 1973, where he joined the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left). He was detained in a stadium during the coup and expelled from Chile. Many others were killed. He was also involved in Chile solidarity work in Vancouver and later returned to Latin America to support the MIR underground.

After returning to Vancouver, Bob's politics shifted but he did not retreat from an activist political life or accommodate himself to capitalism and imperialism, like so many others of his generation. Instead, Bob gravitated towards the new social movements internationally and locally. He was an early advocate of ecologically conscious green left perspectives, embraced the notion of community-based radical direct democracy and was inspired by horizontal organizing models drawn from the Zapatistas. When upsurges arose, Bob was present. In his last year, Bob devoted attention to healing activities and teaching but could be found both at Anti-Poverty Coalition protests against Gordon Campbell and at meetings organized by Bolivarian circles in solidarity with Venezuela.

His presence has led some activists to consider documenting his life as part and parcel of the history of the left in Vancouver.

Harold Lavendar

Numerous contributions have been posted to a memorial web site for Bob at <http://memorial.resist.ca>. New Socialist is reprinting one contribution by Vancouver community activist, Maryann Abbs.

I THINK THAT I FIRST MET BOB WHEN HE RETURNED FROM THE First Intergalactic Gathering for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism. He was inspired by the Zapatista movement and he conveyed his passion about the movement to many, many people. I remember him first from the experience with organizing for the International of Hope gatherings (a movement to extend Zapatista ideas, which took place in many cities worldwide). And, in a way, the International of Hope really does describe Bob. Bob was the community optimist, the guy who could take setbacks and keep on going – in fact, I think he never talked about any alternative but to keep on fighting. Bob was also an internationalist – he was inspired by and participated in struggles from Chile to Mexico, Venezuela and Argentina and also very much locally.

Bob loved getting people together to do and talk about radical shit. Whether it was organizing the International of Hope gatherings in Vancouver, helping to get people together to go to Seattle and Quebec City, organizing potlucks of radical labour activists, or floating the idea of starting a community assembly, Bob was about getting people together to talk stuff out, learn to trust each other, and take action.

What I've tried to learn from Bob is the ability that he had to work in a non-sectarian way – yet without becoming pragmatic or betraying his principles. Bob did not betray the social movements that he worked with in his youth, but worked to strengthen and transform them. Many could learn from this example. Bob believed passionately in community, but he also believed in political integrity.

Bob showed me that radical politics are not just a symptom of youth. I'm at the age when I'm supposed to grow up and realize that the revolution is not just around the corner. We've been told that it's time to grow up and reject the fairytale of that real transformation can occur – that it's time to settle for lesser of evils. Bob, on the other hand, was always there to mentor and teach new activists and radicals. Because of this commitment, Bob often had difficulty getting work, even though he was a gifted teacher. Often passion and political integrity don't go hand in hand with decent paychecks.

One of the last things that I worked on with Bob was to gather community support for striking HEU workers. Bob was totally committed to walking the picket line, leafleting and making sure that people were ready for the anticipated general strike.

Bob put his heart into social movements and teaching. And, in the end, his heart stopped maybe from too much love for people and justice, or maybe it was just tired and time to stop. Bob's heart might have stopped – but be sure that ours are full of the knowledge and inspiration that he has left us.

*With much sadness,
Maryann Abbs*

TIME TO ORGANIZE

Branches and members of the New Socialist Group are active in a number of cities. Call for information about our activities.

VANCOUVER Box 4955, Vancouver, V6B 4A6
nsgvan@resist.ca

HAMILTON vandeir@mcmaster.ca (Ingrid)

EDMONTON (780) 451-3103, or
email: wr@ualberta.ca

KINGSTON (613) 542-8462 (Contact Toby),
or email: newsoc@sympatico.ca

TORONTO (416) 955-1581
newsoc@web.net

WINNIPEG (204) 775-0265
nsgwpg@yahoo.ca

**FOR ALL
OTHER AREAS** newsoc@web.net
(416) 955-1581
Box 167 253 College St
Toronto Ontario M5T 1R5
www.newsocialist.org



Activists must make defense of immigrant rights central to their work. See article on capitalism & immigration on page 28.

new★ SOCIALIST IDEAS FOR RADICAL CHANGE

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

	IN CANADA	IN THE U.S.
1 year	\$25	\$30
2 years	\$45 (save \$5)	\$55 (save \$5)
3 years	\$65 (save \$10)	\$80 (save \$10)

INSTITUTIONAL AND OVERSEAS INTERNATIONAL: \$50 per year

ALL PRICES IN CANADIAN DOLLARS

SEND CHEQUES TO **NEW SOCIALIST**
Box 167, 253 College Street
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R5

www.newsocialist.org

The NSG works with the Québec organization GAUCHE SOCIALISTE

MONTREAL montreal@lagauche.com
QUÉBEC CITY quebec@lagauche.com
and the **OUTAOUAIS** hull@lagauche.com

GAUCHE SOCIALISTE
CP 52131, Succ, St-Fidele, Québec, G1L 5A4
www.lagauche.com

THE NEW SOCIALIST GROUP *is an organization of activists working to renew socialism from below as part of today's struggles. Our socialism is revolutionary and democratic, committed to working-class self-emancipation, internationalism and opposition to all forms of oppression. We reject bureaucratic and authoritarian notions of socialism and look instead to the radical tradition of socialism from below, which believes that liberation can only be achieved through the activity and mobilization of the oppressed themselves. Ideas need to be put into action. So if you like what you read, get in touch with us.*

SOCIALIST FEMINIST & PROUD



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

	IN CANADA	IN THE U.S.
1 year	\$25	\$30
2 years	\$45 (save \$5)	\$55 (save \$5)
3 years	\$65 (save \$10)	\$80 (save \$10)

Institutional and Overseas International: \$50 per year
ALL PRICES IN CANADIAN DOLLARS

send cheques to:

NEW SOCIALIST
Box 167, 253 College Street
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R5

www.newsocialist.org

CELEBRATING OUR 50TH ISSUE!

new 
SOCIALIST

IDEAS FOR RADICAL CHANGE