

Metro Network For Social Justice

Sept/'94

MNSJ

METRO NETWORK'S AGM - OCTOBER 1!

Date: Saturday, October 1st
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Loc'n: 519 Church Street
Reg'n: \$10 (includes lunch)
Agenda: Evaluation of '94
Planning for '95
MNSJ & Metro Elections

Member organizations are reminded of our Annual General Meeting on October 1st. Registration and participation is open to all interested, but voting is limited to one vote per member organization. Organizations must be accepted into membership by September 29th in order to vote or nominate candidates to the Steering Committee. However, signed nomination forms can be brought to the meeting and handed in upon registration. If your organization is a member and is interested in nominating a representative to the Steering Committee, and you'd like more information, call Bill Howes at 441-3663.

METRO NETWORK'S MUNICIPAL ELECTION EFFORTS

The MNSJ is getting into electoral politics. No, we're not fielding or even endorsing candidates. But we want to make sure that the issues that are important to our member organizations get discussed during the campaign, and we want to do our part in letting voters know the importance of the Metro level of government and the importance of electing candidates who share our views on the issues.

We're going to do this in three ways. First, we're publishing a newspaper-style broadsheet called "METRO VOTES" which will zero in on issues that we've worked on in the past. These include social services, employment, child care, the budget, and others. Copies of METRO VOTES will be available at our Annual General Meeting on October 1st, and we hope that member organizations will take quantities to distribute through their usual networks. (We would also appreciate a contribution toward the printing costs from organizations which have the resources.)

The second way in which we hope to encourage greater public participation in the Metro election is by offering a workshop on Metro government and Metro issues. Billed as "The Travelling Road Show", the workshop will be done by a member of the MNSJ Steering Committee and can be given wherever a community organization can bring together an interested group of activists or potential activists. Finally, an Organizers' Kit for the Metro Elections will be made available as a resource for community activists who want to organize groups in their own communities during the election period and afterward. A shorter, version of this workshop will form a part of our Annual General Meeting. If you're interested in learning more about our Metro election effort, call Janet Conway at the SPC at 416-351-0095.

UPDATE ON SOCIAL POLICY REVIEW

Axworthy's intended directions for Canada's social programmes will surface on September 20th. However, leaked documents focus on the areas of Employment, Security, and Learning.

Employment: UI eligibility and benefits will be replaced by an Employment Insurance System with expanded coverage for self-employed and non-standard work. The basic employment insurance system will be like the current UI. Frequent UI users (ie three claims in the past five years) will receive Supplementary Assistance with less money for shorter periods and mandatory participation in training.

Security: The emphasis will be on children through enhanced Child Tax Benefit, increasing earned income supplement and a comprehensive universal child benefit tax break to all families with children. Childcare options include 150,000 subsidized spaces and a child development programme. Additional measures: a child support formula as a guideline for judges, national support enforcement, workplace child care, flexible work arrangements, family leave entitlements, and extended maternity/paternity leave.

Learning: Current transfers to post-secondary students will be replaced by a four-tiered student assistance programme ranging from no aid to subsidized loans to needs-tested subsidized loans to needs-tested grants. This model might also apply to training.

Throughout the review process, it should be clearly understood, however, that the real motive behind the government's Social Policy Review is to cut back on the \$40 billion of spending that is under study. In fact, the whole nature of federal-provincial funding is at stake here.

The final government document will be responded to by our social partners - including the Social Planning Council, the Ontario Social Safety Network, the Ontario Coalition for Social Justice, and the Action Canada Network. The MNSJ's work group - the Social Policy Review Action Group - will keep MNSJ member organizations informed of actions, events, and further developments.

FORUM ON RESTRUCTURING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Ontario Social Service Workers' Co-ordinating Committee, a committee of CUPE members in the Social Service field, is sponsoring an all-day community forum featuring Stephen Lewis, former Canadian Ambassador to the U.N., Judy Darcy, CUPE National President, and Peter Clutterbuck, Executive Director of the SPC. The forum will be held October 28th at the Toronto Hilton (Downtown), 145 Richmond St W. For more information, call Ian Thompson, 416-292-3999.

(over)

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

Listed below are meetings & events of interest to activists in the Metro area. If you have additions for the calendar, please fax information to Bill Howes at fax 445-8405.

Sept 20	SPC Lecture on Refugee Issues
Sept 27	OCSJ General Meeting
Oct 1	Metro Network for Social Justice AGM
Oct 5	OCOSO Forum on Long Term Care
Oct 6	Metro Coalition for Better Child Care Conference
Oct 10	Thanksgiving
Oct 12	Basic Poverty Action Group Rally & March
Oct 25	OCSJ General Meeting
Oct 25	1st Anniversary of Chretien Government
Oct 28	Forum: Restructuring for Social Justice
Nov 11	Remembrance Day
Nov 14	Municipal Election Day
Nov 19	LCS Seminar: "Mandatory Drug Testing"
Nov 25-27	OFL Arts/Labour/Heritage Symposium
Nov 29	OCSJ General Meeting

DEMONSTRATION vs SOCIAL SECURITY CUTS

The BASIC Poverty Action Group is organizing rally and march to protest social security cuts by the federal government. To be held on October 12th, the event will begin with a 9:30 a.m. rally at the St. Lawrence Market North at the corner of Front & Jarvis Streets. The rally will be followed by a march at noon to the Toronto Stock Exchange and then move on to the Liberal Party headquarters at Yonge and St. Mary St (just south of Bloor). If you're mad as hell about more social service cuts, join the rally and march. If you need more information, call Lesli at 588-1234.

ANNUAL CHILD CARE CONFERENCE OCT.6th

The annual conference of the Metro Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care, entitled "The Shape of things to come", will be held at Metro Hall on Thursday, October 6th from 9:00 a.m. till 4:00 p.m. Metro Hall is located at 55 John St, just south of King, and the conference will be held on the 27th floor.

With child care reform no longer on the political agenda, and with the upcoming municipal election, it is important for the child care community to come together and discuss the future of child care in Metro. For a registration form or more information, call Caron Hawco at 416-538-0628.

LECTURE ON REFUGEE ISSUES

The Social Planning Council and the Urban Alliance on Race Relations are presenting the first Wilson Head Memorial Lecture at the Council Chambers of Toronto City Hall on Sept.20th from 6:30 till 9:30 p.m. The Guest Speaker will be Dr. Mary Jo Leddy, speaking on the topic of Refugee Issues. Her lecture will be followed by a panel discussion, then snacks and a cash bar.

SENIOR'S FORUM ON LONG-TERM CARE

The Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations (OCOSO) is sponsoring a public forum on Long-Term Care. Free and open to all, the forum will include speakers from OCOSO, the Ministry of Health, and community organizations. The forum will be held on October 5th from 1:00 p.m. till 4:00 p.m. at the United Steelworkers' Hall, 25 Cecil St - just south of College and just west of Beverley St. If you'd like more information, call Felicia Fallen at 416-979-7057.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA

The Canadian-Colombian Association is organizing a letter-writing campaign, urging the newly-elected Colombian government and its security forces to respect human rights and to seriously address the country's political violence. The letters are to be sent to the new government, which took office on August 15th.

Since 1986, more than 20,000 Colombians have been murdered due to political motives. The majority of these crimes have been committed by the Colombian army, police and closely associated paramilitary groups. Unionists, grassroots organizers and human rights workers are a central target of this violent campaign. Colombian authorities have never taken responsibility for these crimes.

The new Colombian government is dedicated to maintaining a favourable international image. A strong message from Canadian organizations regarding human rights will exert pressure on the Colombian government to begin to address the crisis. Also, it will provide valuable political support to Colombia's grassroots movement.

For more information about the letter-writing campaign or to arrange for someone to speak to your local about the political situation in Colombia contact Humberto Geovo at (416) 929-1966 or Iliam Burbano at (416) 761-0026.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice is looking for a Theological Reflection Animator. The job will last 8 months (2 1/2 days a week) and will include animating and organizing theological reelection meetings among Christian social justice workers. A Masters' degree in theology or equivalent is required, and the deadline for applications is October 7th. For more information call the Jesuit Centre at 469-1123.

FOOD POLICY DISCUSSION PAPER AVAILABLE

The Toronto Food Policy Council released a second discussion paper on food issues last month. The paper is entitled "Health, wealth, and the environment: the impacts of the CUSTA, GATT, and NAFTA on Canadian food security". It's intended to stimulate discussions on issues and strategies to improve the food and agricultural system in Canada, and comments are encouraged. For a copy of the paper, write to the Toronto Food Policy Council, 277 Victoria St, Room 203, Toronto, Ont, M5B 1W1.